

> International Development Matters

Perspectives on Youth, Conflict and Enterprise



YOUTH ENTERPRISE AND LIVELIHOOD DEVELOPMENT IN CONFLICT SETTINGS

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“Youth Enterprise and Livelihood Development in Conflict Settings”

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Making Cents International

The world's youth population has reached an all time high of over 1.5 billion, with 89 percent living in developing countries.¹ As the ILO estimates 400 million new and decent jobs need to be created just to meet the potential of today's youth, and millions more youth are expected to enter the labor pool within the next 10 years, it is critical to address the increasing employment needs of young people today and over the long term (ILO 2006). While many youth leaders are making positive contributions to their communities, unemployed youth are increasingly the target of recruitment into gangs, drug and human trafficking, as well as armed conflicts. Limited economic, social and political opportunities are strong contributing factors driving youth to become involved in conflicts. By engaging youth productively in their societies and in ways that strengthen their livelihood opportunities, development practitioners are playing a crucial role in reducing youths' vulnerability to involvement in these activities, which are destructive to them and their communities.

Out of a clear need to address today's complex issues related to youth livelihoods, Making Cents International organized and held the first-ever Global Youth Microenterprise Conference in Washington, D.C. September 10-11, 2007. The conference convened 270 people from 135 different organizations and 28 countries to build and advance the field of youth enterprise, entrepreneurship and livelihood development. This article summarizes some key points informed by Making Cents' and other conference participants' experiences that specifically relate to working with and for youth in conflict-affected environments. Full details on the conference, including presentations and other related material, can be accessed at www.makingcents.com and www.ymeconference.org.

At the conference, the youth enterprise community identified some promising practices² for supporting youth enterprise and livelihood development around the world, which commonly include:

- engaging key stakeholders, including youth, in all aspects of project design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation;
- conducting assessments on the nature of the youth population and the market prior to program implementation;
- incorporating monitoring and evaluation strategies from the very beginning into long-term project plans;
- ensuring youth livelihood programs offer youth options for entrepreneurship as well as other employment opportunities; and

¹ The United Nation's definition for youth (12-24 years old) is used for the purpose of this paper. ² The term 'promising practices' has been used in place of 'best practices,' since the field of youth enterprise, entrepreneurship and livelihood development—especially in conflict environments—is nascent. A need remains for more monitoring and evaluation and long-term impact assessments to be done on programming in this area.

- taking a holistic approach to meeting young people's multi-faceted needs and interests.

The aforementioned promising practices are increasingly recognized as important guidelines when supporting economic and income-generating opportunities for youth in all environments. With approximately 300,000 of the world's youth under age 18 currently or previously engaged in an armed conflict, conflict-affected environments pose additional difficulties and unique challenges that must be addressed in program design. Using practical examples, highlighted below are lessons from working with youth on enterprise and livelihood development in conflict-affected environments (WDR 2007).

Increasing economic opportunities for youth requires a holistic approach. Due to the varied needs youth have, it is important to take a holistic approach to youth programming. The holistic approach implies bringing together various partners to collectively offer youth the full range of products and services needed to be effective entrepreneurs. In general, this concept includes increasing youths':

- i) life skills or "soft skills," such as self confidence building, working in teams, and other interpersonal skills;
- ii) entrepreneurial skills, such as business opportunity identification, market-led product development, labeling, marketing and distribution;
- iii) financial knowledge, including basic budgeting, the importance of savings mobilization, an understanding of how to calculate returns on investment and interest costs, among others; and
- iv) access to investment capital, which, for example, might come from grants, family or personal savings, loans, or equity investments.

From Making Cents International's work in partnership with the American Refugee Committee (ARC) in Guinea, Box 1 highlights the value of applying a holistic approach to youth enterprise development within a conflict setting.

Box 1: Applying a Holistic Approach to Youth Enterprise Development in Guinea

Context of the conflict. Guinea's expanding youth population is impacting the country's ability to maintain peace and a stable socio-economic environment, which is required for poverty reduction. For decades, neighboring civil wars have hindered Guinea's economic, social and political development. These conflicts have forced Guinea to absorb a half million refugees from Sierra Leone and Liberia in 2000 and another 4,000 from Cote d'Ivoire in 2007. The refugees – on top of border incursions that occurred in 2000/2001 – have placed tremendous pressures on Guinea's national budget. Recurring violence has fueled uncertainty and strife within the country and has forced the government to realign resources to bolster security and rebuild infrastructure in border areas. (World Bank Guinea 2007). Declining economic opportunities and deteriorating

living conditions now have the potential to inflame current frustrations of Guinea's poorest and most vulnerable groups, women and youth.

Objectives of this youth enterprise development program: to reduce risk and stabilize a conflict zone. The American Refugee Committee (ARC) designed and implemented the Preventive Activities and Training that Works for At-Risk Youth (PATHWAYS) project with the objective to: 1) improve community capacity to prevent and respond to violence through the creation of a network of community management committees and youth conflict prevention animators; 2) create greater youth and community capacity to resist violence through a program of conflict prevention-oriented life skills training for 5,000 at-risk youth aged 16-35; and 3) remove economic incentives for potential conflict by providing and facilitating access to economic opportunities for 1,600 at-risk youth. In line with the holistic approach, ARC contracted the technical expertise of Making Cents International under this USAID/Guinea and USAID's Office of Conflict Management and Mitigation-funded award, which combined ARC's strengths of implementing high quality enterprise development training and microfinance in conflict zones with Making Cents' technical expertise in designing and delivering experiential business management training curriculum for entrepreneurs and trainers.

Making Cents International would like to acknowledge Terry Isert of the ARC for his technical editing assistance in this case study

As a result, ARC and MARWOPNET offered a community-level conflict prevention network, life skills training, and economic opportunities to at-risk youth. Life skills included youth literacy and numeracy training to improve the young people's abilities to absorb the technical material, as well as vocational training and placement with local master craftsmen. Making Cents International adapted its MicroEnterprise Fundamentals™ curriculum to the local culture and adjusted it to meet the needs of illiterate youth. With an emphasis on experiential learning through role plays, illustrated visuals, simulations, group work, and facilitated discussions, participants were taught basic business skills, such as math, budgeting, marketing, accounting, planning, and communications. Designed as a twenty-hour cross-sectoral course in microenterprise start up and growth, the training was tailored to vocations with local market potential, including carpentry, embroidery, tailoring and mechanics.


Box 1: Applying a Holistic Approach to Youth Enterprise Development in Guinea (continued)


Integrating youth into program design and implementation. ARC selected (14) fourteen Lead Trainers and 250 youth facilitators to participate in a Making Cents “training of trainer” (TOT) course to build their capacity to train others using *MicroEnterprise Fundamentals*. The goal was for youth to be able to provide quality and appropriate microenterprise training – complemented by anti-violence and reconciliation messages – to 5,000 young people between 16 and 35 years old in their communities. After completing this training and being certified, PATHWAYS two-person youth teams then provided the trainings to 40 youth at a time over six months.


Through this peer-to-peer capacity building activity, young people were directly contributing to their communities’ social and economic development, and were empowered to identify and act on business opportunities, while gaining valuable training and leadership skills.


Funding youth enterprises through grants and access to finance. Youth who were ineligible for apprenticeships, but completed the enterprise training course and submitted viable business plan proposals could apply for a small grant. Averaging USD \$60, each grant was dispersed in two tranches to support the start of their businesses. To enhance their access to finance, successful business start-ups were referred to local microfinance institutions.

Programmatic Challenges. The PATHWAYS project faced several challenges, which provided valuable lessons learned.

 Youth participants had very little business knowledge and skills when they started in the program. Business concept development, planning and budgeting subsequently became important pieces of the trainings, which reduced the chances of addressing in-depth and advanced business concepts.

 It was difficult to engage young female training participants largely due to ingrained social and cultural norms, which allowed males to dominate discussions.

 Refugee populations tend to be more transient and have fewer community bonds, requiring more time to be spent on understanding and integrating the needs of the community, which was mostly done through the use of Community Management Committees.

 Finally, only a few microcredit providers operated in the area, which could potentially limit ongoing access to capital and hinder the growth of economic activities in the future.

PATHWAYS’ results to date have been promising, as participating young people’s incomes have increased and the likelihood of their engaging in violence and destabilizing activities has decreased. A Knowledge, Attitudes and Perceptions (KAP) study, administered after the first year of the project in September 2006, found:

- 👉 **a reported decrease in poverty** - the number of respondents who had an income of less than \$1 a day fell from 72 percent to 62 percent;
- 👉 **reduced interest in returning to combat** - the number of ex-volunteer combatants who were prepared to take up arms again fell from 82 to 46 percent;
- 👉 **reduced participation in violence** - the number of respondents who participated in violent conflict in the last three months of 2006 fell from 21 percent to 15 percent; and
- 👉 **fewer incidences of violence** - the number of respondents who had heard of or known about recent conflicts in their communities fell from 65 percent to 50 percent.

ARC considered the number of individual youth trained or placed with master artisans as a proxy for the number of businesses created or enhanced. The general interest expressed by the youth population targeted centered on vocational training in the following areas: tailoring, hairdressing, auto mechanics, carpentry, and electronics. Youth who received the two-step grant only received the second tranche of the grant after investing 75 percent of their profits back into their businesses. Therefore, the number of youth receiving both grants represents crude proxy for the numbers of businesses that demonstrated positive growth. The ARC/Guinea PATHWAYS 2005-06 Final Report states 500 youth received 2-step grants. On average, microenterprise managers who received start-up grants reported a 55 percent average increase in income. Income increases in this group ranged from 18 percent to 365 percent with 60 percent of 500 grant recipients reporting at least a 50 percent increase in income (project benchmark).

Success factors:

1. The project's youth- and demand-driven approach has helped ensure its relevancy and receptivity in this complex environment.
2. The implementers engaged the communities through Community Management Committees, which strengthened the commitment and support needed for the youth to succeed.
3. The youth facilitators and training participants were empowered from the beginning, as ARC and Making Cents set high and clear expectations for them to achieve, which built their self-confidence and drive.
4. The training of trainers and curriculum were experiential, hands-on, customized, culturally relevant, and appropriate for youth who had little to no literacy and business experience.
5. Youth participants gained needed life and leadership skills to be successful in their businesses, more competitive in the labor market, and better prepared to manage their household economies.

6. Community-based organizations, such as credit unions, microfinance institutions, and village savings and loan operations, played important roles in providing needed financing to youth-run businesses.
7. The project fit well into the country's poverty reduction and economic growth strategies.
8. By developing youth to be Lead Trainers (i.e., peer trainers), sustainable skill building and impact will continue beyond the life of the PATHWAYS project.

Conflict environments often present multiple and juxtaposing problems that are not easy to overcome and make programming more difficult than in non-conflict environments. In Afghanistan, for example, nearly 40 percent of the economy depends on illicit drug trade, primarily in opium, which destabilizes the political environment and adds to the conflict. If Afghanistan eliminates the drug trade without replacing it with legitimate sources of income, the economy will suffer, which would further add to the instability and political tensions. Box 2 describes some of the difficulties of working with youth in Afghanistan to prepare them to develop legitimate agribusinesses.

Box 2: Developing a New Generation of “Youth Agripreneurs” in Afghanistan

In November 2006, Making Cents International developed a customized and experiential program to teach Afghan youth the skills they would need to identify and seize licit business opportunities in agriculture. Under USAID's Alternative Development Program (ALP/E) TARAQI SABA initiative, Making Cents designed and conducted a training of trainers for teachers to engage students in interactive business learning, based on an adaptation from Making Cents' interactive experiential learning enterprise development curricula. To ensure that girls were integrated into the program and not sidelined, the program emphasized girls' business education and provided additional tools to facilitate the teachers' abilities to address the cultural constraints and specific needs of young female entrepreneurs in Afghanistan.

The resulting Youth Agri-preneurship Curriculum and associated Teacher Training Course was enthusiastically received. A total of 15 teachers and university student leaders were trained during the pilot phase on how to use the curriculum, who collectively trained 108 girls and 18 boys over a period of 10 weeks. Some of the results were immediate and apparent, including:

- The teacher/trainers demonstrated their understanding of the concepts and the materials, implying that the training could be replicated multiple times and the local community could continue to benefit with no additional technical assistance.

- All students learned to write a business plan and 25 of them entered their business plan into a competition. Among the winners were five young Afghan girls— TARAQI SABA participants—who took home a US\$500 cash prize (sponsored by USAID’s Afghanistan Small and Medium-Sized Enterprise Development project).
- The project helped to counter the common belief that “only people who are not smart enough to attend college usually go into business” and to show that professional education and entrepreneurial spirit are complementary rather than mutually exclusive skill sets.

While this pilot program did not result in the establishment of a large number of youth enterprises, it was effective at transferring entrepreneurial skills to a small group of young Afghan participants. In addition, the program contributed to labor mobility as upon graduation some of the youth were hired by local financial institutions due to their increased understanding of how to assess a viable business.

Much more time and investment would be required, however, to develop agribusinesses that could compete with the average returns on investment experienced from growing poppy, which is used to produce opium. While most Afghan families engage in multiple income generating activities, they are mostly at the micro level. In recognition of this, the SABA approach is designed to benefit microenterprises, and USAID/Afghanistan is now focusing more on small and medium enterprise and agribusiness development programs. The programs often include special efforts to attract private sector capital and investment to industries that can achieve higher rates of return. Even these efforts are being thwarted, however, from increasing interventions from local war lords who benefit from the continuing drug trade. Unfortunately, conflict in Afghanistan continues to hold households hostage to a safety-first mentality, often prioritizing short-term gains over the long-term investments required to create wealth and move out of poverty.

Local and international partnering can facilitate the development of an effective holistic approach to serving youth. Rarely is one organization equipped or best suited to offer the full range of services needed to meet the diverse needs and interests of youth. In developing young entrepreneurs in conflict settings, there is a need to understand the nature and impacts of a conflict, as well as the local culture and environment, while leveraging deep technical knowledge and tools related to enterprise development and finance. While partnering can require more time, money and coordination upfront, multiple experiences have shown that the initial investment pays off by preparing youth to be successful entrepreneurs. Only by offering attractive alternatives can we expect youth to resist engagement in armed conflicts and other activities that are counterproductive to the development of a peaceful society.

Community meetings and discussions are important for building trust and buy-in, which are necessary to ensure project success. For example, the PATHWAYS’ project’s use of Community Management Committees helped to build local ownership for the project, facilitated the adaptation of tools to fit the local social and cultural environment and prepared the communities for the project’s eventual exit. Making Cents’ work with

the Academy for Educational Development (AED) in Nigeria provides another example of the importance of community engagement (see Box 3). Involving the community and building local capacity facilitates sustainability and empowers people to take charge of their lives and to solve their own problems.

Box 3: Building Trust and Teacher Buy-in for the YES Program in Nigeria

Working in communities negatively affected by oil in the past made distrust and skepticism serious obstacles for the implementers of the Academy for Educational Development's (AED) Youth, Education and Self-Reliance (YES) program in Nigeria. While the school principals and other community leaders were involved in the initial planning stage, community members did not completely inform the participating teachers of the program's long-term goals and their role as drivers of the process. Initially, the teachers were more focused on their compensation than their potential for impact. To overcome this challenge, Making Cents' Youth Enterprise Specialist in collaboration with AED facilitated a community meeting where the goals of the initiative were reviewed, and the teachers were asked for their input and ideas on the design of the project, possible barriers they might face, and solutions for overcoming them.

Through ongoing dialogue and by involving teachers in the training design and learning process, the teachers realized that their own understanding of business concepts and capacity to their teach students was expanding. During this session, it also became apparent that teachers were resistant to using participatory training methodology, which was at the time felt to be a foreign concept. Once engaged in the process, however, teachers saw the value of experiential learning and began taking on an even more active role in the community's social and economic development. In addition to the 25 youth who started businesses as a result of the program, eight of the teachers/facilitators also started new businesses.

Build local capacity, rather than provide once off benefits to youth. Given the amount of resources it takes to develop a youth enterprise program, it only makes sense to put the energy into developing local capacity to continue as many aspects of the program as possible after the project or donor funds have ended. Both the Guinea PATHWAYS and YES Nigeria programs were designed so that local youth could continue to learn and benefit from the knowledge shared from international experts. In Guinea, local unemployed youth were developed in a cascading training model to be Youth Animators (Lead Trainers), so they were capable of providing enterprise development trainings to youth after the PATHWAYS project ended. In Nigeria, the teachers and community leaders were thoroughly trained and equipped with re-useable tools and materials to deliver the enterprise training to youth beyond the life of the YES program. The trainings were sustainable as teachers and community leaders were never paid additional funds to do this work, but the training became an integral part of their regular duties. Both projects linked local microfinance institutions to the youth enterprises, as well, which builds local institutional capacity and provides a more sustainable solution than direct financing through the project.

Programmatic complexities increase when working directly with young ex-combatants.

There is a need to bring the concept of peace back to the entire community—youth, community leaders, educators, business owners, government representatives, and others. As demonstrated by the Truth and Reconciliation Committees in post-apartheid South Africa, nurturing a culture of forgiveness is an important part of establishing lasting peace and facilitating ex-combatants' acceptance into society. Box 4 provides an example of a holistic youth livelihoods program that specifically targeted ex-combatants in Northern Uganda. As emphasized by Anywar Ricky Richard, from Friends of Orphans in Uganda, who presented on the program, "Reintegration is not easy and some ex-combatants, particularly females, have to be relocated to new areas to avoid the stigma of their past role in the war." Friends of Uganda use a combination of spiritual training and traditional cleansing techniques to help the ex-combatant and the community forgive the wrongs of the past and move toward peace. Only by instilling hope for a better future can communities that have suffered from ongoing conflicts move forward in a way that will support economic and political stability required for successful livelihoods and enterprise development.

Box 4: Working with Young Ex-Combatants in Northern Uganda

In Northern Uganda, Friends of Orphans targets vulnerable youth (ages 12-30), including those that have been afflicted by HIV/AIDS, orphans and the war. The war in Uganda, which has lasted 21 years, is between the Lords' Resistance Army (LRA) and the Government of Uganda. The LRA often abducts children and youth to fight in the war. The LRA is so effective in reprogramming the youth to do their bidding that they often incite them to kill their own fathers.

Friends of Orphans targets disadvantaged communities and camps for internally displaced people (IDPs). It uses an integrated or multisectoral approach with ex-combatants, offering a combination of education and vocational training to reintegrate youth to be productive members of society. By building on the leadership skills of the ex-combatants, the program places a strong emphasis on empowerment, which the program managers believe to be a key factor in reducing youth's chance of returning to armed combat.

Given that formal education is not an option for youth who have been out in the "bush" for 6-7 years, the Friends of Orphans' *Atim Kikoma* (Let Me Do It Myself) vocational training centre provides vocational training, entrepreneurship and income generating skills. Participants receive a one week orientation before beginning the program, which allows them to select the kind of skills they want to develop and determine whether they are more comfortable pursuing an enterprise development or employment track. For those that choose to participate in the enterprise development training, once completed, trainees are provided with access to capital, primarily via small community loans, to launch a sustainable business or income generating activity.

Reintegration is not easy and some ex-combatants, particularly females, have to be relocated to a new area where their past is unknown to avoid the stigma of their past role in the war. In addition, Friends of Orphans works with the communities on peace building. Building on local culture, they use a "traditional cleansing ceremony" to facilitate forgiveness for the reintegrating ex-combatants, which are led by tribal chiefs. Sometimes they even use religious and spiritual training to encourage peace building. They also teach them about human rights and how to protect themselves from HIV/AIDS.

- As presented by Anywar Ricky Richard, Friends of Orphans

Youth should be empowered to play a role in their country's, community's and personal development. As youth represent an increasing proportion of developing country populations, it is important for them to have a voice and be empowered to play a role in designing their future. In many cases, including in Northern Uganda where about 50 percent of the population is under the age of 14, youth have not been involved in government peace negotiations, despite the fact that they were the ones predominantly fighting the war (WDR 2007). This is a missed opportunity in that as key stakeholders, if young ex-combatants are given the opportunity to be involved in decision-making processes that affect their country's and community's transition to peace, they will have greater ownership over the process and the process will be more informed by their experiences. At a minimum, youth should be encouraged to form networks at local and regional levels to facilitate information sharing and advocacy for their concerns, their businesses and their communities, which can build positively on skills they have developed during the conflict. Such networks could also be used to facilitate peer mentorship, as was done in the PATHWAYS project, and coordinate youth enterprise development activities.

Participatory training is more effective at transferring knowledge than traditional classroom style training. While this is generally true, it is especially apparent in working with youth in conflict settings. HIV/AIDS is decimating the knowledge and skill base in many communities, leaving young entrepreneurs without traditional mentorship and apprenticeship opportunities. The number of youth-headed households and orphans is steadily increasing. The majority of those infected by HIV/AIDS is under 25. Conflict and war are similarly disrupting formal and traditional learning systems, and are causing high numbers of youth-headed households and orphaned children. Furthermore, conflicts often cause significant disruptions to traditional education, resulting in youth being less accustomed to and tolerant of sitting still for long lectures. Participatory style training, including role plays, simulations, group work, and interactive question and answer sessions, is designed to draw from the participants' own knowledge and experience. As a result, participants tend to experience higher levels of knowledge retention, an increased sense of empowerment and overall satisfaction with the training.

Grants can be used as start-up capital, but should not be confused with loans. Since some youth in conflict environments may not meet age and suitability criteria to be placed in apprenticeships with master craftsmen, micro-grants may be used to fund their start-up enterprises. It is important, however, that such grants be seen as a one-time

opportunity to launch a business tied to an incentive, such as requiring 20 percent cash or in-kind contribution to their potential business with the expectation that future funds for expansion will have to come from the revenue streams from the business and market-based financing. This incentive reaffirms commitment on the part of youth to the enterprise and may be a key linchpin to their entrepreneurial success. Youth development programs should not attempt to combine the grant subsidy with the need for on-going finance, such as by offering interest-free loans. Experience has shown that offering below market interest rate loans tends to distort and harm natural market mechanisms (e.g. they compete with sustainable microfinance institutions). In addition, subsidized loans tend to be seen as a gift or donation by the recipient, reducing the chance of repayment. By linking with a local financial institution or microfinance provider, youth can use the capital from the grant and the cash flow from their successful business model to access loans and other financial services to expand their businesses in the future.

Deposit services are especially important to youth. While some microfinance institutions have found youth to be viable microfinance clients even in conflict settings, many remain wary of lending to youth (Nagarajan, 2005). Nonetheless, many financial institutions are willing to offer savings accounts to youth, which can be an important way for youth to learn the value of saving and compound interest over time. In addition, some financial institutions use entrepreneurs' savings histories to assess cash flow for loan decisions. Eventually, savings value as collateral and the account's ability to demonstrate the business's positive cash flow can be used to convince financial institutions to make a loan. In the meantime, accumulated savings can be used to fund business growth and investment.

Female youth often require unique strategies to ensure their needs are addressed.

Multiple youth development initiatives, including Making Cents' work in Afghanistan and Guinea, have found that special efforts must be made to help young females develop their full potential. The role of girls and young women in many cultures makes it difficult to simply apply the same strategy and approach to enterprise development as applied to young males. Programs that attempt to integrate both girls and boys often find that boys dominate and girls end up sidelined in process. And as Friends of Orphans' found in Uganda, post-conflict reintegration can be especially difficult for females, especially if they were sexually exploited. While there is not one clear approach to working with female youth, programmers must consider these and other gender-related impacts when designing projects.

Ex-combatants should be integrated with non-combatants. Donors are often tempted to target young ex-combatants for specific programming efforts. In Uganda, for example, Friends of Orphans has found that such targeting can incite jealousy on the part of youth who did not engage in the conflict and are ineligible for assistance. By integrating young ex-combatants with non-combatants in entrepreneurial programming, this negative impact can be avoided and will assist the young ex-combatants' reintegration and acceptance by the greater community. Other interventions have experienced similar problems when a refugee camp is provided with income generating opportunities that are not provided to the surrounding community hosting these visitors.

Coordination is needed to reduce the negative impacts of donor dependence and activities that undermine market mechanisms. Conflict-affected environments often attract multiple donors and relief agencies seeking to improve the lives of those affected by the conflicts. It is a delicate balance to provide enough assistance to avoid backsliding into conflict without creating excessive donor dependence or thwarting community and market-based solutions to problems. To minimize such negative impacts, donors should attempt to coordinate efforts with others, as well as integrate communities into the planning and decision-making processes.

There is a need for clear standards and common indicators for monitoring and evaluating the impact of youth and enterprise development projects. Project design must clearly highlight the target population to be served and how results should be measured, monitored and evaluated. Building local buy-in and sustainability should be factored into program design as well, with associated indicators to verify progress. While this is a general need for all youth and enterprise development programs, there are additional factors to consider when implementing in conflict-affected environments, such as the need to monitor the program's ability to deter ex-combatants from returning to war or to measure their integration and acceptance by the community. Working in conflict-affected environments sometimes requires that adjustments be made to program target results, especially when new conflicts arise. While ARC and AED made efforts to collect impact data during and after the projects to identify the longer-term effects of the projects and the lessons they generate, there are many projects that have not. More systematic collection and analysis of impact data is needed to create more effective and sustainable youth and enterprise development programming in the future.

More research and learning is needed. In no way does this article address all issues related to youth enterprise, entrepreneurship and livelihoods development programming in conflict-affected areas. Many questions remain, such as:

- 👉 How do traditional programs need to be adapted further to conflict environments?
- 👉 How important is each component - life skills, entrepreneurial training, access to finance - of the holistic approach to achieving positive impact on youth livelihoods and enterprise development?
- 👉 To what extent should we encourage microfinance institutions and other financial service providers to reach out to serve youth? How? 👉 To what extent does conflict increase costs and hinder impact of youth enterprise and livelihoods programming? 👉 What government and donor subsidies and other support are appropriate in conflict situations and what are off limits in any setting? 👉 How can we help move youth faster through the entrepreneurial learning curve without placing undue pressure to achieve rapid business success? 👉 How can we ensure that the skills that are emphasized are demand-driven and market-led?

☞ In what ways can we leverage and align private sector interests with the needs of youth? ☞ How can enterprise development programming be used to reduce youth's involvement in armed conflict in a way that will bring lasting peace?

Making Cents International will continue working with the youth enterprise community to debate and address these remaining issues at its 2008 Global Youth Enterprise Development Conference, as well as engage in continual knowledge-sharing through Making Cents' new youth enterprise website and other learning initiatives. Those interested in participating or desiring more information should contact Fiona Macaulay, President, Making Cents International (Fiona@makingcents.com; 202-783-4090).

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Description of Making Cents International

Making Cents International is committed to creating a legacy of improved skills and economic opportunities at the individual, community, and global levels. We equip youth and adults with the vision, confidence, resources, and skills to create and grow their own businesses. Making Cents is a leader in building the youth microenterprise sector through innovative learning events. Through the organization of learning opportunities and networks, Making Cents supports youth, practitioners, policymakers and funders to more effectively share and develop partnerships, programs, and policies that support young entrepreneurs. Making Cents has collaborated with and provided innovative and high-impact technical assistance for adult and youth entrepreneurship initiatives to a range of organizations that include financial institutions, schools, NGOs and large private sector corporations. Over the past eight years, Making Cents has worked in 45 countries, and has adapted enterprise start-up and growth curricula into 20 languages. For more information visit: www.makingcents.com and www.ymeconference.org

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As Manager of Making Cents' Innovative Partnerships and Learning Initiatives, Whitney is committed to developing innovative learning initiatives and multisectoral partnerships that advance the fields of youth microenterprise, entrepreneurship, and livelihood development. Her 10 years of experience in youth development, communications, partnership building, and knowledge management have supported the creation of the first-ever Global Youth Microenterprise Conference, organized by Making Cents. Prior to joining Making Cents, Whitney served as a consultant to organizations that support and promote youth entrepreneurship throughout Latin America and the Caribbean: the Inter-American Development Bank's Youth Development and Outreach Program; the Organization of American States' Americas Business Trust; and Fundación Paraguaya. Whitney serves as a Guide on the Development Gateway's youth portal, has organized numerous international and domestic learning events, volunteers with youth-based organizations, and is fluent in Spanish.

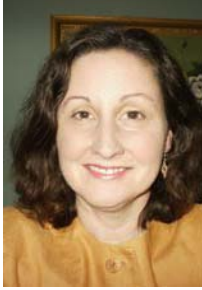


Fiona is the Founder and President of Making Cents International. She strongly believes in the importance of equipping youth and adults with the enterprise and financial skills as a means to achieving personal and professional potential. Fiona has 10 years of experience in the international micro and small enterprise development sector and has worked closely with local partners in Africa, the Middle East, Latin America and the Caribbean, Europe and North America. Under her

leadership, Making Cents has emerged as a leader in the development of the youth microenterprise sector by creating learning opportunities and networks that inspire youth, practitioners, policy makers and donors to more effectively share and develop programs, policies, and partnerships to impact youth's economic opportunities.

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Anita is currently editing a publication for Making Cents, which summarizes the findings and lessons learned shared at its 2007 Youth and Microenterprise Conference. She is a financial services and enterprise development specialist with more than 20 years of domestic and international experience, including several years working with youth. For Peace Corps, she co-designed a Youth and Enterprise Development training of trainers and conducted a successful pilot test in Mali. For Chemonics International, she supervised the AMAP Knowledge Generation program, including a research project on Microfinance for Youth