FACING THE COVID-19, HOW TO KEEP SUPPORTING THE YOUTH?

MARCH, APRIL 2020

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INTRODUCTION

In this particular period when the various measures taken by the different States (confinement, cessation of certain activities, etc.) can impact our work with the Youth, we decided to meet around webinars in order for all of us to **share our challenges and our good practices** put in place in terms of crisis management.

The Youth still needs us! To keep following them, we need to reinvent our actions quickly and shift our ways of **working together**, now more than ever.

As a network gathering *43 members, in about 20 countries and 4 different zones* (Africa, South America, Europe, Asia), we believe it is important to keep sharing challenges and best practices to be more efficient together, and to **keep supporting the beneficiaries in these times of crisis.**

The objective of those webinars with our members on Youth & CoVid 19 was thus to discuss ongoing actions, guidelines to follow, finding new solutions.

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FIRST WEBINARS

27th of March & 3rd of April 2020

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Introduction - Members from Africa, Asia and Europe

From March 27th to April the 3rd, we organized 3 webinars with our **African, Asian** and **European** members.

The main challenge for all organizations is really to keep in touch with the youth regarding the **uncertainty of the situation** and the **lack of some communication tools**.

In Asia and Africa, the **contexts and situations are diversified**, as not all the countries are under complete lockdown. Still, the main challenges for all organizations are really to keep contact with the youth and the communities as well as **increasing awareness**.

In Europe, after reaching out young people, the challenge is to continue to motivate them to stay active, despite the emerging frustration linked to this situation. It is also now a question of **reinventing actions** that used to be done in direct contact with the beneficiaries, whether in schools, with the elderly or the disabled ones.

From what we discussed, we noticed that most of the organizations are **not giving up neither on the youth**, nor their families or communities and are looking for more and more **innovative solutions** to keep in touch with them.

Several points emerged from the discussion.

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Social networks

Social networks are a **strong way to keep in touch daily with the youth** and follow their activities : it is easier to organize individual and group calls and/or some online challenges.

- **Messenger or WhatsApp** group to continue talking with them :

  - At [Unis Cité](#) (France), a Whatsapp group has been created for the exchanges and questions + Skype meetings are done weekly with the teams;
  - Students who are already vulnerable, followed by [Article1](#) (France), are supported via an **online permanence** (discussion group on Whatsapp and relay of good cultural and virtual plans);
  - With [Plateforme i](#) (France), WhatsApp groups are created with young people, allowing them to do specific missions.

The visual is very important in this time of crisis and confinement: the use of applications (such as Zoom) allowing to make videoconferences is therefore more than ever relevant!

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Various activities

Below are **some activities** that came up during the discussion, to make the youth busy through the social networks during this time of lockdown, keeping the link between young people and allowing remote cohesion.

- ○ Organize debates in videoconference, remote games, share passions even despite the distance (cooking…), set up challenges between volunteers ("I tell my life of confinement"), create a weekly journal : recipes, articles and videos - according to Unis Cité (France);
- ○ **Give them challenges**: make testimonies, make videos ("H*ow do I occupy myself at home*?"), make them share their talents (draw the LP4Y center, write how they feel during the lockdown) - according to *LP4Y* *(Asia)*
- ○ **Share health recipes**, **write** what you are thinking about the situation, create a **magazine** and share it with everyone - according to *Prajaak* (India)

One advice: be sure to be reachable all the time!

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BEST PRACTICES IMPLEMENTED

Digital training & platform

- In _LP4Y_(Asia), the digital team is developing **online trainings** that will be available for the youth at home;
- In IkamvaYouth (South Africa), they had to organize a rapid change: transfer of physic tutoring to an **online platform** (they started even before the full lockdown). Through this platform, it is possible to **interact with the learners,** share challenges and give advice;
- Together for Africa (Uganda) organizes **online webinars** to keep supporting the youth, keep them engaged and give them **mental support;**
- In ESSOR (Africa), they are developing **online activities** and keeping contact through phone calls. For now, it's quite easy to keep the link as the staff is really close to the youth.

WHAT IF NO SMARTPHONE, NO INTERNET ?

As highlighted by IkamvaYouth (South Africa), many youth from disadvantaged backgrounds don't have a phone, data or an available network. What to do in this context?

- In the _LP4Y_ (Asia) pedagogy, all the youth receive an **allowance** which allows them to buy a phone & load - thanks to this, the communication is facilitated.
- When the youth don't have a phone, there is almost always at least one person in the family who has one. _Grain Foundation_ (Philippines), who is working with disabled youth, is keeping in
- touch by calling the parents in order to have news from the youth.
- **Involve the partner for financial support**

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BEST PRACTICES IMPLEMENTED

Join forces with other organizations

Joining forces will allow us to reach a more **global response** by designing **collective advocacy answers**.

From what has been discussed, there are little contacts with international emergency-focused NGOs to support the more local NGOs on how to react to this crisis. However, some initiatives are already there:

- *Terre des Hommes* (India) is part of **"Sphere India":**
    - Group of organizations from different sectors (education, protection, etc.)
    - To align themselves, improve coordination
    - To understand what are the different mechanism responses
    - **To develop advocacy messages** towards the **government**
  Terre des Hommes (India) is also part of "Joining Forces"
    - Group of 6 organizations: ChildFund India, Plan India, Save the Children, SOS Children's Villages of India, Terre des Hommes and World Vision India
    - Focus on what kind of crisis this situation will create for migrant children

- *LP4Y* (Asia) has created a **mobilization team** to keep in touch with other local and international organizations to see how they could act together.

- Together for Africa (Uganda) in partnership with other organizations in Uganda and abroad is working towards having an **online Africa Regional Youth Summit** under the theme : *Countering COVID-19 : The Role of Youth in Securing Africa*.

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Involve the youth themselves to raise awareness

One big issue is that many people, mainly young adults, who are not going to school **don't have access to all the information**. In this context, the Youth themselves are **the best ambassadors** within their communities to share information regarding the crisis and help the people to follow the good practices.

- SID Benin (Benin) is developing a program to raise awareness about **hygiene** : "*my environment, my body*", working with students in schools.
- EducommuniAfrik (Burkina Faso) launched a digital campaign, developing graphics to **educate about desinformation** on CoVid 19 (here);
- Youth for Change Africa (Mali) is creating **hand washing stations:** the most important is to show the good example, speak to the people and share information.
- ESSOR (Africa) is partnering with the Ministry of Health to sensibilize communities to the best practices in times of crisis.

Giving the youth responsibilities will also facilitate the links:

- Print the **hygiene guidelines** related to the virus, in the local language (translation by the youth), and make them distribute them in the community (only if they have the right to go outside!)
- **Use of social network to sensibilize**: make the youth share the guidelines or fight against fake news by releasing the good tips through **Tik Tok**

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Internal (re)organization

This crisis and the lockdown push us to rethink our activities but also our internal organization: working at home, no more direct contact with the beneficiaries and/or with our colleagues… To keep being active, it is important to **redistribute the tasks.**

- In LP4Y(Asia), new tasks have been given to the coaches who were in direct contact with the youth: the team is now split in different **task forces,** each of them being focused on a specific topic (digital / mobilization of other NGOs / follow-up of the alumni network…) & the coordination team is **meeting every day;**

- In *Terre des Hommes* (India), they are taking time to **train their staff** to develop online capacity and understand the situation.

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SECOND WEBINARS

22, 23, 24th of April, 2020

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Introduction - **Members from Africa, Asia and Europe**

As we are still all experiencing this particular period of Covid 19, day by day, we still have to adjust our activities in order to keep supporting the youth.

Few weeks after our first webinars, we strongly believe that **working together is the best way** to face this crisis. As discussed during our first gathering, the main challenges are related to **the way organizations keep in touch with the youth and keep supporting them.**

Some immediate actions have been taken, such as:
- The creation of Facebook and WhatsApp groups
- Digital trainings and learning platforms
- Raising awareness
- Joining forces with other organizations

Our partner **LP4Y LAB** did a survey on *"How do organizations keep on accompanying at-risk youth during the COVID19 crisis worldwide?"* and this second webinar was the opportunity to share the results with the participants.

Finally, we think it's important for us and our network to keep an update on other NGOs' and other countries' situations.

LP4Y LAB is a center dedicated to the **development of innovative solutions** toward young adults inclusion. It has 3 main missions : capacity building, recruitment and training of trainers, incubator of social projects.

While the sanitary situation has a significant impact on our lives and our jobs, especially the youth and their families are the first to suffer from this crisis. LP4Y LAB gathered **all the best practices from many different countries, all around the world** (mostly Mali, Cameroon, India, the Philippines, France…).

You can find this report here.

Raising awareness

It's still one of the **main best practices** shared by every organizations !

- For Global Compassion (Cameroon), an important task is to deal with fake news. With this particular issue, the best way to help people is to **make them understand how the virus is spreading, in order to prevent it**.
  - Sharing advices from the WHO
  - Raising awareness with megaphone speakers going to villages

- Grain Foundation (Philippines) shares every news on Facebook and translates them in **sign language**, as they are mainly accompanying young adults with disabilities toward inclusion.

- Acina (France) **has translated all barrier gestures into several languages,** before transmitting them, either by going directly to the field during the distribution of service tickets, or by email and Whatsapp message.

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Food, hygiene & kits distribution

The different organizations work every day with marginalized children, youth and adults. To help them protect themselves from the virus, an important action is to **distribute,** as far as possible, **tools that meet the basic needs.**

- ○ Global Compassion (Cameroon) is distributing **hand washing kits** and **face masks** produced by the youth.

- ○ Aide et Action (Vietnam) is distributing soap, sanitizers and are in process of **distributing books and nutrition kits** to the communities.

- ○ Oasis (India) provides **food rations to migrant & hygiene kits.** They have a social enterprise that produces masks, and they distribute these masks to their communities and others in need.

- ○ Terre des Hommes (India) is providing to their beneficiaries some sanitation & hygiene kit, items like **exercise books, drawing books, games**.

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BEST PRACTICES IMPLEMENTED

Fundraising

New actions are in this case related to **newest needs:** most of the NGOs are actively looking for funds to help them implement **new practices** to deal with the crisis.

- ○ Grain Foundation (Philippines) is doing fundraising online through Facebook platform and other social media to reach out donors.
  - •
- ○ LP4Y (Asia) is launching donation campaigns through their corporate partners and expatriate network.

Integrate businesses

The corporate world is also an ally.

- ○ Youth Inclusion Network is calling partners to know more about the situation, their needs and how they can **still support** the youth during the Covid-19 crisis, mostly by digital ways.
  - Professional trainings through the internet
  - Mock interviews by phones
  - Videos on professional topics

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Mental health issue counseling

This crisis can be complicated to handle for some youth and their families due to the lockdown, the fear of the virus and the lack of food/water.

- Terre des Hommes (India) set up some **virtual counseling support** for the youth whenever they are feeling down. They are also trying to gain some information regarding any kind of crisis related to domestic violence.

- Grain Foundation (Philippines) is working with people with disabilities : this community really needs psychological support during the lockdown. They encourage everyone not to share the negative news & to **focus on the positive**.

- Oasis (India) is dealing with mental health issues by constantly engaging the youth.
- Together for Africa is reaching one by one the youth online to keep an update on their well being and their mental health.
- At Unis Cité (France), a slight loss of motivation has been observed. To avoid dropping out and ensure good mental health, several leads are explored:
  - Videoconference to break the distance,
  - Implementation of a recurrence to give a rhythm of life to young people,
  - Daily solidarity goals.

For bigger issues, the organization has an **occasional psychological assistance available** to all young people via a national agreement with PSYFrance.

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CONCLUSION

Since the Covid 19 crisis began, NGOs are facing multiple challenges. Those webinars took place in March and April 2020.

Thanks to them **we gathered all the best practices** put in place by our members. This unprecedented situation challenges NGOs to find **innovative solutions** to continue supporting young people.

The health and economic crisis does not affect all people equally. By working with young people, we do have a key role supporting the most vulnerable. Working together does not only apply for NGOs but also to all actors inside NGOs. We must engage young people, not just as beneficiaries but as partners, as actors. The most important thing is to **maintain the bond** in order to be ready to go back to work once the lockdown is over.

Another key point is to **start thinking about the after crisis**. We will organize a third webinar beginning of June to discuss about this topic, open to all who wants to join ! The main goal will be to once again share the best practices and the new inputs and start preparing **together** the after crisis.

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Youth 4 Change Network (Y4CN) is an international network of support and exchange between organizations working in favour of the inclusion of Youths who are victims of exclusion.