

USAID YouthPower2 Symposium (November 9-10, 2021)

SESSION NOTES

Building Skills

for PYD

Programming

Track 4: Youth

Engagement

with System

Actors

Wednesday, November 10, 2021 – DAY TWO

11:00 – 11:55 AM

Breakout Session

Session Participants

Moderator:

Kristin Brady, Director Education Quality, FHI 360

Presenters:

Yassine Helali, President, Community Resilience Committee, President Local Youth Council, leader of ARTS

Clare A. Ignatowski, Senior Advisor for Youth and Systems Thinking, Creative Associates International

Sophy Okotta, VP, National Youth Bunge Association and President of the Nairobi County Bunge Forum

Rosemary Wanjala, Program Management Specialist (Youth), USAID/KEA

Slim Yaich, PYD Technical Advisor, FHI 360 Ma3an Project, Tunisia, FHI 360

Session Overview

This session will promote youth engagement with system actors and learn from two examples and two young leaders. The session will explore the successes, challenges, and lessons learned from programs in Tunisia and Kenya. The Kenya panel will review how USAID's strategies to promote youth engagement with system actors have evolved. Beginning in 2011 under the Yes Youth Can program, USAID supported developing village-level youth-led associations known as Bunges to a robust network of youth associations. Today, more than 1 million youth participate in Bunges that exist in 34 of 47 counties. Bunges engage with government actors on a broad range of issues, including education, youth employment, peacebuilding, voter education, financial services, entrepreneurship, and access to youth-friendly economic and social services have been effective advocates and partners in community development.

The Tunisia panel will review community-level activities in USAID's Ma3an project to identify and address the rise of violent extremism. The project

Through its Whole System in the Room methodology, Ma3an also provided the space for youth - as key stakeholders - to engage with other system actors in structured discussions and action planning to develop collaborative solutions to the priority issue. They have identified and trained Tunisian youth to map their community to understand better factors that influence youth vulnerability to violent extremism and prioritize a key issue for community action. Youth can also participate in Community Resilience Committees, which bring together key community stakeholders who offer resources and support to implement the action plan. Through this process, youth have gained skills and built relationships with key actors to continue to constructively engage in their communities, such as through Local Youth Councils that coordinate actions to address the rise of violent extremism.

The panel will also include a presenter from the Youth Systems Collaborative who will briefly share its Youth Systems framework and pull themes and lessons learned from the Kenya and Tunisia cases.

Proposed Learning

Attendees understand the conditions that have facilitated youth engagement with system actors. They also identify strategies that have enabled youth to engage directly with government actors and service providers and learn about the Youth Systems Framework.

Session Notes

Main Topic: The session focused on hearing from different examples of youth participating in and influencing policies and government systems and decision-making.

Sophy - National Youth Bunge Association (NYBA)

Youth lack the platform and resources to take action on important issues. After *Yes Youth Can*, the youth now see themselves as more than a beneficiary. Beyond capacity building and pieces of training, youth were “at the table” in decision making and co-creation of projects with government and USAID projects. Organizing at the village level allowed non-traditional leaders to emerge- youth elected their leaders.

USAID/KEA Youth Assets & Networks

Youth Bunges – NYBA, 34 County Youth Bunges, 68 board members, 1 million members - 23,000 villages

Youth Bunge SACCOs – 30 SACCOs, 60,000+ members, \$3M in revolving funds

YALI Alumni & Chapters – 47 YALI RLC County Alumni Chapters, 4,100+ members, MWF Alumni

There is “power in numbers”- allows them to mobilize quickly. NYBA sat at the table with the county govt-- based on a devolved system

Examples of some of the work they did:

- Supported Tusome early grade reading program-- 23 counties enabled them to develop more partnerships with the Min of Ed
- ID card campaigns

USAID Strategies:

Desire to avert election-related violence

Youth demanding a seat at the table

Building a national youth network

Youth leadership development/YALI

Identify and support the most vulnerable youth, especially vulnerable adolescent girls and their families

Policy framework, CDCS, RDCCS

Cross sector programming

Implementing partner strategies aligned

USAID/KEA technical expertise

Clare (Youth Systems Collaborative)

The Youth systems Collaborative has developed a framework for how to work toward youth development systems change.

The Youth Systems Framework

The Framework is based on 40 years of community change experience in the domestic U.S. and international work. The Framework helps us visualize a complex situation by showing us the parts and how they relate. It gives us a standard mental model to collaborate even when work in different sectors, countries, or contexts are quite different.

3 Levels:

- Domains: space where systems change plays out
- Stakeholder collaboration: the heart of the matter, the relationships among systems actors
- Enablers: actions we take to understand & nudge the system to change

Slim

Ma3an Project – The program goals are to increase youth participation in civic and political life, address youth grievances, and prevent radicalization in Tunisian communities vulnerable to violent extremism. There were two objectives. Objective 1: Youth are equipped with skills and engaged in civic actions with local actors to address their communities' needs, and Objective 2: Tunisian capabilities to prevent and counter violent extremism are enhanced.

Ma3an's Community-Driven PYD-P/CVE Model:

- YouthMapping
- Collaborative Stakeholder Action Planning (CSAP)
- subgrants to local CSOs to fund activities/plans from CSAPs
- also did a social network analysis

Yassin: one of the youth mappers

Yassin- founded “Art Play” to lead other youth with backgrounds in art and dance. They grew to 150 members to launch street art shows in the community and continued to be underground artists. When Ma'an came to the community - did the CYM training- was still reluctant to meet with community actors because it was used to them being controlling'; so only youth were assessed. But during the CSAP, I discovered that I had an equal voice and freedom to speak and discuss with many actors. We felt fully respected and have found more opportunities to contribute to my community and have attended meetings.

Takeaways for USAID:

Training and capacity building is important, but beyond that, youth need a room “at the table” to be involved in co-creation and decision-making. Adult stakeholders need orientation and role models to help them see how they should interact with youth and be more open and receptive to youth power-sharing. The NYC and Tunisia models demonstrate ways to do this in varied contexts. Youth may be reluctant to participate in activities because they don't trust adults based on how they have been treated or perceived in the past.

Takeaways for Donors, Partners, and Implementers:

The Youth Systems Collaborative Framework can be a valuable tool to show the considerations and components of supporting a systems approach in youth development programming. Develop politically neutral tools to avoid politicization of networks

Resources

[Building Youth Infrastructure: Early Lessons from the Youth Systems Collaborative](#)