

A Preliminary Report on Youth-Focused Programming
in Zones of Political Conflict

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Introduction

The Center for the Study of Youth and Political Violence has been studying conflict-affected adolescents since August 2005. One area of interest to the center is researching the extent to which youth themselves are directly involved – as designers or implementers – in programs for youth directly or indirectly affected by political conflict. The research discussed in this document represents a preliminary look into this issue.

There is no consensus on the ages that define the period of “youth” or “adolescence.” For example, the UN World Youth Report 2005 refers only to individuals between the ages of 15 and 24 as “youth” or “young people” . Alternatively, the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (Convention on the Rights of the Child, 1989) defines childhood to extend to age 18. Otherwise, some researchers extend the definition of “youth” to include children as young as 8 years old (e.g., Daiute et al., 2006; see Barber, 2008 for a discussion of this variability in conceptualizing children, adolescents, and youth). To maintain this project’s range in studying samples of youth programming across the world, “youth” functionally refers to any person, regardless of age, receiving assistance through any program considering itself youth-focused. Essentially, therefore, “youth” as used here, is a term that reflects the socio-cultural definitions that vary across the globe.

This report describes the availability and nature of youth programming. It also explains how programming conceptualizes youth in the framework of conflict. Further, the summary provided in the report presents real-life examples that illustrate challenges, failures and successes of youth programming. Finally, the report provides a set of general conclusions and several recommendations for continued study and possible application of information.

Purpose of the Study

The preliminary project that is reported here was conducted between May 16, 2007 and October 01, 2007. Its central purpose was to discover how much information on youth programming is available or known, and to synthesize that information into a document that efficiently summarizes that body of knowledge for the Center’s website. The various contexts of violence that have given rise to the need for conflict-youth programming were not analyzed. Because there appears to have been no previous attempt to quantify the number or types of youth programming in conflict zones, and because most accounts of programming do not present empirical evaluations of their efforts, this report can offer no quantitative findings.

General Orientation to Youth Programming

According to the United Nations Development Program Bureau for Crisis Prevention and Recovery, violent conflict affects societies, but it is the youth in those societies who are most impacted by the collapse of stability and, too, the most likely to become recruited into the fighting forces in these conflicts. Further, the UN High-level Panel on Threats, Challenges and Change refers to youth as potential threats to security and that continued

exacerbation of conflict scenarios will undoubtedly lead to violence involving and even initiated by youth. In short, exposure to violent conflict adversely affects youth. Further still, violent conflict brings about rapid alterations in established social norms and political structures. These facts have resulted in a cause for concern.

Recently, the international community has given more attention to youth who have been directly and/or indirectly involved in violent conflict. Most often this attention takes the form of one of three themes (economics, rights, psycho-social) and one of three approaches (prevention, intervention, recovery) to conflict (see Conclusion). “Youth,” “young people,” and “adolescents”—whichever term used—on the whole have been singled out as a group to be targeted by specific programming efforts. Despite this attention, there appears to be insufficient evidence as to the effectiveness of youth-focused programming. Part of the reasons for this might be that differing contexts of violent conflict might require relatively conflict-specific programming. The following information describes these variations.

Method

The research for this report was conducted primarily via electronic searches using keywords such as: “youth programs,” “post-conflict development,” “conflict-youth,” etc. Most of the information came from youth programming websites. Using information from these sources, direct contact was attempted and achieved with many current youth program directors, humanitarian and youth aid specialists, and others previously but not currently affiliated with youth programming. Repeated contact was made with 13 of these individuals. Two interviews were conducted. Another four individuals (all directors of youth-focused programs) agreed to establish an on-going communication and were asked a common set of questions: (1) By what method are youth selected to participate in programs? (2) To what extent are youth involved in developing the programs in which they participate? (3) How and to what extent is the effectiveness of youth programming determined and monitored? (4) What is the scope of youth programming in terms of problematic areas and successful practice?

While each contact was interested in providing information, the openness and candor with which that information was provided varied greatly. Some contacts provided entire reports of information that went beyond the scope of the initial questions. Other contacts simply provided short, simple and direct answers to the specific questions. It is unclear why contacts varied in their readiness to provide information other than what appeared to be uncertainty as to the reasons for the requests. Thus, for example, often contacts asked for what purpose the questions were being asked and what was to be done with the information they were providing. Contacts were informed that the purpose was to simply increase the body of knowledge that the Center has about youth programming. In cases where contacts asked about publication, they were informed that they would be notified if their information would be published.

(A full listing of agencies contacted or referenced in the report can be found in Appendix A.)

Limitations of the Study

As with any study, this particular one had its limitations. First, given the apparent hesitancy on the part of some contacts to provide information, it is unclear as to how objective (i.e., self-critical) the information they provided was. Second, information searches were limited to English language sources. Several of the youth programs and some entire programming agencies were found to have detailed information available only in the host language. Further, communication difficulties between the English-speaking research and some non-native English speaking contacts may have contributed to a lack or misunderstanding of information. Third, electronic searching is never adequate in identifying all relevant information. One can assume, therefore, that there are youth programs that were not identified in this preliminary research. Fourth, many youth programs that are no longer operational have also discontinued their web services and electronic mailing addresses.

Definition of Terms Used in the Report

Administrator	Person who may serve as the executive decision maker in a youth program
Adolescent	A term used interchangeably with “youth”
Beneficiary	Person who benefits from a youth program
Contact	Person who provided written feedback to Center inquires
Coordinator	Person who helps implement and plan programming; sometimes a synonym for “administrator”
Evaluator	Person who performs an evaluation on a program to gauge its effectiveness
Partner	Person, usually a native of the region/country, who advises youth programmers
Stakeholder	Person or organization contributing resources (monetary, personnel, etc.) to a youth program
Youth	A conflict-affected person whom a youth program can assist

Acronyms Used in the Report

BiH	Bosnia and Herzegovina
Center	Center for the Study of Youth and Political Violence
CIEP	Community Initiatives Empowerment Program

GTZ	German Technical Cooperation
IYP	Integrated Youth Program
MDG	Millennium Development Goal
NGO	Non-governmental organization
RTP	Right to Play
SL	Sierra Leone
UN	United Nations
UNDP	United Nations Development Program
USAID	United States Agency for International Development
USIP	United States Institute for Peace
YOAC	Youth Action Nepal
YPCPP	Youth Post-Conflict Participation Project
YFP	Youth for Peace

Findings

Regional Distribution of Youth Programs

The electronic searches that were conducted for this report revealed that some degree of programming relevant to conflict-youth was available from numerous countries or regions of the world. A listing follows, with an asterisk attached to those countries whose programs are discussed in this report.

Africa: Mozambique, Sierra Leone*, Sudan, Uganda*

Asia : Armenia*, Burma, Cambodia*, Georgia, Nepal*, New Guinea

The Balkans: Albania, Bosnia*, Kosovo*, Macedonia, Serbia

The Middle East: Israel*, Lebanon, Palestine*

Russia*

South America: Colombia

Specific Youth Programs

The main data compiled for this report consists of details on eight specific programs that involve youth. Initially, several dozen programs were located that seemed to be solely youth-focused; later, however, it was discovered that many were not specifically youth-focused but were in reality larger humanitarian development projects having youth components. By and large, those youth components dealt mostly with economics. Nevertheless, some information from these youth components was helpful. (See Appendix B for examples of such programs.)

Those programs that appeared to be exclusively or primarily youth-focused have been organized into two categories according to the amount of detail that was provided about them. The first category consists of four programs for which the most information was given. It is from these overviews that the bulk of the information attained through this research period is derived. The second category is made up of four further programs for which some information was provided. In some cases like these, after initial and/or repeated contact with someone involved in a program, contact was discontinued or lost. Some form or project description is given, but there is little conclusive information.

The information for all of these programs was organized into six sections (when available):

- 1) Name of Program
- 2) Region
- 3) Administering Organization
- 4) Dates of Operation
- 5) Context of the Conflict
- 6) Program Report

Most Informative Youth Programs

Program 1

- 1) Name of Program: Sharek Youth Forum
- 2) Region: Palestine
- 3) Administering Organization: Independent NGO
- 4) Dates of Operation: Ongoing, since 1996
- 5) Context of the Conflict:

According to the program documentation, Sharek Youth Forum includes the following description of the conflict's effects on youth in the area: "A review of the socio-economic and political situation in the Palestinian territories points to the hard conditions under which the Palestinian people are living. War, stagnation of the peace process, closure of territories, economic hardship, decline in household income, expansion of settlement activities and land confiscation are driving up stress among the people.... Youth under the age of 29 represent about three-quarters of the population."

The Sharek background report goes on to say the violence-ridden environment has negatively affected youth across the board. Their livelihoods are inhibited physically, socially, educationally, etc; indeed, in every aspect of life. The organization asserts that youth are usually the ones most affected by the cycles of violence that have continually plagued the region.

One person involved in the Sharek program called youth in Palestine the "lost generation."

6) Program Report:

History of the Program:

According to the program documentation, the United Nations Development Program launched the Sharek* Youth Forum project as an initiative under the Program of Assistance to the Palestinian People (PAPP). The program began operation as a youth-focused program in 1996 under the support of two organizations: the UNDP and the Swiss Development Cooperation (SDC). The Japanese government also lent its support. From its initiation, Sharek aimed to make itself a non-governmental organization operating independently of other organizations or governments. In mid-2004, Sharek became an independent youth-focused non-governmental organization. However, the UNDP at times still acts as an advisor to the program.

Administrative Structure of the Program:

According to the program documentation, the structure of Sharek is much like a forum, which is directed by program youth. These youth are supervised by the General Assembly and the Executive Committee. The General Assembly is responsible for identifying needs in order to ascertain appropriate program development to meet those needs. The Executive Committee (whose members are elected by the General Assembly), directs the program's fieldwork. This three part system attempt to act as the "cement" to the democratic nature the program assumes to convey without jeopardizing the independence of projects and activities.

Mission and Objective(s) of the Program:

According to the program documentation, Sharek's is "to contribute to the development of youth through designing and implementing creative youth initiatives, programs and projects and supporting youth by giving them the opportunity to determine their needs and have their voices heard."

According to the program documentation Sharek's objectives are to: 1) increase the ability of youth to identify, plan and ultimately implement their own development initiatives and 2) to ensure long-term sustainability of youth organizations for addressing community needs. The program approaches these two objectives by encouraging youth to "break the status quo by thinking critically about how they together can tackle their problems to advocate youth interests and make stronger their communities."

According to the program documentation, Sharek maintains that the results of Objective 1 should include: 1) the establishment of local youth groups for both men and women 2) the identification of collective needs 3) the attainment of information to empower youth to put into practice their ideas 4) youth-evaluated programming; while the results of Objective 2 should include: 1) stronger links between the community-at-large and youth groups 2) transparency for stakeholders to ensure prolonged support 3) an elevated level

of managerial capacity in order to implement programs more efficiently and with more participation.

Scope of the Program:

The Sharek Program operates in Palestine via more than 20 program centers scattered throughout the West Bank and Gaza Strip. Sharek has core staff members in major city centers, including Nablus and Hebron, as well as in Ramallah, the program's headquarters. While cooperating with municipalities, local councils, private sector businesses, etc., the program has specifically targeted areas of Palestine with particularly weak infrastructure and areas of weak service delivery. These targeted areas are within both the Gaza Strip (Jabalia Refugee Camp, Khan Younis Refugee Camp, Rafah Refugee Camp, the Middle Camps, and Gaza City) and the West Bank (Hebron and Jenin cities).

According to Sharek documentation, the program has been designed mostly for youth between the ages of 14 and 20. Male as well as female youth participate in the Sharek program, but females occasionally find the degree to which they can participate restricted by Palestinian gender culture. Nonetheless, Sharek asserts that it gives equal opportunity of participation to individuals of either gender and that it advocates for greater participation for females by making itself transparent to local communities. Sharek program documentation notes that culture is sometimes a brick wall to most changes in gender perceptions. As a result, the program is sometimes regarded as male-oriented.

Evaluation and Review Methods of the Program:

According to the program documentation, Sharek's methods of evaluation (sometimes called "monitoring") assess a program project's effects on its target group in order to determine whether the project beneficiaries indeed benefited from the project's implementation. That is, "evaluations are carried out on a continuous basis in all project cycles in an effort to ascertain whether the project was carried out at acceptable standards and to the satisfaction of those involved, including the individuals who designed and/or implemented the project, the project's direct beneficiaries, and the project's effect on the community in general. Sharek sees this high level of evaluation as a method for its continued improvement in its assistance to youth. Further, as a monitoring mechanism, regular meetings are held between project teams, volunteers, program beneficiaries, and others involved in the project cycle." According to the program's current director, the evaluations of the program's former projects have revealed that Sharek's method of observance of projects' operations has led to "highly cost-effective, efficient, and sustainable implementation."

More specifically, Sharek's evaluation also inquires as to why youth initially joined this program instead of other programs. According to one youth, "In other youth organizations, planning of activities is carried out by the administration. Our role is to implement those plans only. In Sharek, we think of the activities, we plan them, we implement them with full responsibility."

Although Sharek does evaluation on a continuous basis from project to project, it also produces an annual report that summarizes the program's projects for that year. The latest program report reviewed was Sharek Program Report 2003-2004. Sharek's accounts are also audited annually.

Examples of Program Projects:

One of Sharek's founding projects was the establishment of "core groups" of youth (also termed "regional youth groups") who are extremely committed to the program and have been involved since they joined Sharek. These groups facilitate much of the programming Sharek sponsors. Below is a generalized list that illustrates the assortment of projects designed and implemented by these core groups.

- 1) Art projects
- 2) Creation of a computer center
- 3) Construction of public playgrounds
- 4) Information center
- 5) Slow learners project
- 6) Theater projects
- 7) Traffic and road safety campaign
- 8) Tree plantation
- 9) Volunteerism
- 10) Youth meeting center

General Commentary about the Program:

Sharek's participants consider the program to be a pioneer in the region for youth-focused programming, primarily because youth participation is highly involved. Youth who join the program are expected to participate in programs as much and as often as is possible, and Sharek enforces the expectation that youth will be active rather than passive participants.

According to the program documentation, at its inception, Sharek molded itself into an inspirational safe haven for youth by helping them to identify areas of academic and leisure interest. Youth tend to see the program as a social atmosphere instead of a development atmosphere, even though development is often a direct accomplishment of the programming. For now, it seems that strictly psycho-social programming works for the youth involved. That is to say that Sharek focuses more on the ideology of youth rather than on their practicality as citizens. The program is more concerned with youth expression and community-building than with youth economics, and it is undetermined at this time if Sharek's participants believe that meeting social needs leads to improved academics and eventually economic gains in life.

Another issue to note is one that concerns the "core groups," Sharek's evaluations have noted that allowing new members to participate in these elite circles is unofficially

discouraged. Concerns for adding new members to these groups stems from a fear that some individuals may not understand Sharek and subsequently change its direction and philosophy in potentially negative directions. Nevertheless, the notion that youth can be a powerfully unified group who can form their own meetings and committees, etc.—just like a government would—has contributed to the overall idea that Palestinian youth working together can undertake youth-focused development projects. Sharek documentation has noted that groups of youth working together foster the sense of democratic power that Sharek claims it strives to employ as a tool to promote youth development. Sharek youth have realized combined efforts are sustainable and practical.

With increasing community knowledge that Sharek exists, Sharek documentation states the program has become more effective for its mission and objectives. The program notes that its success is in part attributed to its goals to involve the community as much as possible in various projects, even though community antagonism is considered by Sharek youth to be the second largest obstacle to effective programming.

* “Sharek” means “participation” in Hebrew.

Program 2

- 1) Name of Program: Youth for Peace
- 2) Region: Cambodia
- 3) Administering Organization: Independent NGO
- 4) Dates of Operation: Ongoing, since 1999
- 5) Context of the Conflict:

The Khmer Rouge Regime (or the Democratic Kampuchea, DK) headed by guerrilla commander Pol Pot was a Communist movement that swept through Cambodia between 1975 and 1979. Under Pol Pot’s four-year rule, some 1.7 million (one-fifth of the country’s population) people were killed through systematic murder and deprivation. Although the regime’s official rule ended in 1979 due to a Vietnamese invasion, supporters of Khmer Rouge fled to the Thai-Cambodian border, where they stabilized with aid from Thailand and China, governments opposing Vietnamese influence in Cambodia. From their border-retreat, guerrilla fighters waged a long guerrilla war to retake their lost power from the Vietnamese who had put DK defectors into governing power. Throughout the 1980s, DK retained international recognition, even in the United Nations. Vietnam withdrew in 1989, but the guerrilla fighting continued until 1991 when the country’s warring factions signed a peace treaty. Khmer Rouge later repudiated the treaty, and in 1993 international governments ceased to recognize DK as Cambodia’s legal government. Most sources of international aid were discontinued. Pol Pot died in April 1998 and in May of that same year the newly formed National Solidarity Party (DK’s new name) announced it would bring to tribunal its own former leaders. In 2007, a UN-backed tribunal brought the first indictment—for crimes against humanity—against a DK leader since the conflict’s end in 1979.

While most of the youth who endured the fighting between the years 1975-1979 are now adults 30 years of age or older, the result of years of shockwave violence by guerrilla

fighting has continued to affect the population, particularly youth who see the effects violence has on their communities and ultimately themselves. Some of these youth believe that the homicide of former DK soldiers is the sole means of reconciliation. Cambodia, one of the poorest areas in Southeast Asia, continues to struggle from the decades-old civil war and the genocide that destroyed public institutions, local culture, and traditional family lifestyles; that is, societal structure is still in the process of stabilizing.

The country continues to battle conflict's shockwaves that ensue even though there is no official armed conflict at this time. Nevertheless, instances of violence among youth in relation to DK spring forward from time to time, and it seems well understood by many in Cambodia that preventing further violence--especially where it concerns youth who have joined the ranks of violent political gangs--is a priority.

The history of genocide there has permeated into the thoughts of the first generation of youth since the DK period. The history of the DK is perhaps the greatest interest to Cambodian youth, as it angers, frightens, saddens and occasionally threatens them. There is a desire among them to reconcile their feelings about the past, calm the current aggression, and prevent future instances of violence. (Encarta, <http://encarta.msn.com/>)

6) Detailed Program Report:

History of the Program:

According to the program documentation, Youth for Peace (YFP) began operation as a youth-focused program in 1999. The program was designed by several Cambodian university students who were concerned about Cambodian youth who were subjected to the country's vulnerable economic, political and social situations. The founding staff conducted a survey of the situation of youth in the city of Phnom Penh. They contacted a number of individuals in the civil services, including school officials and teachers and youth workers and compiled information for identified youth needs. In response to those needs, the founding staff designed, all with their own money, a peace-building program with a curriculum for youth workshops on a variety of issues. YFP has since grown much larger and was registered as an official organization with the Ministry of Interior in 2001.

Mission and Objective(s) of the Program:

According to the program documentation, the mission of the program is to "bring about a society of peace and social justice in Cambodia, through the development of good role models and active citizenship of youth who understand and practice a culture of peace."

According to the program documentation, the objectives of the program are to: 1) Develop critical thinking and qualified leadership among youth 2) Encourage and empower youth to become actors in their communities. 3) Provide mental and technical support to youth and youth groups.

Scope of the Program:

According to the program documentation, Youth for Peace programming has operated across the country and has so far reached over 18,000 youth between the years 2000 and 2005. Further, as a result of YFP influences, youth have themselves initiated youth-organized events that have reached approximately 6,500 youth. Up to the present, the number of participants increases yearly.

Administrative Structure of the Program:

According to the program documentation, the program administration is currently composed of a staff (21 members) and a board (3 members). The staff are divided up into five departments: 1) general staff 2) peace education 3) leadership 4) youth injustice and reconciliation 5) administration and finance.

Evaluation and Review of the Program:

During evaluation, Youth for Peace takes a different approach with evaluators by incorporating parental perspectives as a means of gauging the program's effectiveness. Evaluations are used to determine the changes parents have noted in their children's attitudes and behavior. Typically for YFP, parents note positive or no change in attitude or behavior. Never has YFP recorded a parent claiming negative changes as a result of a child's participation in YFP programming.

YFP has noted its own success in its tailored programming. Trial and error have shown that an overall programming agenda, even within a single country (here, Cambodia), is ineffective at reaching out to specific needs.

YFP's self-evaluations have noted that long- vs. short-termed programming success directly correlates with the program's parental evaluations. Parents tend to notice only positive changes in their child's behavior or attitude when they have been involved in YFP events more than six months. Usually, no change in child behavior or attitude is reported for durations less than six months. Program evaluations have shown that very positive changes in behavior and attitude are noted for durations lasting up to two years or more.

Examples of Program Projects:

According to the program documentation:

Cross-cultural relationships facilitate broader understanding of world affairs, recognition of underlying similarities and differences, and more importantly overcoming misperceptions/stereotypes of the "other". Youth for Peace implements the Cyber Bridges Project in a partnership with Catholic Relief Services (CRS), and the project aims to promote cultural understanding and global leadership among youth across borders via information technology. Youth share information regarding personal and

social issues, explore solidarity, build intercultural relationships, and promote global community leadership via Internet electronic mail exchange.

Outreach Workshops Project enables youth to develop a plan of action for introducing YFP to their friends and others in the community. YFP reports that, statistically, 80% of students begin their experience at YFP because they were invited by a friend. In these three-hour workshops, youth share their own stories and learn strategies to spread the peace-building messages to others. The workshops deepen students' understanding of the value, mission and philosophy of YFP.

Reflection Trips Project help students reflect on the causes of and responses to conflicts present in everyday life. These one-day trips include practicing meditative reflection on problems and conflicts, discussion of sources of stress for youth, and student role-plays of problems young people face daily. Youth are encouraged to reduce feelings of materialism, selfishness, and social pressure and to build a sense of inner peace. This event allows students to find practical ways to calm their feelings and solve feelings of inner conflict. The common experience of reflection also provides a basis for solidarity among students.

Study Tours Project gives youth the opportunity to gain first-hand experience with societal problems and efforts to solve them. Youth will visit places where groups are working to combat societal problems, in order to see the power of social action and formulate ideas for their own potential roles to build a better society. The one-day study tour may include a visit to an orphanage, an urban development project, a community development project, or an NGO working with disadvantaged youth.

General Commentary about the Program:

Program documentation notes that the primary focus is on youth who have direct perceptions of rather than direct experiences with the Khmer Rouge regime. Youth for Peace works often but not always through schools and established community centers to assist youth in spiritual¹ development, and it encourages them to be active in building a culture of peace for themselves and their communities via one-day and multiple-day activities and workshops. YFP has noted that its one-day programming events seem to have less impact on youth than its multiple-day programming events. Since YFP sponsors more continual (repeated) than continuous (constant) programming, it follows that the program has noticed children experience the greatest personal gains when they participate longer. Hence, YFP's program success can be directly attributed to the frequency and duration of time spent with the program.

Youth for Peace deals primarily on the community level. YFP asserts that community empowerment effectuates youth empowerment; communities are a channel through which youth can be reached.

¹ In Cambodia, spirituality refers to inner sense of peace, morality, solidarity with others, and personal character. It is not a reference to religion.

Program 3

- 1) Name of Program: Youth Action Nepal
- 2) Region: Nepal
- 3) Administering Organization: Independent NGO
- 4) Dates of Operation: Ongoing, since 2003
- 5) Context of the Conflict:

Violence in Nepal began with the democratic elections of 1991. A series of elections ensuing in the next five years shifted government power between opposing political groups, with several coalition governments forming and fragmenting in the same time period. Upset at the pace and direction of progress toward a constitutional monarchy, the Communist Party of Nepal (the Maoists) began, in 1996, a “people’s war” that was designed to overthrow the government and establish what the Maoists called a “people’s republic”. The “people’s war” has spurred political instability since 1996 because a series of governments headed by several ministers failed to control the rebellion. Incidents of violence were at first limited to remote mountainous regions of Nepal, but soon the violence began to spread, until it had reached the capital city by 2001. Eight members of the royal family were massacred in June of 2001. The untimely event led to more support for the Maoists, who subsequently intensified their rebellion. Numerous periods of peace would resume for months at a time, only to be ended by Maoist insurgencies. In 2006, massive protests against the government ensued, often resulting in the deaths of protestors. The Maoists are currently a part of a seven-party coalition to establish a new government and finally abolish the monarchy. The peace agreement of November 2006 saw the end of a decade-long conflict that brutally killed more than 13,000 people. The future of the government is still up in the air as politicians battle over monarchical or republican rule.

Further, the Maoist Youth League, sometimes called the Young Communist League, continues to harass society, and Maoist support groups (splinter groups of the Maoist’s earlier movement) often threaten, assault and/or detain anyone found in resistance. According to government officials, new violence-prone groups spring up every day, with as many as a dozen of these groups active at any given time. As a result, Nepalese youth in general are constantly criticized by the general populations.

Even more concerning are the eruptions of violence that spring from peaceful political protests. Frustration is high at the lack of peaceful change so political groups often become violent as a means of creating the changes passivity cannot. In the southern region of Terai, bordering India, conflict is at its worst, as citizens are often murdered and violent and large uprisings occur without warning. The centralization of power in the government during prior years has kept youth voices from being heard, thereby making the democratic notion of youth as important actors within the populace seemingly unattainable. (Encarta, <http://encarta.msn.com/>)

- 6) Program Report:

History of the Program:

According to the program documentation, Youth Action Nepal (YOAC) began operation as a youth-focused program in 2003. The program was engendered by several Nepalese university college students who were concerned about the Nepalese youth subjected to the country's vulnerable economic, political and social situations. At the time of YOAC's inception, there were numerous organizations—NGOs for instance—working with local communities on the whole to sponsor post-conflict development. YOAC was established to fill the gap in programming, and it became the country's first program to focus its efforts entirely on assistance to youth and their potential contribution to the community. In 2004, the program registered with the Nepalese government, and it has also become affiliated with the Nepalese Social Welfare Council (SWC).

Mission and Objectives of the Program

According to program documentation, the program's mission is to “create pro-human rights and a just society through active youth participation from the local to the national to the international level.”

According to program documentation, the program's objectives are to: 1) promote human rights and democratic values 2) promote a culture of non-violence 3) engage in community awareness and empowerment 4) promote participation in social and economic development 5) promote participation in cultural, economic, political life 6) enhance social activism 7) combat and eliminate discrimination and violence against females, Dalit, and ethnic minorities.

Scope of the Program:

The exact scope (geographic presence, etc.) of the program could not be ascertained.

Administrative Structure of the Program:

According to program documentation:

A General Assembly acts as the body which elects executive committee members every two years. The General Assembly has the authority to approve finances and to assure that an annual progress report is completed, and it also directs and writes policies for the organization's programming.

The Executive Committee has the authority to develop policies and programs under the guidance of the guidance of General Assembly. Executive Committee members hold meeting meetings every two months to discuss policies and programs. Executive committee members also nominate up to five members to sit on an advisory board.

The General Secretariat is lead by either the executive Chairperson or the person specified by the Executive Committee. The General Secretariat is responsible for day-to-

day operations, contacting members and volunteers, fundraising, building partnerships, networking with national and international organizations, implementing project activities, and managing and supervising members and volunteers.

The General Members (excluding volunteers and professional groups) delegate the members of the General Assembly.

Evaluation and Review of the Program:

YOAC has previously hosted outside external evaluations to accompany its internal evaluations of programming. Further, these external evaluations include discussions with program staff as well as analysis of programming at the project level.

Specific Examples of Program Projects:

YOAC on the national level:

According to program documentation, between the years 2003 and 2005, YOAC managed to organize youth consultations (i.e., getting youth input) for the National Youth Policy. These consultations were carried out in conflict-affected communities across Nepal, and the results were sent to the national government to represent youth opinion.

YOAC on the local level:

According to program documentation The type of youth programming typical of YOAC programming ranges from small-group workshops to large public debates to what YOAC calls “Street Dramas”. Often, these programming events are actually the combination of several Nepalese organizations participating laterally. These organizations often uphold the same general views on youth, so, by inviting them to work together, YOAC hopes it provides more opportunities for further and more efficient consolidated “action and interaction among young people.” YOAC is not the only organization offering programming for youth, so it views the collective gathering of multiple organizations as a necessary means of successfully advocating for the youth of Nepal.

An example of a youth workshop involves a small number of individuals gathering into a location where they will be led by topical experts to discuss important cultural, political, social and technological issues concerning youth. Discussions are intended to highlight the concerns about present-day issues, create awareness of those issues, and also inform participants about the issues. In essence, areas of need are identified, and YOAC in return for hosting the event learns can determine how to best use its programming.

Street dramas are events in which youth act (as in a play or skit) to raise awareness for issues that concern them. Sometimes these street dramas make cases for general issues that concern Nepal, such as children’s right to education, etc., and sometimes they make cases for specific issues relevant to local communities, etc. The benefits of street dramas parallel those of workshops.

Other informal events include research presentation, exhibition of youth work, poem recitation, and talent shows.

The larger of these youth events, which have on some occasions reached thousands of individuals, offer options for community involvement in youth issues.

General Commentary about the Program:

According to the program documentation, Youth Action Nepal approaches youth-based conflict-healing from top-down perspective: involve the nation in order to involve youth. That is, YOAC often appeals to the government as a method of attaining reform and creating changes that result in benefits to youth. YOAC asserts that creating youth participatory activities via cross-country programming (local and national) gives youth the opportunities to create change and that prolonged exposure to these events lessens the impact violence and bad behavior and/or attitude maintains on youth lifestyles. Overall, YOAC focuses on prolonged and widespread communication and physical presence (strong visibility of youth activism within communities) as a means of promoting social healing and belonging to achieve its mission.

YOAC recognizes that Nepalese youth in general do not enjoy complete input into the governance of their country. Youth development activities and decisions have been occasionally ignored, and their collective vision often unnoticed or neglected by the general society.

Further, although YOAC certainly allows youth to share their ideas in planning, it does acknowledge that more participation in planning is needed..

Program 4

- 1) Name of Program: Community Initiatives Empowerment Program
- 2) Region: Sierra Leone
- 3) Administering Organization: Independent NGO
- 4) Dates of Operation: Ongoing, since 2004
- 5) Context of the Conflict:

Violence in the country began when guerrilla fighters from the Liberian civil war moved into Sierra Leone. As the Sierra Leonean government fought to remove the guerrillas from the country, the Revolutionary United Front (a militant group) saw their moment to act and a brutal civil war ensued between them and the state military. Through a series of coups, government leaders were elected and expelled, with only a few months lapse in the violence between the years 1992 and 1999. The worst of the conflict occurred in 1998 and 1999 when rebels terrorized (mostly rural) communities all over the countryside. Most of the brutality (such as the removal of body parts, etc.) against citizens was intended to force the existing government, then headed by President Kabbah, to abdicate.

Disarmament began in late 1999 but was not declared a success until 2002, the year marking an official end to the fighting. (Encarta, <http://encarta.msn.com/>)

6) Program Report:

History of the Program:

According to program documentation, Community Initiatives Empowerment Program – Sierra Leone (CIEP-SL) is a Sierra Leonean non-governmental organization that began operation in 2004. CIEP-SL is registered with the Ministries of Youth and Sports, Development and Economic Planning, and it is partnered with the Ministry of Education, Science and Technology, the National Union of Sierra Leone Students, the National Commission for Social Action, the Sierra Leone Teachers Union and the Sierra Leone Association of Non-governmental Organizations.

Mission and Objectives of the Program:

According to program documentation the mission of the program is to: “promote democratic values, good governance, and political participation of youth through advocacy, training and social research for a secured future and democratic culture in Sierra Leone.” This mission is intended to accomplish the goal of creating a “community without discrimination in which young people can work together to fulfill their socio-political potentials.”

According to program documentation, the objectives of the program are to: 1) encourage youth to exercise their beliefs in fundamental human rights 2) encourage communities to work together 3) encourage cross-cultural understanding 4) encourage honesty, partnership and respect 5) encourage innovation through shared endeavors 6) encourage learning

Scope of the Program:

According to program documentation CIEP-SL maintains operations throughout the country, with program coordinators and volunteers in “all four regions—North, South, East and West”.

Administrative Structure of the Program:

According to program documentation, the administration of CIEP-SL is relatively few in number; the majority of its staff are volunteers (sixteen). The organization is managed by a Board of Advisors (seven members) and an Executive Staff (six members).

Evaluation and Review of the Program:

Numerical statistics, even upon request, for evaluations and/or review could not be attained for this report. However, according to the current program director, there are

established mechanisms for monitoring and evaluation. CIEP-SL documentation also states that the program maintains a database of beneficiaries for a period of up to two years after the completion of a program project. A project's effectiveness is measured against the views expressed by the beneficiaries. If those expressed views align with the project's intended outcomes, the project is then considered successful.

Specific Examples of Program Projects:

- 1) The program's director reports that CIEP-SL has facilitated exchange programs between students and other youth within different regions of Sierra Leone. The purpose was to experiment with partnership and participation among youth who have been involved to some degree in conflict. Further details on the project are unknown.
- 2) From March through June 2007, CIEP sponsored lobbying to change general attitudes about youth. The programming took place in provincial capitals via publicly viewed dramas, music and radio discussions. Youth were invited to provide their input on social issues in hopes their commentary would bring to light problems like marginalization, exploitation and abuse.
- 3) From October 2005 to March 2006, CIEP facilitated a program to empower young people to build sustainable communities. The focus was on secondary schools and political youth organizations in provincial capitals. The overall objective was to establish a sustainable learning platform from which organizations can improve collaboration amongst one another, thereby creating a greater culture for idea sharing and youth participation

General Commentary about the Program:

According to program documentation, CIEP-SL works largely on the socio-political spectrum of youth programming by dividing its programming efforts into four categories: 1) capacity building and organizational development 2) advocacy 3) social research and mobilization 4) partnership. Each of these program functions is designed to take CIEP-SL's participants to the grassroots level of social and political activism, in which youth are visible, especially during times of social (i.e., community change) and/or political (i.e., elections) movement.

The overall objective of capacity building and organization development is to build up the institutional capacity of political youth groups, student movements, and community-based organizations to meet determined goals. The aim is to provide training and skills that aid youth in becoming effective actors on a variety of issues within their communities while simultaneously assessing current community needs and then molding current CIEP-SL programming to meet those needs.

Advocacy is what CIEP-SL calls the process of working with "a range of decision-makers and stakeholders, including national and local government and policy-making bodies." For example, CIEP regularly communicates with the Social Welfare Department and the Department of Gender and Children's Affairs. Creating awareness about CIEP

programming entails community engagement, networking (including coalition- and alliance-building among organizations and groups) direct lobbying, and campaigning. CIEP-SL expects advocacy to strengthen youth ability to participate in society.

Social research on the context of violence in local communities and the subsequent mobilization of youth in those communities serves as the program's introduction to the reintegration process. Social research complements capacity building and organizational development in an attempt to plan programming based on assessed needs. It investigates youth problems and then provides tools for dealing with those problems on a socio-political level.

CIEP-SL documentation states that planning and implementation of programming includes four main steps:

- 1) Identification of key development and participation issues
- 2) Evaluation of organizational issues
- 3) Definition of the participation framework
- 4) Establishment of mechanisms for monitoring and evaluation

Ultimately, CIEP-SL does not view itself as an individually effective organization. It therefore maintains partnership with organizations in the region. In fact, CIEP emphasizes that collective work is at the heart of effective programming.

After a review of the provided literature about CIEP-SL, it appears that the program is less organized than Sharek, YAN and YOAC. However, it should be noted that CIEP-SL has also been in operation a shorter period of time.

Other Youth Programs

Program 1

- 1) Name of Program: Integrated Youth Program
- 2) Region: Bosnia and Herzegovina
- 3) Administering Organization: UNDP
- 4) Dates of Operation: Ongoing, since 1999
- 6) Program Report:

History of the Program:

The program began operation in 1999 as a result of the UN's MDGs.

Mission and Objectives of the Program

The mission of the program is to: "empower young people in BiH."

The objectives of the program are: 1) institution building 2) capacity building 3) promotion of youth entrepreneurship 4) creation of a youth volunteer center.

Scope of the Program:

Unknown

Administrative Structure of the Program:

Unknown

Evaluation and Review of the Program:

Unknown

Specific Examples of Program Projects:

Unknown

General Commentary about the Program:

According to program documentation:

Early stages of the program incorporated community integration into youth activities. However, perhaps seeing inadequate results, the program later turned its attention to more political activism designed to get the attention of the government, while working to get a footing for a consistent national youth policy. Essentially, the program sought to create a means of youth participation in politics at all levels of society in BiH.

Of interest to the ambiguous definition of youth, IYP did not define who constitutes a youth. It only asserts the program is available to “young” people.

Program 2

- 1) Name of Program: Youth Post-Conflict Participation Project
- 2) Region: UN Administered Province of Kosovo
- 3) Administering Organization: International Rescue Committee, UNDP
- 4) Dates of Operation: 2000 – 2001
- 6) Program Report:

History of the Program:

According to the program documentation, Youth Post-Conflict Participation Project began in 2000 when it was noted that more than 20,000 young people were involved in more than 275 participatory civil service organizations in the UN Administered Province of Kosovo. However, few of those organizations worked in partnership. YPCPP was

established to consolidate these fragmented civil service organizations into a larger more prioritized and cohesive program.

YPCPP intended to only establish a “network of youth-led Regional Working Groups and a Representative Youth Body”. At the program’s end in 2001, the government of BiH as well as local communities were supposed to assume administrative and support roles in order to continue the groundwork laid out by UNDP. One year later, without extra funds and cooperation or support, the UNDP pulled out.

Mission and Objectives of the Program

According to the program’s website, the objectives of the program were to: 1) mobilize youth to research, prioritize and initiate development projects at the regional level 2) gather representatives for a “Kosovo Youth Congress” in the spring of 2001 3) establish a youth body to advocate youth priorities.

Scope of the Program:

According to the program’s website, the project operated throughout Kosovo to directly affect 5,000 individuals and 20,000 individuals indirectly.

Evaluation and Review of the Program:

Unknown

Specific Examples of Program Projects:

Unknown

General Commentary about the Program:

According to program documentation, the program divided its projects into three main phases:

- 1) The mobilization of youth working groups to ascertain youth needs.
- 2) The organization of the “Kosovo Youth Congress”, which included invitations by stakeholders to minority as well as majority youth.
- 3) The formation of a Representative Youth Body, a follow-up to the “Congress”, designed to continue planning on youth projects.

Although the program focused most of its programming on a rights perspective, there were projects involving training sessions and service activities designed to actively address youth-determined non-rights-based needs.

YPCPP listed several direct outcomes of the one-year program:

- 1) Networking among communities
- 2) Networking between youth and government
- 3) Opportunities for youth participation in human rights and sustainability
- 4) Integration via peace-building

YPCPP also noted an indirect outcome of the one-year program:

- 1) A contribution to the general knowledge of the Kosovo Department of Youth.

Program 3

- 1) Name of Program: Children and Youth Development Program
- 2) Region: Sierra Leone
- 3) Administering Organization: Japan International Cooperation Agency
- 6) Program Report:

History of the Program:

Unknown

Mission and Objectives of the Program

Unknown

Scope of the Program:

According to program documentation, the program operated in the Kambia District of Sierra Leone.

Evaluation and Review of the Program:

Unknown

Examples of Program Projects:

Unknown

General Commentary about the Program:

According to the program documentation, the Children and Youth Development Project is curtailed toward educational empowerment as a means of social reintegration. The program is designed to assist former child soldiers by providing them with knowledge of and subsequent training in agriculture. Other program initiatives include the formation of youth groups as a means of solidarity building.

Much of the program information is available only in Japanese.

Program 4

- 1) Name of Program: Contrast Project
- 2) Region: Palestine
- 3) Administering Organization: Independent NGO
- 4) Dates of Operation: Ongoing, since 2006
- 6) Program Report:

History of the Program:

According to the program's website, Contrast Project was developed in 2006 by a doctoral candidate at American University's School of International Service, in coordination with the Wi'am Community Center and the Battir Community Center, both located in the West Bank. The Center for Peacebuilding International, an NGO based at American University, has agreed to host the Contrast Project until it becomes an independent non-profit organization.

Mission and Objectives of the Program:

According to the program documentation, the mission of the program is to "use photography as a tool of expression, empowerment, non-violent activism and advocacy."

According to the program documentation, the objectives of the program are to: 1) provide youth with technical and artistic skills 2) offer youth a therapeutic means of creative expression 3) empower youth 4) provide an alternative to violence 5) advocate the needs and rights of youth at all levels of society.

Scope of the Program:

Currently, the project's area of operation is limited to the West Bank region of Palestine during the summer season.

Administrative Structure of the Program:

Unknown

Evaluation and Review of the Program:

Unknown

Examples of Program Projects:

The program's projects are based on the use of photography to achieve the program's objectives.

General Commentary about the Program:

The summer projects consist of 20 hours or more of training for forty youth between the ages of 13 and 19 during the children's six-week summer vacation, with four hours of training each week over a five week period. Students receive a certificate after completion of the training, and a presentation and exhibit of the photography is held at the Wi'am Community Center and the Battir Community Center. Later, the photographic work is put into

This project adopts a two-fold approach to address identified youth issues. First, the expression and empowerment components aim to develop educational and therapeutic training sessions in documentary photography and production for individuals and groups. These sessions are intended to give young people practical skills that they can use, while also encouraging them to creatively reflect on past and present situations. Finally, the project aspires to build solidarity among the beneficiaries.

At the same time, "the activism and advocacy components allow young people to share their stories with broader local, regional and international communities. In this way, youth learn how to use art and media as a form of advocacy and active non-violent resistance."

A Few Examples of Identified Needs in Youth Programming

As became evident from reviewing the literature of the programs in this report, the needs described below do not all unconditionally apply to every youth program across the board. However, it is possible that a program's effectiveness, or lack thereof, is in part the result of certain grades of success or failure to meet these needs, and hence why at least an awareness of them is pertinent. Any one program may identify all of the following as needs. Some may identify none.

1)

According to numerous sources of information (i.e., the UNDP or Save the Children) creating good programming depends on many variables, including gender, duration of time spent in conflict, level of education, health (mental or otherwise) and age.

Age is a good example to describe the importance of determining these variables for individual youth. Age is often one of the largest concerns for determining who is a youth and who is not. Programmers, as is the case with Sharek, may regard a youth's age as an absolute, believing that an older youth is better-equipped to handle struggle than a younger one simply because s/he is in fact older. In reality, age is relative, determined not by dates but by experience, intelligence, maturity, etc. (See referenced information from USIP).

For example, hypothetically, if there is (for whatever reason) only one spot left for participation in a program, and there are two youth vying for that spot, that program must

decide who will be the final chosen participant. The first individual is thirty years of age. The second individual is fifteen years of age. Most programming as it stands now will likely choose the younger of the two. In fact, some programs (Sharek, for example) will place parameters on absolute age, before determining who actually most needs participation in the program.

According to documentation from USIP's event *Uganda: In the Field*, when determining whether or not an individual is allowed participation in a program, the variables that define youth should be taken into consideration.

2)

Programming often involves economics.

According to the United States Institute for Peace, if economics is determined to be a need for reintegration, it should be considered first, because economic security promotes social reintegration. For instance, if a youth has some means of contributing to the economic welfare of a community, the community will see the benefits of his or her efforts. Slowly, through making an economic contribution, a youth can transform the community's negative perceptions of that youth into positive ones.

According to USIP, the methods of achieving economic security (i.e., earning a living) are numerous. Western ideas can be dangerous here. In the West, it is assumed a person first decides what s/he would like to do, second studies the determined subject of interest, and then finally begins work after having learned "the trick of the trade". Typically, it is very impractical for a conflict-affected youth to spend all his/her time learning. They literally cannot afford it. So, educational training must be very vocational, applicable to what a youth has decided s/he would like to do. Theory-based education without viability will not help a youth earn a living. For instance, if a program is training youth to be automobile mechanics, the program must have cars for those youth to work on.

What might be termed "formal" education in this regard is not always necessary, but addressing the usefulness and abilities of youth to help themselves is necessary. It just must be noted that a youth cannot be forced to go to school if they are the bread winners for themselves or for their families. Further, if a youth has been out of school for years, s/he cannot be expected to sit in classes with peers that are not of the approximate (absolute) age. Age groups then must be equated for education.

Some general guidelines—outlined by the speaker of the event *Uganda: In the Field*—for aiding youth economically are:

- 1) Vocationally train students both in groups and individually.
- 2) Leave students the freedom to change their vocation of choice.
- 3) Use incremental approaches. If a youth does one thing correctly, give him/her more responsibility, etc.

3)

There is a need for a more solid understanding of programming as it specifically assists post-conflict youth on an individual basis. In the West, it is assumed that youth are seldom capable of making important [life] decisions alone, or without external guidance. More “experienced” individuals (i.e., adults, school counselors, religious leaders, etc.) are seen as good advisors on matters of the future and are often looked to for advice.

Occasionally, as was noted by USIP, this idea may be pertinent for youth in politically conflicted regions:

The “Quartet of Decision Making” (QDM) is an example of an attempt at solid and individualized youth assistance. The underlying significance of QDM is the stress it places on communication.

In Africa, economic sustainability is a major concern for youth, especially if it serves as a first step to on the path to reintegration. And for some youth, economic independence is actually a personal goal. Becoming economically self-sufficient would be difficult for any person who has few or no possessions or money, so assistance from stakeholders is required from the beginning. However, stakeholders supporting QDM models are wary of simply giving support money (often in the form of a loan) to a youth who has decided on a means of making a living, such as farming. This assistance is often termed “micro-finance”.

Loans should be given with caution. There have been numerous reports that loans engender wholly unexpected outcomes. For instance, the money has been used by youth—typically by those youth who feel that reintegration is not working—to buy weapons or drugs they will give to their former combat superiors. The idea is that the youth can impress their former leaders and subsequently get their permission to rejoin the conflict.

Instead, QDM involves planning by multiple individuals (typically those who know at some level [personal or otherwise] the individual at hand) to assure that the money can be used wisely and most effectively. The method assumes that the best decisions come from a collective.

A model “quartet” might resemble:

- 1) The youth
- 2) A youth program advisor
- 3) A close relative
- 4) A community leader

Of course, four is not the required number of participants. Fewer or more involved persons may be the most workable option for the youth. Youth should have a say in who gets to be part of the “quartet”, as trust is naturally a very important factor to consider.

QDM has met some controversy even though its application has been at least marginally successful. It appears that sociological contexts determine to a large degree whether or not the method is appropriate (or even feasible) for youth. Some former youth program observers have noted that QDM actually failed in their region. Failure, however, will not leave the youth alone, as he or she will have a group of persons to fall back on. This type of programming, like most, involves the weighing of many pros and cons.

4)

According to one program coordinator, it is often only the coordinators and administrators who know the proper methodology and process for effectuating a program's projects. Other general program workers and volunteers may lack program know-how. Such inconsistency in knowledge among those who work toward the same goal leads one to wonder if a lack of relevant education leads to lack of success or outright failure. The problem seems easily fixable (more education on programming) but most often, programs do not have or do not want to spend the money (as it could go directly toward the youth, for instance) that would be required.

5)

According to programs in this report, communities are sometimes very cautious and occasionally antagonistic toward youth; however, some regions are more open to youth than others. Of course, reintegration signifies connection and acceptance between youth and the rest of the people in their local community, so even if youth are very willing to reintegrate but the community is not (as it is part of that process), reintegration cannot be achieved. Further, communities often alienate youth and youth programming on the basis of gender, age and/or perceptions of youth. And too, sometimes jealousy becomes a factor if communities do not understand why youth are being singled-out for help, particularly if youth are the ones who fought in conflict.

All programs noted that changing negative views into positive views remains a struggle.

6)

Right to Play uses specifically-designed sport and play programs to engage youth in participatory activities. Although RTP is not specifically designed for conflict-youth, its programming has particular benefits for those most marginalized by conflict—child soldiers, refugees, street children, etc.

As was noted, programs that offer “fun” activities, like creative writing, dance, drama, song, etc., have had success in assisting youth. In much the same way, RTP focuses on sports, most commonly soccer, as a means of social integration.

RTP asserts that fun is a necessary component to growing up, and it facilitates socialization among members of a community. Play—although not work in the traditional

sense—essentially allows people to work toward solidarity and it reinforces notions of youthfulness that might not be seen by members of a community who view conflict-youth as anything but youthful.

There is a current movement by the Sport for Development and Peace International Working Group to engage national governments to establish their own programs in this regard. For instance, pertinent to CIEP-SL, as of August, 2007 RTP is planning a five-year programmatic effort in Sierra Leone.

RTP already notes that there is some evidence that proves play benefits not only youth; it also benefits coordinators (and sometimes communities) whose presence with youth is often necessitated by sport (i.e., refereeing, etc.). Such instances provide the chance to work alongside children and learn more about what they are thinking and feeling, leading to better assessment of needs, etc.

The programming community has recognized that sport and play is a very logical method of achieving peace. Continuing to introduce it into programming will only further benefit youth needing reintegration.

7)

According to several of the program reports, while programming has good intentions, there are many ethical violations one must take caution to avoid. Violations of ethics may result in loss of trust and/or frustration by youth.

Just a few ethical concerns are:

- 1) Do the youth understand what programming can and cannot do for them?
- 2) Do the youth understand the purpose of specific program projects?
- 3) Do the youth understand the level of confidentiality they can expect to have?

Sharek and CIEP-SL seem to be cases in point for avoiding these ethical violations.

For instance, in response to questions 1 and 2, Sharek documentation noted:

- 1) “Because Sharek is in fact youth led, the youth themselves are designing the projects that require their participation. They know the ins and outs and are therefore very in-tune to possible benefits.”
- 2) “Sharek youth know why the project is being implemented because they designed the project based on a previously assessed need.”

In response to question 3, CIEP-SL documentation noted:

- 3) “CIEP-SL maintains open files on youth for up to two years after a youth has discontinued participation in the program, at which point those files are destroyed, thereby assuring youth confidentiality.”

8)

Ethnocentrism and cultural relativism are both to be avoided when dealing with conflict-youth programming. As was discussed above, Western theory and practice are not applicable in some cases. It is necessary to account for subcultures and countercultures within the specified programming location in order to form the most effective program model. Fundamentally, value blinders can lead stakeholders to create false senses of reality that may lead to programming problems.

All this is to suggest that stakeholders should advise programming, but ultimate decisions about effective practice should be largely, if not entirely, left up to local coordinators, partners who know the culture and the situation, and of course the youth themselves.

Conclusions

1)

In line with a large number of informational documents (i.e., *State of the Microcredit Summit Campaign*) on the subject, throughout this report, three major themes appeared in regard to post-conflict youth-focused programming. These three themes are: 1) programming that emphasizes economics 2) programming that emphasizes rights, more specifically human rights and/or political rights 3) programming that emphasizes the important relationship between psychology and the social environment, otherwise known as psycho-social programming.

These several common themes suggest that youth have different needs. For some youth, economic assistance (i.e., with financing loans, with starting businesses, or with owning property) is most needed. For other youth, the knowledge that they have the power to fairly participate in and influence politics is crucial. And still for others, feeling they “fit in” with the local community and believe they have something to contribute to their society and environment is most important. For programs like Sharek that are holistic in their approaches, youth have been identified as needing a combined degree of assistance incorporating the elements of economics, politics, and psycho-social support.

Concurrent with the three common themes, there also appeared throughout the document three general approaches to youth-focused programming. The approaches, in effect, utilized the three themes, whether singularly or combined, as the mechanisms to assist youth. The approaches are: prevention, intervention, and recovery. All programs documented within this report sought to, simultaneously, prevent future conflicts from occurring, intervene as best they could within their capacity to assist the youth, and to offer methods for recovery when prevention and/or intervention failed.

Regardless of the specific theme or the specific approach, these various methods for assisting post-conflict youth have targeted the same goal: to let youth continue as successfully as is possible their transition into adulthood.

2)

According to information taken from various programs' documentation, researchers sometimes try to correlate conflict-affected youth to negative behaviors and attitudes. On the contrary, administrators, coordinators, evaluators and stakeholders have noted the positive effects programming has on youth. The difference is at the point of reference: connotation (war is negative) or denotation (programming is positive). If one looks at youth connotatively, it is assumed youth are "bad" and must be changed. If one looks at youth denotatively, it is assumed youth have much to offer if they are given the opportunity.

In fact, because the occurrence was never found in the studied information, this study does not profile programs that withdrew or halted support for post-conflict youth on the basis the youth themselves could not be helped. Instead, the informants of this report noted that youth programming's hindrances are not the youth themselves but other factors like opposition from communities, financial limitations, etc. (See Notes 3 for another possible limitation.)

3)

Another conclusion is the frequency with which administrators and others working with youth stated that youth programs are limited in their ability to reach targeted populations. That is, the capacity of youth-focused programs cannot assist all youth who need assistance. The youth programs in this report noted that financial limitations were the main cause of failure to reach a targeted population. When asked specifically what outside organizations could do to aid youth programs, several administrators of programs in this report stated that financial assistance would be most helpful.

4)

According to CIEP-SL, YFP, YOAC, and Sharek, youth find that simple discussion of their experiences and knowledge amongst one another and others with whom they come into contact proves to be perhaps the most beneficial effort of programming. Participatory measures, like community service, are emotionally, mentally, and physically beneficial.

5)

Lastly, despite the variation in types of programming examples listed above, it is necessary to note that, by-and-large, the programs in this report assert that their work fundamentally provides a means of youth self- and/or group-expression and pursuit of livelihood. The programs above sought to help youth articulate the positive as well as the negative feelings they harbor and to ultimately to lessen the severity of a post-conflict society by providing opportunities.

Notes

1)

For the most part, programs working solely for youth are not as common as youth programming included as components to larger humanitarian efforts. Most organizations that have humanitarian operations in other countries make efforts to incorporate youth into aid relief processes, simply because youth are members of the population. This fact substantiates the notion that youth programming is a (slowly) growing operation, even if it is an operation only conjoined to general programming for the alleviation of poverty.

One program coordinator pointed out that intense inclusion of youth into overall humanitarian aid projects can be just as beneficial as a youth program, as the youth feel they are working with the community rather than apart from it to overcome whatever struggle is at hand. That coordinator also noted that if a program is not designed specifically for youth, then regardless of its effectiveness, when the overall humanitarian aid is stopped, the work for youth will be stopped as well. Another program coordinator claimed that programming too short in duration is actually detrimental rather than advantageous to youth, even if the programming demonstrated positive results during its operating period.

2)

The information herein was attained because of an active and persistent search, which resulted in only four extensive and largely successful youth programs. Considering youth programming is characteristically short (usually six months to two years) in duration, detailed information is, again, consistently absent. Essentially, time is not invested in thorough evaluation if the program only warranted the achievement of immediate results, particularly if over only a few months' time. However, several contacts expressed expectation that the growing presence of technology—more specifically the Internet—in the developing world will eventually lead to even more accurate and readily available information ascertained by programming itself.

3)

Just as violence and its influence on youth have certain degrees of intensity, frequency and duration, the same is true of programming. CIEP-SL, Sharek, YFP and YOAC all concur that more intense, frequent and prolonged youth involvement in their programming directly correlates with more positive results. Further, it was noted from various programs that: 1) transparency of program results to stakeholders encourages prolonged support of a program 2) diversity in methodology seeks to ensure an unbiased methodology 3) past assessment to better future planning ensures positive program growth.

4)

One USIP broadcast commented on an interesting and specific idea to note for youth reintegration: Successful reintegration is recognized by the community, not the youth themselves. For instance, in a post-conflict zone, a news media reporter goes into a village to report on the culture of reintegration in the area. The reporter asks if the villagers there can identify former child soldiers and/or ex-combatant youth. If the villagers can identify the ex-combatants, reintegration has probably not been totally achieved. If the villagers cannot identify the ex-combatants, reintegration probably has been achieved.

5)

One possible limiting factor to the success of youth programming that was not discussed in this report is the capacity of administrators, coordinators, partners and stakeholders to effectively operate a youth program.

Recommendations

Continued Research

As not every existing and past program was studied, and, due to the worldwide, on-going, and increasing concern for conflict-youth, pursuing the study of youth programming will only further build on this initial report. The nature of conflict-youth programming as a learning mechanism only means that more accurate information will arise with time, thereby pinning down previously indeterminable facts.

Research in Other Languages

Searching for information in languages other than English will unquestionably reveal substantial amounts of information not yet seen.

For instance, Germany and Japan both maintain organizations actively pursuing work with conflict-affected youth, so German and Japanese would be fitting languages to use to find information. Further, despite the availability of information from Youth for Peace and Youth Action Nepal, some information is only available in Khmer and Nepali.

Looking to General Information

Methods handbooks, general practice guidelines, etc. parallel some of the guidelines discussed in the program-specific information. Therefore, a solid search for such handbooks and guidelines might be a productive course. Further, many of the major organizations—like the UN and the World Bank—put out such materials (which tend to accompany their own active use) as a means of suggesting ways for individual governments to implement national youth policies, thereby positively affecting existing, developing or new programming.

Micro-finance

The use of micro-financing began approximately 30 years ago as a means of revolutionizing the fight against poverty. Since that time, micro-finance has evolved into a very successful mechanism for hundreds of millions of individuals and/or small groups of people who wish to reach their own desires of economic sustainability.

Recently, micro-finance services have been extended to youth, and, as this poverty-reduction strategy continues to grow, it is likely that it will provide many opportunities for post-conflict youth wishing to reintegrate. A look into the world of micro-finance may lead to an even better understanding of the possibilities of youth reintegration.

Sport

Sport has become a growing reintegration trend in many post-conflict and poverty-stricken locations. Several youth-focused organizations like Right to Play have founded very large sports movements for youth, and the results so far seem positive, especially concerning methods of solidarity-building. An in-depth look into sport as an alternative to human rights and economic post-conflict reintegration may be worthwhile.

Counseling

Given that major organizations like the UN expend much of their energies to influence governments to be more cognizant of youth on the national level, there is a known discrepancy in cognizance to youth on both the individual and local level. As was discussed, programs are looking for specific and individualized assistance from agencies that can advise existing and plan future programming. According to the youth programs in this report, professional counseling services to assist in the development and progression of youth-focused programming on the whole are in demand. Even while new programming efforts are continually occurring, providing expert assistance to existing programs remains a previously identified need that is not being met. (See Appendix A for a list of organizations whose websites maintain updated information about new and existing programming)

Standardized Evaluation

Given the relative variation in evaluation practices in this report, the evaluation of youth programs is difficult to define. Organizations had varied methods of gauging the effectiveness of their efforts, and some methods were questionable. For instance, some organizations failed to have an external evaluation done by an outside source. Instead, these organizations favored evaluations performed by their own staff, etc.

As the Center wishes to further its knowledge of this subject, one method of doing so would be to develop itself as an authoritative source of program evaluation. In time it

might be worthwhile to establish an unbiased and conclusive evaluation method for programs that seem to be lacking such necessity.

As programs tend to continuously look for new ideas and desire any opinion on their programming, such evaluative action might be generally well-received by the programming community. Particularly, the standardization of evaluative practices might offer the programming community means of self-analysis and comparison not yet enjoyed before.

Mediator

It appears that some youth programs make endeavors to maintain communication with other youth programs. Communication of course allows for the free flow of ideas and, as was the case for several programs in this report, contributes to greater program success. There is a strong desire among youth programs to become better connected with one another, and in the process helping to discontinue the fragmentation of youth programming on the whole. Youth programs need assistance in their search for partnerships locally and farther abroad.

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Appendix A

Agencies Contacted or Referenced in the Report

Australian Agency for International Development
Canadian International Development Agency
Center for Applied Research in Education
Centers for Peace-Building International
Christian Children's Fund
Danish Development Agency
Finland Department for International Development Cooperation
German Technical Cooperation
Global Power Initiative for Women
Global Youth Connect
International Institute for Communication and Development
International Labor Organization
International Rescue Committee
Irish Aid
Japan Bank for International Cooperation
Japan International Cooperation Agency
Netherlands Development Cooperation
New Zealand Official Development Assistance
Norwegian Agency for Development Cooperation
Peace Development Institute
Right to Play
Save the Children
South African Development Community
Transition International
United Nations
United Nations Development Program
United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization
United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees
United States Agency for International Development
United States Institute for Peace
Women's Commission
Woodrow Wilson International Center for Scholars
World Bank
World Health Organization

Appendix B

Examples of Programs That Were Organized as a Part of Larger Humanitarian Projects

- 1) Center for Peace-building International Program – Burma
- 2) Child and Youth Development Project
- 3) Linking Vocational Training to Youth Employment Program
- 4) National Integrated Plan for Social Action and Youth
- 5) Post-Conflict for Socio-economic Rehabilitation for Southern Lebanon
- 6) Support to Security Sector Reform: Education Awareness Component
Southeastern Europe Youth Network
- 7) Youth Engagement and Job Opportunity Project

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