

Community Coffee and Chat

Youth, what's their problem?

November 30, 2023, - 1h 5m 32s

In this [Community Coffee and Chat](#), the [Community Engagement Forum](#) invited Craig Dean, NRC's global youth education and training specialist, and some youth from different regions to talk about youth engagement and how NGOs, INGOs, UN Agencies and local authorities can improve their work.

Emmanuel Fikrte Lema is from the DRC and is living in a refugee camp in Ethiopia; Yom Sarafina, from the western part of Uganda and Alex Khemis Maika, from South Sudan living in Juba, as youth engaged in their community shared some thoughts and tips to change the mindset of humanitarian organisations when working with youth.

Annually, NRC invites youth from their programs to an open conversation with Jan Egeland, NRC Analysis Secretary General, for over an hour. This year, they also had representatives from the Global Business Coalition for Education, who helped mobilise funding for education projects and a journalist from Tortoise Media to help amplify the messages young people had. (video)

"I think the most important thing is to be willing to give space to young people, to sit down and listen to them and understand their their priorities, understand their capacities and and find solutions to the the issues that they want to work on." **Craig Dean**

Engaging youth can be intimidating when we don't share much in common, or most projects are oriented toward adults. Humanitarians engage with many different publics, including authorities and community leaders; what should be different from engaging youth and, you know, engaging the children and the adults, and the elderly? What should we do differently?

"I was saying that you know the youth do not believe in what others do. So, most of the time, it is best to have at least a few years of the importance of use. Advocacy should be the ones to reach their fellow youth and at least do the campaigns. And after the campaigns, that's when it will be easier for the the NGO. To at least carry out what you are supposed to do." **Yom Sarafina**

“Understand the youth because most of them can do something. But before you start supporting them, you should understand what they need and what they can do after that. If you hear what they can do, you can keep them. That's the best way I see. Which can help to engage the youth.” **Emmanuel Fikrte Lema**

“Youth, It is very easy to mobilise them, but now it needs a program. When we talk of training the organisation can support, we shall call them, and they will mentor them with the needed program. Also, the government is in a position to enforce some of the activities. We have other issues like gangs, which require a kind of help from the government so that they can work together”. **Alex Khemis Maika**

Youth face systemic challenges worldwide, Alex, Emmanuel and Sarafina shared some of these challenges.

“For this program, even though we have stayed for a little bit of time without coming together, I am very impressed when we can say ideas like this. Stops for bringing us down and also in supporting the youths, especially those who are without any jobs. There are energetic youths, but that is only what is lacking right now: creativity or vocational training they do not have access to the areas where they are supposed to work, but they have the energy. I will also request the NGOs and other organizations, to join hands with the government to access up to the village level. So when I'm seeing people sharing ideas like this I feel good because I know it's very simple to mobilise them. But to mobilise them, it needs something that also will make them busy.” **Alex Khemis Maika**

“The international community and the government who stand for youth should try their best to support you, especially in the refugee aspect. You may see young people who are sitting idle in the camp or another area. Who are you able to do something? Who needs to build their future, but due to the limitations, financial support, and even limitations of free movement, it's a big challenge to the people.

So we need this voice to be heard by other people who can decide to see the future of our world, which is dying inside the camps or in another place, to see what can be done. Even I may say urgently, because this generation has a big problem. Over a million youth in camps who can't do anything. Just who is sitting depending on other people, and if they get the support, they can work and they can build their future.” **Emmanuel Fikrte Lema**

I remember that was a video that I shared with Greg. In that video, While collecting the information, people will ask, “Why do you want to use this school, or why do you want to use this area for your video coverage? And I tell them that it's a use advocacy and solar focus on a better education, there would be like, is that education for girls or boys? When I say it's gender balance, it would be like, then why is it that it's a girl that is collecting the information? Why is it that there was not a gentleman but a female doing this?

So it's me who has taken over that, and next time, it might be the male majority of them who took it personally. I was denied summer schools and some distracted facilitations because I am a female, but they never expected me to do it. I knew no support; it was only my determination, and first, the camera guy had to give up. But I insisted cause most of the communities will be like if it's you that is using this area, then we are sorry, we cannot allow you to do that. So, it was my determination that made the video succeed. But that was no, I don't support the community, And recently I tried advocating again. We tried a campaign, and I started with a secondary school, I was focused on everyone. I told him I was only here doing now, so I'm just giving a recap of what the user is supposed to be doing other than doing other and want to stop seeing the community majority of the youth, especially the boys, are refusing to attend. They said, if you want us to be part of this, that should be male. That should be at least your male fellow like that will be talking to us privately. And then you talk to the girls privately. I told them if this is to be based on, girls only come for girls, but it's generally the youth. But today, I'm still facing those challenges. The first school I attended was the same as the second one, and I will probably be going to the next one to face the same things. **Yom Sarafina (Sarafina Video)**

Sarafina, Alex and Emmanuel shared more ideas on involving young people in projects, their interest in training, education, and investment in ideas and activities that can use their knowledge and creativity energy. Many contribute significantly to supporting their families as well. To hear their full testimonies and answers to other questions from humanitarians, visit the whole meeting on our [YouTube channel](#).