

Tackling Poverty Together

The Role of Young People in Poverty Reduction

TPT Document 1: Fact Sheet

Introduction

Little is known about the estimated 209 million young people worldwide who live on less than \$1 a day¹ and the ways in which they experience poverty. Youth perspectives, such as an understanding of how poverty affects families and the allocation of resources for food, health and education, remain largely absent from many poverty reduction efforts. For example, a content analysis of Poverty Reduction Strategy Papers (PRSPs) completed by August 2003 shows that while just over half the PRSPs give some attention to youth in their action plans, *the papers do not identify young people as a major group experiencing poverty.*² Only 16 % of PRSPs view young people as a focus for integrated interventions. Consequently, many initiatives are piecemeal and limited in their scale and potential impact.

The promotion of young people's socio-economic needs should be an essential part of any country's efforts to reduce poverty. Fortunately the call to cooperate directly with young people on poverty reduction has never been more promising. From second generation PRSPs meant to better incorporate the views of civil society to the establishment of participatory national frameworks to achieve the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), a shift towards multi-stakeholder cooperation to eradicate poverty is apparent. Equally encouraging is the number of national youth policies being adopted by Governments to support the involvement of young people in the decisions that affect their lives.

Framework for the Tackling Poverty Together Project

The *Tackling Poverty Together* project was developed to include two workshops interspersed by a four-month working period. 28 youth participants have been selected to attend the workshops, four from each of the following countries: Ghana, Kenya, Malawi, Sweden, Tanzania, Uganda and Zambia. These participants have agreed to attend the workshops and to dedicate time to working on the project before, between, and after the face-to-face meetings.

The first workshop, held in Ndola, Zambia in October 2005, explored the concept of youth poverty and examined existing poverty reduction efforts. Participants worked to create action plans, which contain concrete steps towards greater inclusion of youth in the poverty reduction efforts of their countries. These action plans will be implemented between the first and second workshops, during which time the participants will interact through electronic and teleconference communication. The second workshop, to be held in Kampala, Uganda in February 2006 will focus on reviewing the strategic plans and discussing problems encountered, lessons learned and future directions for this work.

A joint project of:

Objectives for the Project

The overall objective for the *Tackling Poverty Together* project is to work directly with young people and other stakeholders to identify and strengthen the role of youth in poverty reduction strategies. More specifically, the project aims to:

- Further an understanding of youth poverty by 1) soliciting experiences and views directly from young people; 2) incorporating existing research, and 3) examining the specific gender and intergenerational dimensions of poverty;
- Find out the particular characteristics and needs of young people living in poverty and, in particular, where they differ by gender, and to identify factors that should be considered in developing effective poverty reduction strategies for youth;
- Review some of the current poverty reduction strategies in Africa and their efforts to include youth, drawing out lessons learned and identifying opportunities for further application.
- Assist young people in developing skills in research and analysis, strategic planning, advocacy and understanding decision-making processes for the purpose of strengthening their role in the development and implementation of national poverty reduction policies.
- Support partnerships and collaboration between youth organizations from different countries.
- Create a model for strengthening youth policy development that involves cooperation between the youth organizations, Governments and the United Nations.

For more information

More information on the *Tackling Poverty Together* project is available at <http://www.un.org/esa/socdev/unyin/tpt.htm> or by contacting:

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¹ *World Youth Report 2005: Young people today, and in 2015*, UN Department of Economic and Social Affairs, New York, 2005.

² "The Case for Investing in Young People as part of a National Poverty Reduction Strategy". Paper commissioned by the United Nations Population Fund, New York, 2004. Available at: <http://www.unfpa.org/publications>