

Tackling Poverty Together

The Role of Young People in Poverty Reduction

Report from the Second Workshop

held in

Kampala, Uganda from 14 to 17 March 2006



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A joint project of:



Landsrådet för Sveriges
Ungdomsorganisationer



DEPARTMENT OF
ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL AFFAIRS

Background to the *Tackling Poverty Together* Project

During the ten-year review of the [World Programme of Action for Youth \(WPAY\)](#), the situation of youth living in poverty was identified as an area requiring greater attention in both policy dialogues and operational activities. As noted in the [World Youth Report 2005](#), little is known about the number and circumstances of young people living in poverty worldwide. As a result, investing in programmes for young people is frequently overlooked in national poverty reduction strategies and rarely seen as essential to promoting development.

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

- Further an understanding of youth poverty by compiling existing research and soliciting the views and experiences of young people.
- Determine the characteristics and needs of young people living in poverty, particularly where they differ by gender, in order to develop more effective poverty reduction strategies for youth;
- Review the poverty reduction strategies of six African countries and their current efforts to include youth, drawing out lessons learned and identifying opportunities for implementation.
- Assist young people in developing the skills needed in order to strengthen their role in the development and implementation of national poverty reduction policies.
- Support partnerships and collaboration across sectors to promote poverty eradication in Africa.
- Engage a model for strengthening youth development that involves cooperation between youth organizations, Governments and the United Nations.

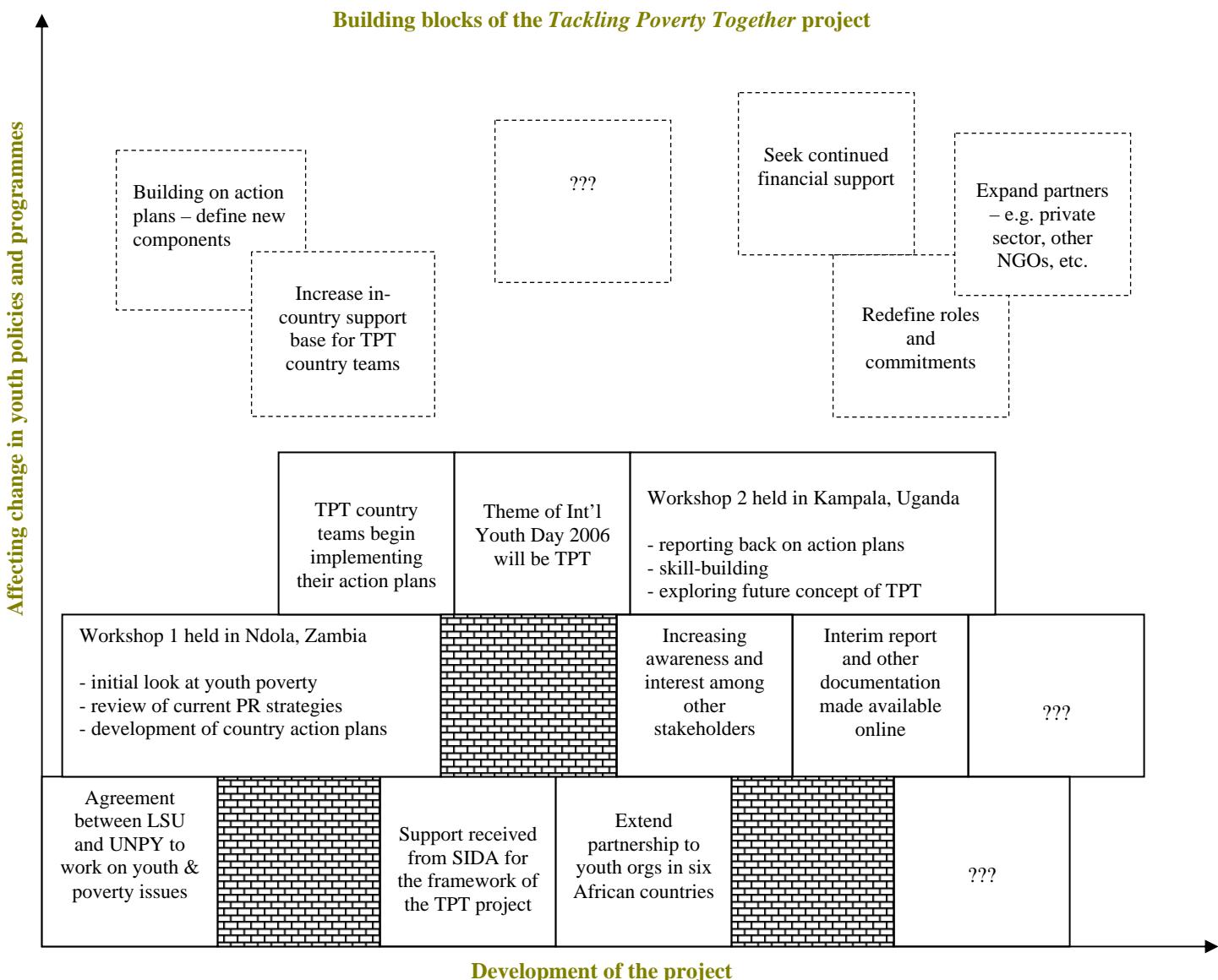
Tackling Poverty Together is designed and implemented jointly by the [United Nations Programme on Youth \(UNPY\)](#) and the [National Council of Swedish Youth Organisations \(LSU\)](#). Each partner brings essential components to this work. The project also benefits from the support of a team of advisors and is made possible with assistance from the Government of Sweden.

The project was initially designed to include two workshops that gathered representatives of youth organisations from Ghana, Kenya, Malawi, Sweden, Tanzania, Uganda and Zambia (See Annex 2: List of participants and their organisations). The first workshop, held in Ndola, Zambia in October 2005, explored the concept of youth poverty and examined current poverty reduction efforts. Participants created action plans, containing concrete steps towards increasing the inclusion of youth in the poverty reduction efforts of their countries, which were advanced in between the workshops. The second workshop, held in Kampala, Uganda in March 2006, focussed on reviewing the action plans and discussing problems encountered, lessons learned and future directions for this work.

Threefold purpose of the Kampala Workshop

The workshop held in Kampala had a threefold purpose: 1) to allow country teams to report-back on the implementation of their action plans; 2) to delve deeper into some of the areas identified by participants as being important to their work over the previous months, and 3) to reflect on and discuss a future concept of *Tackling Poverty Together*. (See Annex 1: Final Programme for the Kampala Workshop for more detail).

The workshop began with an overview of the project to date using the diagram below, which highlights some of the building blocks put in place to begin strengthening the role of young people in poverty reduction processes. The “???” squares indicate unidentified progress and the “floating” squares indicate potential next steps and new areas for the project.



Report-back from TPT Country Teams

Although participants remained in communication via email and teleconference between the first and second workshop, coming together again in Kampala allowed the country teams to share their work in detail and to learn from each other's experiences in their *Tackling Poverty Together* efforts. Each team used the following guidelines in reporting-back: successes achieved in their action plans to date, barriers faced, and possible solutions and ideas for next steps. While each country team's action plan is different, these are some of the commonalities that emerged from the presentations:

Successes achieved to date

- Building a support base for youth and poverty issues beyond individuals

Participants agreed after the first meeting that in order to ensure the project's impact extends beyond the individuals attending the workshops, everyone must share information and build supportive networks upon return home. In almost all cases, the organizations directly involved in the project have been briefed by their representative on the action plans resulting from Ndola. In some cases, participants replicated the sessions and activities that took place at the workshop to spread the pertinent information and resources.

Many groups also reported back to entities other than their own organisations, such as national or regional youth structures (e.g. Sweden), National Committees on the MDGs (e.g. Ghana) and existing civil society networks working on monitoring and evaluating PRSPs (e.g. Zambia).



In Malawi, the team is quite decentralised, so each member worked to determine youth organisations in their region that are working on poverty issues and could be interested in collaboration. A task force has since been created to work on youth and poverty issues in collaboration with the National Youth Council of Malawi.

Team Zambia has created a Memorandum of Understanding between their organisations that will serve as a starting point to coordinate a larger Tackling Poverty Together network that extends to youth organisations in all 12 districts in the country.

- Meeting with other stakeholders and gathering further information

In many cases, country-teams have met with other stakeholders to discuss the inclusion of young people in national poverty reduction processes. This includes government officials (e.g. Malawi has met with officials at the Ministry of Economic Planning and Development; Sweden presented the project to the youth division at the Ministry of Education and Science), and other development partners (e.g. Team Ghana met with representatives

of the World Bank and have liaised with the UNDP). These meetings have raised awareness about the project as well as provided opportunities to hold “fact-finding” interviews about current poverty reduction efforts at the national level. For example, through their meetings with various ministry representatives, Team Malawi has learned of a new National Youth Development Concept Paper and Fund that is before cabinet for approval. They will work with officials to monitor this process and its progress.

Additionally, some groups have used existing events and consultations taking place within civil society to raise youth and poverty issues (e.g. Team Kenya used the World Bank’s consultation on the World Development Report in November 2005, as well as the on-line HABITAT Jam for the next World Urban Forum).

Team Uganda has done an extensive search of both governmental and non-governmental efforts to work with young people in poverty reduction efforts. They identified the Promotion of Children and Youth project operating at national, district and parish levels and housed within the Ministry of Gender, Labour and Social Development; a youth enterprise and micro-credit program administered by the Ministry of Finance; micro-credit, animal farming and crop-growing support for youth managed by the Ministry of Youth within the Buganda Kingdom; and a handful of other civil society initiatives working on youth poverty such as youth congregations within the church of Uganda and the Federation of Uganda Football Association (FUFA), to name but a few. The team also made special efforts to disseminate information to youth living in IDP camps in Minakulu and Bobi.

- Facilitating workshops to raise awareness

Many of the teams have held workshops, information sessions and other awareness-raising activities to sensitize others about the need to strengthen the role of young people in poverty reduction. Team Ghana held a one-day event at the UNDP office to launch and distribute the World Youth Report 2005, to showcase their completed inventory of youth organizations developed in conjunction with Millennium Campaign, and to sensitize participants on the role of young people in the implementation of the GPRS-II.



In Kenya's case, they held a one-day session at the One-Stop Youth Information Resource Centre to review the results of their research and to gather broader opinions from their peers.

Team Sweden held a one-day workshop about PRSPs with several of LSU's member organisations. One member presented the TPT concept at training on the MDGs by the European Youth Forum and held a workshop on the project during a LSU course for youth interested in learning more about international issues.

- Undertaking further analysis of youth poverty and national strategies to address it

Several of the action plans aimed to further examine the dimensions of youth poverty and how they are currently addressed through national strategies. Team Tanzania used a framework that identified internal and external factors in relation to youth poverty. Internal factors were clustered into economic and social issues such as unemployment, insufficient support to the agricultural sector and poor division of labour between the sexes, whereas external factors related to the debt burden, international trade inequality and the situation of refugees.

In Malawi's case, they identified food insecurity, HIV/AIDS, drug and alcohol abuse, low enrolment rates in secondary and tertiary education and human rights violations as some of the key areas where youth are most affected by poverty. They also took an inventory of some of the solutions underway (such as youth business training, soft loans for small-scale businesses, crime prevention education campaigns) and feel these need to be scaled up and made accessible to many more young people.



Team Kenya undertook an informal survey over a three month period to determine what their peers knew about policy processes such as the PRSP, the MDGs, and the National Youth Policy and their opinions around these processes. Some of their findings revealed that youth resent being perceived as beneficiaries of these processes and are not actively engaged in monitoring and supporting the implementation of the strategies. Young Kenyans also find it

very difficult to access information about poverty strategies and feel there needs to be a more cooperation in involving them in the implementation of these plans.

Barriers faced

Many of the teams faced common barriers in implementing the steps in their action plans. These included:

- Communication

In many cases, the team members are quite dispersed and the use of internet and mobile phones is expensive. This slows down progress and also limits the interaction with the UN Programme on Youth and LSU.

- National circumstances

Many of the countries underwent national political elections and changes in government. This makes it difficult to get people's attention (including civil society, the media, and Ministry officials) in order to discuss a social issue. Many communities have also been severely affected by the current drought in East Africa, diverting all spare resources and attention to basic survival.

- Difficulty in establishing partnerships

Many of the key stakeholders in the development sector do not have institutional structures that facilitate the participation of young people in their poverty reduction work. Few World Bank or UNDP country offices have “mandates” to work with youth, nor do they offer a specific focal point or contact person with whom youth organisations can liaise and, at a minimum, collect information about the poverty reduction efforts underway. In most cases, development partners appeared either disinterested, unable to cooperate with a partner that *appears* to have few assets to bring to the table, or unwilling to explore ways in which the TPT action plans could add value to the poverty reduction work underway. In meeting with Government officials, it can be equally difficult to convince them that youth organisations are legitimate partners trying to work on youth poverty, rather than “thinking [young people] are trying to play around with them and that TPT is something [young people] cooked up to get money”.

Unfortunately, this means that youth organisations often lack information about current policies used by government and other partners to address poverty. This makes it difficult for youth organisations to find the proper direction and programme development in support of current poverty reduction work.

- Lack of financial resources

Every team reported the difficulty of having to “do a lot with a little” and noted that the capacity of youth networks to develop and take forward issues of concern to young people is fragile at best. There is a need for capacity-building at many levels and this can only be done with proper resources. Many of the items included in the Action Plan became difficult to undertake without adequate resources.

- Accessing the young people who need assistance the most

Several groups reported a difficulty in being able to access the young people who need the assistance the most. The young people most affected by poverty are the hardest to reach, including youth living in remote, rural areas or in IDP camps. In future TPT work, specific strategies and resources are going to have to be dedicated towards helping the TPT country teams with this task.



- Low priority given to youth development issues

In many cases, TPT country teams found that there is a low-priority status attached to youth development issues, particularly in relation to national budget planning. The national youth policies that are in place are often

ambiguous, vague, and developed without the involvement of young people. This makes it very difficult to “activate” these policies and make a strong case for better resourced youth programmes.

- Apathy among young people

So many young people in Africa are preoccupied with just trying to get by or are disillusioned by the continued deterioration of their lives, making it challenging to interest them in working to improve their situations. For example, Team Malawi reported, “Some people, even the learned ones, have come to believe that Malawi is poor by God’s design and that nothing can be done to change the situation. Others think that our impact will be too small and is not worth pursuing, as if the whole government has failed to reduce poverty, what will a team of youths do”.

Possible solutions and ideas for next steps

Despite these barriers encountered when advancing their actions to strengthen the role of young people in poverty reduction efforts, the teams put forward the following ideas for possible solutions and next steps:



- The country teams encouraged one another to develop long-term action plans to build upon the outreach and establishment of a support base that has been undertaken in the last 6 to 8 months.
- The UN Programme on Youth could meet with key national stakeholders and introduce members of the TPT country teams in order to initiate cooperation. This would take the letters of support issued by the Programme one-step further, add legitimacy to the country-team’s work and help foster cooperation among key stakeholders on the ground.
- Work together to put operational mechanisms in place for involving youth in reviewing poverty reduction activities and to co-develop programmes with them that support achieving the PRSPs’ targets. These activities and programmes need to help youth organisations ensure the inclusiveness of such efforts and assist their networks to access “hard to reach” youth.
- Create greater awareness about the need to work with young people on poverty issues. International Youth Day on 12 August 2006 is one very good opportunity for each team to work toward this end.
- Raising awareness must be accompanied by capacity-building at all levels (communities, governments, non-youth NGOs, development partners and with young people themselves) about youth poverty issues and how to work with youth organisations as legitimate partners to solve them.
- Undertake more cooperation with the private sector in terms of job creation for young people e.g. establishing programmes that invest in the future labour force.
- Collect age and gender disaggregated data on poverty levels so that a better case can be put forward as to why young people are a key part of eliminating poverty.

- Enact policies that ensure the continuity of social programmes in case of a transition in governments.
- Create greater recognition for youth work and a willingness to work with youth organisations, even though there will need to be a capacity-building component to the partnership.
- Establish a parliamentary committee or similar legislative body within the existing political system that puts forward progressive recommendations for solutions to youth poverty as well as convenes intra-governmental cooperation on the issue.
- Regarding attitudes and scepticism among young people, the teams remain determined to work hard to encourage change no matter what. They feel their small successes will help to convince the sceptics.
- Many of the teams will work to put the issue of youth poverty at the forefront of National Youth Councils and similar organisations. For example, in Tanzania, a bill on forming a national youth council will come before Parliament and the team will lobby to have the issue of youth poverty become a main focus of the Council's work. Also, given the consultation process that involved youth in the formulation of the past PRSII and now the NSGRP, team Tanzania will work to begin identifying ways that this Plan can be used to ensure young people are stakeholders in implementing poverty reduction efforts.
- The TPT project could pilot many small-scale initiatives from which successes could be drawn and scaled-up to national scope. This includes income-generating farming projects run by youth, micro-credit programmes adapted to youth organisations, monitoring budget partnerships between government and youth organisations, skill-training initiatives with the private sector, to name but a few.



Skill-building in relevant areas

Having reported back on the implementation of the country-team action plans, the next two days of the workshop were an opportunity to explore some of the areas that participants had identified as being important to working on youth and poverty issues. This includes a number of “skill-building sessions” and a study visit to the Livelihood Uganda and Wakiso Youth Project.

Each of the skill building sessions had a lead facilitator and incorporated participant presentations so as to capitalise on the expertise within the group. The sessions were three hours in length and it is noted that this was not enough time to truly “skill-build” in some of these very dense and technical areas. In the end, the sessions became an introduction to various concepts and tools that could assist in working with young people on poverty, including the identification of places to go for further information on the various topics. If any TPT team is serious about pursuing some of these areas as continued steps to their action plans, they can work with the project’s resource people to further develop their concepts and activities.

Session A: Financing for Youth Development Work

In order to begin addressing the need for more resources for youth organisations to work on poverty, this session examined financing for youth development projects. It began with a general overview and discussion on the myriad of approaches to fundraising and then looked more specifically at preparing formal proposals for the consideration of institutional donors. We discussed needs assessments, identifying project goals and objectives, methodology and budgeting. The session concluded with a brief examination of some existing examples of micro-financing schemes for youth.

Session B: Policy Analysis and Research

This session looked specifically at policy analysis and research as a tool to activating youth-related elements of PRSPs as well as gathering and presenting data to justify investing in youth projects. It discussed what data is, why we need it and how it is generated. It looked more closely at the collection of data through surveys and drew on the experience of the teams from Kenya, Malawi and Zambia in undertaking preliminary data collection on youth and poverty. The session concluded with a brief discussion on how to present data effectively.

Session C: Media and Communication



Using the media to build support for addressing youth poverty is an effective tool that many teams wish to put to better use. This session looked at identifying key messages for youth and poverty, as well as the “packaging” and “delivery” options for those messages. A toolkit was distributed that looked at guidelines for radio (pitching ideas, accessing community resources, interview tips), print media (pitching a story idea, developing an article, writing a letter to the editor), TV and the Internet (blogging, e-bulletin boards, sharing information).

Session D: Employment as a major issue confronting youth poverty

Many teams identified youth unemployment to be at the centre of the youth and poverty question and wished to further examine policy options and programmes that could be used in guiding the action plans. The session looked at the employment challenges facing youth in Africa, including regional differences, gender consideration, rural versus urban and the informal sector. It also looked at policy recommendations, including strengthening PRSPs, and existing examples of job creation targeting youth in Africa.

Session E: Advocacy and partnership development

This session looked at how to better advocate for issues and concerns related to youth poverty, and more importantly, how to find allies with whom to partner in order to address those issues. It discussed building

working relationships outside of youth organisations and provided strategies for gathering and presenting information to use in convincing others of the need to work and invest in young people.

Session F: Monitoring public funds and evaluating public projects

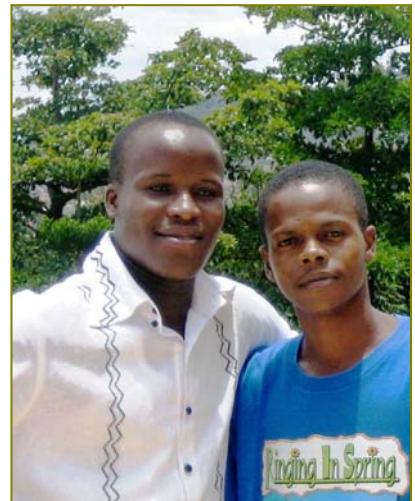
This session acknowledged corruption as a barrier to poverty eradication and discussed ways in which youth organisations could increase their involvement in monitoring public budgets and programmes. It took a closer look at the purpose and tools used in monitoring and evaluation work, such as rapid appraisal and participatory methods. Examples of monitoring and evaluation were discussed, for example, national-scale PETS, or Public Expenditure Tracking Surveys.

All materials related to the skill-building sessions (copies of Power Point presentations, handouts, case studies, fact sheets and other materials) are available by request at larsenj@un.org

Discussing the future concept of TPT

The last day of the workshop was used to review and discuss the future of the Tackling Poverty Together concept. Overall, there was broad agreement among participants and resource people that the TPT project has been a good model for facilitating cooperation between the United Nations and youth organisations to address young people and poverty reduction. There was a strong sentiment from many of the teams that this initial ten month period has been a time of learning and building a support base for continued work in this area.

In addition to the recommendations and proposals for next steps that were shared during the country-team report-backs, the group reemphasized the need to bring on-board missing stakeholders, particularly at the national level. In addition to Governments, two specific examples were highlighted as the World Bank/IMF country offices, as they are central to financial planning and programme development, and the private sector, as they are tackling some of the very same concerns (ensuring a skilled labour force, fostering good governance, creating stable environments). In order to establish a broader in-country support system for combating youth poverty, coordination and training among development partners to work with youth was identified as essential.



The work of young people at the national level must be better resourced and the project should assist and support youth organisations in this regard. Because neither LSU nor the UNYP are channels for donor funding, a capacity-building element and joint cooperation to secure resources as the national level must be built into future steps.

The group also returned to the idea that the project could support the pilot-testing of concrete and small-scale solutions to youth poverty that, if successful, could be promoted and scaled-up at the national level. There are many good ideas from youth organisations, but assistance is needed to determine their feasibility and potential impact.

The discussion on expanding the project to new countries drew a mixed response. Some felt that their organisations had gained a great deal from being involved in the TPT project to date and that youth from other countries should also be given this opportunity. Others felt that the work and cooperation in their countries had only started and that they would need ongoing support before their efforts would yield measurable impact. Some discussed the benefits of mentoring and establishing south-to-south co-operation as a way to build upon and share their lessons learned. Several participants also raised the issue of cross-cultural learning and the benefits of sharing experiences with youth from other regions working on poverty issues. Overall, the group was excited about the prospect of using the idea of “Tackling Poverty Together” as a rallying cry for young people worldwide to cooperate on addressing youth poverty. International Youth Day 2006 is an opportunity to advance this concept.

Conclusion: What will happen from here?

The country-team report-backs, skill-building sessions and “stock-taking” discussions of the Kampala workshop began the process of determining the next steps for the Tackling Poverty Together concept. On the international level, LSU and the UNPY are committed to looking into a next phase for the project and to incorporate as many of the recommendations and proposed directions as possible into continued work.

The country teams have agreed to evaluate their organisation’s commitment to continuing this work and to think about how they could best continue in using the TPT framework to persist in strengthening the role of young people in national poverty reduction efforts. Everyone will remain in communication using the establish channels and there will be a decision made by August 2006 as to the future direction of the TPT project.

