



WEDNESDAY, NOVEMBER 7, 2007, 10AM - 12PM
Youth, Development and Livelihood

Meeting notes

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The Washington Network held its bi-monthly meeting on November 7, 2007 around the topic of youth, development and livelihoods. The conversation was framed by *Whitney Harrelson: manager, Innovative Partnerships & learning Initiatives* and *Lili Marguerite Stern: Technical Advisor for Youth & Livelihoods at the International Rescue Committee (IRC) in the Children and Youth Protection and Development Unit.*

Youth, Development and Livelihood: Building Capacity in Partnership with Enterprises and Entrepreneurship

Whitney ensures new opportunities for young people around the world. Prior to joining Making Cents, Whitney served as a consultant to organizations that support and promote youth entrepreneurship throughout Latin America and the Caribbean: the Inter-American Development Bank's Youth Development and Outreach Program; the Organization of American States' Young Americas Business Trust; and Fundación Paraguaya. Whitney has also worked for U.S. Senator John F. Kerry, an international business-consulting firm, and at the U.S. Department of the Treasury's Department of Tariff and Trade Affairs.

OVERVIEW OF THE YOUTH MICROENTERPRISE CONFERENCE:

- 227 participants attended representing 28 countries
- All had varying definitions of the term “youth” to discuss the role of youth in micro-enterprise
- 89% of youth are in the developing country
- Three main reasons why organizations engage in such practices:
 1. Reduce youth unemployment
 2. Reduce youth vulnerabilities
 3. Avoid youth involvement in armed conflict
- The conference stressed involving youth in the entire process of designing, implementing and monitoring.
- Importance of understanding employment and entrepreneurship
- Understanding youth dynamics and the market before getting involved
- Ability to link youth to growth sectors.
- Incorporate monitoring and evaluation mechanisms in the youth programming arena; while it exists the conference still identified this as a gap in practice

- Need to implement a holistic approach; working in partnership with other organizations in a comprehensive manner which will maximize the benefits for youth

FINDINGS FROM THE CONFERENCE SPECIFIC TO CONFLICT ENVIRONMENT:

- There is a need to better understand what other actors are doing in addressing these complex problems
- Engage communities in the entire process
- Build on local capacity
- Empower youth by giving them a concrete role to play
- Use participatory trainings
- Grants should not be seen as sustainable and we must understand how they distort the market
- We must ensure the needs of female youth
- Integrate ex-combatants with non-combatant youth
- Monitoring and evaluation specifics for conflict affected communities should be further developed

PATHWAYS PROJECT, MAKING SENSE & ARC IN GUINEA:

- This project focused on three regions of Guinea, those most hit by refugees from neighboring Sierra Leone, Liberia and Cote d'Ivoire.
- These regions were also those the most concentrated with the 15-25 age group.
- A thorough assessment was conducted, finding that 56% had never received formal education.
- The training hence focused on experiential learning using non-literacy methods tailoring to the target population.
- Peer to peer capacity building proved to be the most useful for this youth and demand driven approach

Youth & livelihoods: the International Rescue Committee

As the Technical Advisor for Youth and Livelihoods, Lili provides intensified support to a range of IRC programs - particularly those that try to support young people with vocational training, business development skills and strategies for economic sustainability, but also those working on engaging and involving youth through enhanced opportunities for participation, providing leadership development and engaging youth as active agents of change within their communities as community mobilizers, peer educators, and members of youth councils.

BACKGROUND ON THE IRC AND ITS WORK:

- Though the IRC has been working on youth issues for a long time the concept of youth and livelihoods is rather recent
- The IRC uses an assets based approach within its youth and livelihoods programs

- Education, Child Protection and Youth & livelihoods are three intersecting sectors at the IRC rather than distinct isolated programs, creating a synergy for success
- The definition of the term “youth” is highly contested and while the IRC isn’t against the 15-24 definition, it prefers a non exclusive definition in which a youth is someone who has left behind childhood but has not yet met adult responsibilities
 - The World Bank in its Development Report of 2006 focusing on youth has mentioned scientific research which argues that the brain does not complete its formation until the age of 25
 - Mention of Paul Collier’s book: the Bottom Billion
- Important to understand youth marginalization and the potential violence this can lead to all while understanding the tremendous peace potential youth also have access to resources, through livelihoods is key to the prevention of conflicts

LIVELIHOODS:

- The IRC’s definition of “livelihood” is in concurrence with DFID and USAID in which it “comprises the capabilities, assets and activities required as a means of living”.
- These assets can be divided into six categories: social, civic/political, human, financial, natural and physical. These assets can be used to reduce the shocks.
- The IRC focuses primarily on the social, civic/political and human assets hoping for a multiplier effect, as youth usually lack one of these key assets.
- The goal of the IRC is to “build asset bridges” in which youth can be at the center of the state, civil society and the market.
- The IRC focuses on skills training, particularly on transferable life skills, and civic rights training, as these tend to boost the psychosocial aspect.

WHERE THE IRC HAS CARRIED OUT SUCH PROJECTS:

- The IRC with the USDOL has promoted safe and productive work in Liberia and Sierra Leone
- The IRC with DFID have trained Burmese refugees in Thailand in civic engagement
- In Pakistan the IRC has worked with Afghan refugees in socioeconomic (re) integration, training of transferable skills.

KEY LESSONS LEARNED:

- Need for longer programs and monitoring to really determine the benefits from such programs
- Necessity of understanding the unintended consequences
- Move away from targeting of one group to the demise of other youth groups; need for a more comprehensive approach
- Supply and demand dynamics

DISCUSSION:

Q: what should come first education or Livelihoods in a post conflict setting?

A: Ideally both would be imbedded, such as Liberia and Sierra Leone are trying to do.

But this takes a great deal of time and remains an ideal scenario. In the non-formal setting, there are examples of school-based enterprises, which aim at reconciling the two.

A: The question is how can we make livelihoods the skeleton with both youth and teachers, because without the teachers support, there are little chances to success

A: The SEEP guideline framework, which will be launched by October of next year, is trying to fit the pieces together between micro financing and other aspects of livelihoods. These would be an addendum to the SPHERE Guidelines

A: The imperative is to give attention to the economic context

A: Which can be done through the Value Chain Analysis, which looks at how households and markets react to conflict.

A: the challenge has been around the sensitiveness and how not to distort.

Q: Are there any good sources to better understand this concept of Value Chains?

A: www.microlinks.org

Q: What is the start point for livelihoods projects?

A: The start point is at the assets such as the human, social and civic/political, which are already available despite conflict. There is a need to build off of these and pay more attention at what happens at the household level and how to support them with viable alternatives and then focus on the macro level to create supply.

A: Education is much more of a rights based approach, but education and livelihoods have to be done in concert; making linkages is important to make education valuable

Q: Are there any example of Private –Public- Partnerships?

A: the World Cocoa Foundation has focused on PPP's in the agricultural industry; Chevron in Nigeria has also tried PPP's but it seems to be more difficult at the multi-national level.

A: There have been recent attempts in Liberia with Firestone and then there are the questions of illicit trade. It is difficult at the multi-national level rather than at the local level with local businesses where the successes seem to be greater.

A: CHF has been successful in Tajikistan, in bringing together youth, local municipalities and local businesses, followed with mentorship programs and the teaching of skills to youth that were needed for the local businesses.

Q: Do these livelihood projects deal with the psychosocial aspects of youth coming out of conflict?

A: the International Journal specifically addresses this in the case of Nepal and F (Franchise) Skills.

A: There is a sense of linking the heart, head and hand together, in terms of the applicability of livelihoods linking up with the greater context and the psychosocial factors involved.

A: There is a need to also address the government's specific role in response to youth livelihoods.

PROGRAM SHARING:

- USDOL published Secretary's findings on the worst form of child labour in the countries that were funded by the United States.
- AU's PBI and SFCG are putting together indicators for youth program success. They will be hosting roundtable workshops in the next few months.
- USAID / DCOF Eco-strengthening for vulnerable children program to start for a duration of 5 years
- USAID report "Highly Vulnerable Children" available
- Creative Associates are to identify lessons learned in the A & E Region producing a Toolkit.
- CHF International Development Matters Journal
- NDI conducting an article due out in December or January on three case studies of youth and politics