

KNOWLEDGE GIFT TITLE:

Illiterate youth - an overlooked source of entrepreneurs

COUNTRY(IES) / REGION:

Yemen, South Sudan

LEAD ORGANISATION:

SPARK

CHALLENGE / PROBLEM

In conflict affected states, particularly countries where war and conflict have existed for many years high levels of illiteracy exist. While illiterate women and youth often have the skills to provide a subsistence lifestyle, the challenge is to build on their experience and develop them into entrepreneurs.

MAJOR ASSUMPTIONS MADE

Being illiterate is not a barrier to entrepreneurship, most youth and women in conflict or post conflict countries have some skills and often have the capacity for subsistence living, they just need guidance and training to scale what they are doing into a commercial enterprise.

SOLUTION OFFERED

The key feature of the SPARK solution is to provide business training in entrepreneurship through a pictographic and diagrammatic way that is easy for prospective entrepreneurs to understand, provide them with a picture based hand book they can continue to refer to and provide mentoring support during the initial start up phase.

This approach provides illiterate youth the opportunity to start their own business without the need to first improve their literacy so they can access regular mainstream training courses.

The materials are set in the context of each country so the pictures are of direct relevance to their life experiences and fully understood by the trainees.

ILLUSTRATION / VISUAL



Previously Areeb was only catching between 5-6 fish per day. However, after receiving business skills training and being leased a fishing net as part of a business expansion objective, his catch increased to between 50-100 fish! He has now recruited two workers to help him in cleaning and marketing the catch. "I've now come to understand that if you have capital and knowledge, you will prosper. I am determined to grow as a successful fishing entrepreneur".

OUTPUTS CREATED

Pictograph training course to train illiterate youth how to start and run a business. Materials include 4 day training course for youth, pictograph handouts for trainees, 5 day training of trainers course and materials. Mentorship programme to support initial start-ups.

INDICATORS / SCALE / IMPACT

Key indicators achieved: 349 women and 204 illiterate youth trained in Yemen and 350 illiterate women and youth started their own agricultural or fisheries business in South Sudan.

Planned impact: 600 new businesses established by illiterate women and youth in South Sudan by 2022.

PARTNERS

Yemen, key partner: the Yemen Business Support Centre in Sana'a who delivered the courses and through feedback provided additional input to the finalisation of the course.

South Sudan, key partner: Premium Agro-hub, who contextualised the materials for South Sudan and delivered the training to illiterate women and youth.

KEY RECOMMENDATIONS / UNIVERSAL PRINCIPLE

Illiterate women and youth have the potential to be true entrepreneurs providing not only for their immediate family needs but also benefiting the wider economy. The universal principle is despite their illiteracy they are a resource that should not be overlooked by development agencies, or pigeonholed for standardised literacy training.

REPLICATION POTENTIAL / SUSTAINABILITY

The approach, materials and methodology are replicable, having developed the first programme in Yemen, it has been contextualised and delivered in South Sudan. The solution is directly market driven providing an innovative approach for illiterate women and youth to become active players in the economy of conflict and post conflict societies. This is a tool all development agencies should have at their disposal.

TOPICAL FOCUS

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SUB-TOPIC SELECTED

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