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Conflict-Affected Youth Livelihoods Programming: Bridging The Gap Between Research & Practice

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Conflict-Affected Youth Livelihoods Programming: Bridging the Gap Between
Research & Practice

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Foreword

My interest in global health is the health of populations displaced by conflict, particularly the effects on adolescents. Yale School of Public Health does not have coursework related to conflict-affected adolescents; as such I am using my thesis project to better understand this topic. Prior to attending Yale, I worked with unaccompanied immigrant children aged 16-21 in New York City, which initiated my interest in the needs of conflict-affected youth. While at Yale, I had the opportunity to meet Dr. Deqo Mohamed, Chief Executive Officer of the Dr. Hawa Abdi Foundation in Somalia (www.dhaf.org). The Foundation has provided healthcare, education, food, and clean water to displaced Somalis in Afgooye through the Hope Village refugee camp since 1983 (DHAF, 2016). In our discussions, Dr. Mohamed noted that the most pressing needs of displaced adolescents from Hope Village camp are education, livelihoods, and psychosocial support. She emphasized that most nongovernmental organizations and multilateral agencies focus on shelter, water and sanitation, health, and nutrition, and that education, livelihoods, and psychosocial support are not considered priorities, despite their impact on adolescent health. Based on my prior experiences and my conversations with Dr. Mohamed, I chose to map the issue of conflict-affected adolescent livelihoods programming to identify what work is being done, what the research indicates is successful, and what gaps exist between research and practice.

Abbreviations

ALNAP	Active Learning Network for Accountability & Performance
ALMP	Active Labor Market Programs
ARC	American Refugee Committee
CIDA	Canadian International Development Agency
DANIDA	Danish International Development Agency
DFID	Department for International Development
DHAF	Dr. Hawa Abdi Foundation
EQUIP123	Educational Quality Improvement Program
GIZ	Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale
HIV	Human Immunodeficiency Virus
HPN	Humanitarian Practice Network
ICRC	International Committee of the Red Cross
ICT	Information and Communications Technology
ILO	International Labor Organization
INEE	International Network for Education in Emergencies
IRC	International Rescue Committee
M&E	Monitoring and Evaluation
MCI	Mercy Corps International
NRC	Norwegian Refugee Council
ODI	Overseas Development Institute
OECD	Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development
REA	Rapid Evidence Assessment
SDC	Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation
SIDA	Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency
STI	Sexually transmitted infections
STC	Save the Children
TVET	Technical and Vocational Education Training
UCDP	Uppsala Conflict Data Program
UNDP	United Nations Development Program
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization
UNHCR	United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
USAID	United States Agency for International Development
WHO	World Health Organizations
WRC	Women's Refugee Commission
YEI	Youth Employment Inventory
YEP	Youth Education Pack

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I. Executive Summary

Approximately 40% of the 1.5 billion people living in conflict-affected countries are youth (U.N. Office of the Secretary-General's Envoy on Youth, 2015). Youth in conflict contexts experience severe trauma and are at increased risk of abuse, exploitation, and violence. Although there has been an increase in attention to the plight of children affected by armed conflict globally, there is a dearth of information addressing the unique needs of adolescents. Income generation is identified as an integral youth need in conflict settings, providing poverty alleviation, purpose, and improved health outcomes. Given the magnitude of armed conflicts and the disruptions to critical development that occurs during adolescence in these settings, it is imperative that the needs of this fragile population be addressed.

The current thesis project consists of a programmatic mapping of existing policy and programming related to conflict-affected youth livelihoods and a Rapid Evidence Assessment (REA) of the literature to identify the evidence base for effective interventions. The programmatic mapping identified key actors in the field and existing policy and programming, revealing a need for: data regarding evidence-based interventions; demand-driven intervention strategies; cross-sectoral partnerships providing holistic programming approaches; increased outreach to vulnerable sub-populations; and increased youth participation in program design, implementation, management, and evaluation. The REA revealed a severe shortage of evidence-based practice in this area, but sheds light on the value of cash grants for startup businesses, on-the-job training, demand-side market-driven programs, and combination strategies for increased employment. The joint findings diagnose a nonfunctioning system in which agencies continue to invest in youth livelihoods in conflict settings despite lacking data about effective interventions.

The thesis concludes with a set of recommendations for researchers, policymakers, and practitioners to increase accountability in the provision of humanitarian and development assistance for youth livelihoods in conflict to improve youth development outcomes (including health). Specifically, the humanitarian community needs to create an independent youth category to avoid their classification as either children (under age 18) or adults (over age 18) and their subsequent invisibility within policy and programming. This thesis recommends that donors increase funding for small pilot livelihood interventions with rigorous impact evaluations; that practitioners incorporate monitoring and evaluation (M&E) into their intervention strategies to

increase the evidence base; and that agencies create a shared web platform to share research and data about effective intervention strategies.

II. Background and Rationale

Armed Conflict & Displacement

There are currently 107 countries considered to be in warning, high warning, alert, high alert, and very high alert for active or potential conflict (Fund for Peace, 2015). An estimated 42% of the global poor currently live in conflict or fragile states, and the number is expected to increase to 62% by 2030 (UNSC, 2015). Since 1945, there have been an estimated 248 armed conflicts; 125 of which were civil wars; and the majority of which involved civilians (Themnér & Wallensteen, 2012; Wiist et al., 2014; Walter, 2007). Furthermore, the end of 2014 recorded the highest rate of worldwide displacement in history, documenting 59.5 million displaced persons, of which more than half were children (UNHCR, 2015). Troublingly, the average time of displacement for refugees has become 17 years, and the average length of civil war since 1945 has become 10 years (UNHCR, 2004; Walter, 2007). This shift towards protracted warfare has changed the way in which the global community responds to civilian immediate and more long-term needs, and requires a coordinated, global response that provides a meaningful future for affected populations.

There exists definitional confusion regarding conflict, post-conflict, and fragile state categorization. The Uppsala Conflict Data Program (UCDP) defines armed conflict as "an incompatibility in which the use of armed forces between two parties (of which at least one is the government) results in at least 25 battle-related deaths in one calendar year" (UCDP, 2016a). The United Nations Development Program (UNDP) defines post-conflict countries as falling along a continuum towards peacebuilding milestones such as ceasing hostilities; signing peace agreements; demobilization, disarmament, and reintegration; return of refugees and internally displaced persons; establishment of a functioning state; initiating reconciliation; and commencing economic recovery (Ohiorhenuan & Stewart, 2008). Although there is no global definition for "fragile states," these are generally understood to be states in which governments have failed to perform the functions necessary to meet citizens' basic needs and expectations (i.e., authority, service, or legitimacy failures) (Stewart & Brown, 2009). Authority failure occurs when the state fails to protect civilians from violence; service failure occurs when the state fails

to provide basic services; and legitimacy failure occurs in non-democratic states lacking popular support (Stewart & Brown, 2009). For the purposes of this thesis, the term "conflict-affected youth" will be used to describe youth in conflict, post-conflict, and fragile states. The term will encompass youth living in conflict environments and youth displaced by conflict into both formal refugee camps and informal urban and rural settings. The term will encompass both internally displaced youth and refugees.

Adolescence

Globally, more than half of the world population of 6.9 billion is under the age of 25 (UNDESA, 2010). The percentage is greatest in low and middle-income countries, where 87% of the population is under 25 (DFID, 2015b). The numbers are more staggering for the 1.5 billion people living in conflict-affected areas, 40% of which are youth (U.N. Office of the Secretary-General's Envoy on Youth, 2015). Between 1970 and 1999, 80% of armed conflicts occurred in countries in which 60% of the population was under the age of 30 (Cincotta, 2005).

Definitions of youth vary widely by country and agency. The World Health Organization (WHO) defines adolescence as the time period between ages 10 and 19; the World Bank as the time period between ages 10 and 24; and the U.N. General Assembly as the time period between ages 15 and 24 (WHO, 2016; Rosen, 2004; Evans et al., 2013). Although most agencies categorize adolescence chronologically (i.e., by age range), many cultures categorize adolescence by biological change (i.e., onset of puberty) or cultural milestones (i.e., by rituals, responsibilities, and legal rights) (Lowicki, 2000; UNICEF, 2011). Adolescence can be further categorized into developmental stages: early adolescence (ages 10-13), middle adolescence (ages 14-16), and late adolescence (ages 17-19) (Karunan, 2006). Adolescence is a critical phase of human development marked by significant behavioral, biological, cognitive, emotional, and social changes. It is a time period in which patterns of civic, interpersonal, and social behavior is shaped, and is characterized by an increase in complex social dynamics and a new recognition of identity in relation to others (Sommers, 2001; Coleman & Hendry, 1990). Interpreting adolescence as a single developmental stage does not account for the different needs of youth within each stage, however, most programs struggle to define a broad category of "youth" and as such, almost no agencies further categorize youth into smaller subgroups. In conflict settings, youth is even more challenging to categorize as many youth have lost their sense of childhood

and experience fractured transitions from youth to adulthood (e.g., gaining independence, securing assets, taking on adult responsibilities) (Ebata et al., 2005; Olenik & Takyi-Laryea, 2013). Many youth in conflict-affected settings, particularly unaccompanied minors, do not know their age and have no paperwork to identify them (Olenik & Takyi-Laryea, 2013). Another challenge in working with conflict-affected youth is that although the age group covering adolescence has clearly defined rights under the Convention of the Rights of the Child, youth over the age of 18 do not have specific protections (Sommers, 2001). The subsequent review surveys research that uses overlapping categories to define youth. The specific definition of "youth" encompassed in the literature is less important than the overall finding that this population has significant needs in contexts of armed conflict. For the purposes of this thesis, "youth" will refer to adolescents and young people encompassed across these various age categories. The importance of a categorical definition for this population in policy and programming is elaborated in subsequent sections.

Youth and Conflict

Research indicates that conflict-affected youth are exposed to multiple traumatic experiences including mass murder, rape, and torture in addition to familial separation, death, and loss of home and possessions, leading to severe mental health consequences, including posttraumatic stress disorder, depression, and anxiety (Kline, 2003; Carlson et al., 2011). Trauma exposure can impede personality development, impair basic trust, lead to attachment disorders, and disturb the sense of self (*ibid*). Identify formation, a developmental milestone of adolescence, is particularly challenging for conflict-affected youth (*ibid*). Existing youth vulnerabilities are exacerbated by crisis situations due to their critical developmental stage (Zeus, 2010). The magnitude and speed of behavioral, biological, cognitive, emotional, and social changes during adolescence can overwhelm youths' abilities to cope with stressors (Byrne & Mazanov, 2007). The effects of stress are more acutely felt during adolescence because the brain has not fully developed the capabilities to self-manage (Seiffe-Krenke, 1993). The international community has recognized adolescence as a critical time when experiences of violence, poverty, and inequity are passed through generations (INEE, n.d.). Sommers (2001) identifies, and researchers and practitioners support, five main challenges for conflict-affected youth: the need for acceptance and inclusion, the need for work, the risk of self-destructive tendencies, the risk of

exploitation, and the threat of sexually transmitted infections (STI) including HIV. Researchers and practitioners

Most research and programming related to conflict-affected youth focuses on the effects of war on children (here defined as ages 0-18). Acknowledgement of the age-specific effects of armed conflict on youth initiated with Graça Mahel's study measuring the impact of war on children in 1996, in which she highlighted the "invisibility" of adolescents in emergency contexts (Mahel, 1996). Youth (here defined as 15-24) face multiple risks during conflict and displacement, including violence and exploitation, forced recruitment into militias and extremist groups, trafficking for labor and commercial sex, and sexual and gender based violence (INEE, n.d.; Zeus, 2010). The risks are especially high for female youth, who disproportionately face widespread sexual violence resulting in trauma, physical injury, STIs, unwanted pregnancies, social stigma and rejection, and decreased school enrollment due to increased domestic responsibilities and safety concerns (Zeus, 2010). The challenges of adolescence are made worse by the burden of adult responsibilities that youth must take on following displacement (Zeus, 2010). Despite these risks, this age group receives substantially less funding, resources, and protection from the international community than primary school-age children (Zeus, 2010).

Despite the vulnerabilities that conflict-affected youth face, research has also found certain strengths from which programming can build. Resiliency theory focuses on the human ability to overcome challenges and function normally in high-risk settings (Liebenberg & Ungar, 2011). Longitudinal studies indicate that protective factors can buffer the detrimental effects of cumulative risk exposure in children (Carlson et al., 2011). Research has identified three categories of protective factors that build resilience: individual, family, and community (*ibid*). Individual factors include intelligence, coping and problem-solving skills, and faith in a higher power. Family factors include attachment to at least one parent and close parental supervision, support, and stability. Community factors include close attachment to adults and positive community institutions (e.g., school, church) (*ibid*). Biological research also indicates that the human brain is neuroplastic throughout adolescence and into adulthood, meaning it has the ability to remove old neural pathways associated with trauma and strengthen existing neural pathways in response to new experiences (Garland & Howard, 2009; Olenik & Takyi-Laryea, 2013). Youth are able, resilient, and willing to participate in their own development even in conflict settings (Olenik & Takyi-Laryea, 2013). Livelihoods programming provides an avenue

by which organizations can strengthen protective factors to build resiliency among conflict-affected youth.

Linking Youth Livelihoods and Health

The term livelihoods generally refers to the physical, natural, human, financial, social, and political capabilities, assets, and activities by which individuals obtain and sustain resources for survival (Zeus & Chaffin, 2011; Olenik & Takyi-Laryea, 2013). Conflict, post-conflict, and fragile states present significant challenges to youth employment due to weak infrastructure limiting youth access to labor markets, limited purchasing power by local populations, low government legitimacy, weak human capital due to lost education and death during conflict, and limited market ability to absorb new workers (Izzi, 2013). Sommers (2001) proposes that youth employment may be the most practical way to address the economic, physical, and social needs of youth. Given the importance of livelihoods for youth development, this thesis will focus on "livelihoods programming." The term will be used to describe any intervention intended to promote income generation (including formal, informal, and self-employment).

During complex emergencies, multilateral agencies and nongovernmental organizations mobilize to provide support to affected populations through the cluster approach: a system of thematic area teams focused on 11 areas (logistics; nutrition; emergency shelter; camp management/coordination; health; protection; agriculture; emergency telecommunication; early recovery; education; and water, sanitation, and hygiene) that work together to strengthen coordination and ensure accountability in the international response to complex emergencies (U.N. Business Action Hub, 2016). Psychosocial support, education, and livelihoods are often excluded or fragmented when provided to youth (D. Mohamed, personal communication, November 17, 2015).

Livelihoods education and training is an important component of youth health. The International Labor Organization (ILO) has identified three major problems associated with youth unemployment. Youth unemployment can permanently damage youths' future productive capacity; can impede the transition from adolescence to adulthood; and can lead to alienation from society (ILO, 2000). Research indicates that livelihoods development increases mental health outcomes, increases healthy decision-making, and deters unsafe behaviors (Sommers, 2001; Olenik & Fawcett, 2013). At a systematic level, livelihoods development correlates to

increased income and decreased poverty, which has significant positive health effects, as poverty is the single greatest indicator of poor health outcomes (Farmer, 2004).

Livelihoods and Mental health

The effects of stressful events such as unemployment on psychological wellbeing are well documented in social psychology (Erikson, 1959; Seligman, 1975). Due to the typically, but not always, involuntary nature of unemployment, unemployed individuals are more likely to suffer from low self-esteem, loss of confidence, lower happiness levels, anxiety, and depression (Theodossiou, 1998). Cho et al. (2011) found that youth who participated in vocational training in Malawi reported positive effects on subjective measures of wellbeing such as happiness and satisfaction within the last year. The sensitive developmental period of adolescence is further compounded for conflict-affected youth, who not only deal with unemployment, but with the trauma of conflict and displacement. Employment is an empowering process that allows youth to gain confidence by controlling their own lives and capitalizing on their potential (Moore, 2005). Data indicate that livelihoods programming protects youth from exploitation and increases empowerment, self-sufficiency, self-esteem, and self-reliance (Chaffin, 2010; Zeus & Chaffin, 2011).

Livelihoods and Healthy Decision-Making

Life skills programming, a component of livelihoods programming, has been positively correlated to healthy decision making among conflict-affected youth (Olenik & Takyi-Laryea, 2013). Bennell (2000) proposes a theoretical basis for linking sexual and reproductive health education into livelihoods programs to decrease high-risk sexual behavior based on research indicating that improvements in female youth livelihoods can reduce pressures to engage in high-risk sexual behaviors (Sweat & Denison, 1995).

Long-term effects of Poverty on Health

Former U.N. Secretary General Kofi Annan is quoted as saying that "the biggest enemy of health in the developing world is poverty" in his 2001 address to the World Health Assembly (Anderson, 1998). Globally, the relationship between poverty and poor health is reflected in life expectancy rates, causes of death, and child mortality (Anderson, 1998). Poverty creates poor

health outcomes for a number of reasons including: lack of shelter, lack of water and sanitation, malnutrition, lack of education, and limited access to healthcare (Anderson, 1998). Chronic, intergenerational, and life course poverty converge in adolescence to create a cycle of poverty (Moore, 2005). Poverty experienced in youth has implications for the life course, and certain life course events during adolescence (e.g., leaving school, unemployment, teen pregnancy, displacement) increase vulnerability to poverty, and subsequently to poor health outcomes (Moore, 2005). Adolescence may be the developmental stage in which economic interventions have the most potential for better long-term outcomes (Moore, 2005).

III. Programmatic Mapping

Purpose

The purpose of this programmatic mapping is to identify the key actors in conflict-affected youth livelihoods programming; understand existing policies and practices; and assess the commonalities and differences across agencies working with this population. Given the severe and lifelong effects of conflict on youth development, it is imperative for the international community to respond to the needs of this population.

Methodology

The programmatic mapping was initiated with intuitive research methods using the following key term combinations:

Concept	Key Terms
Conflict-Affected	Armed Conflict, Conflict, Displace, Fragile context, Humanitarian emergency, Refugee, Violence, War
Youth	Adolescent, Child, Teenager, Youth
Livelihood	Livelihood development, Economic development, Workforce development, Job readiness, Technical, Vocational, Remedial, Education, Entrepreneurship, Microfinance, Income support, Apprenticeship, Internship, Mentorship
Program	Intervention, Program, Training
Evaluation	Evaluation, Effectiveness, Impact Assessment, RCT

An additional search involved combing through specific multilateral, bilateral, and nongovernmental organizations for programmatic materials. Agencies included:

> Child Protection in Crisis Learning Network, Child Protection Working Group, International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC), International Network for Education in Emergencies (INEE), ILO, International Rescue Committee (IRC), Save the Children (STC), United States Agency for International Development (USAID), United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), UNDP, United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), Women's Refugee Commission (WRC), World Bank, and WHO.

Inclusion Criteria

Included studies are listed in Appendix 1.

Exclusion Criteria

Documents non-specific to conflict-affected youth (i.e., general youth livelihoods, conflict-affected adult livelihoods), academic papers, political speeches, and country-specific programming manuals were excluded from the mapping. Although this mapping focused specifically on livelihoods development, general best practice manuals related to conflict-affected youth programming were included because initial research identified a recurring theme of holistic approaches to programming. Additionally, conflict-affected youth programming related to education was included because many approaches linked education to livelihoods development. Although this mapping focused specifically on conflict-affected youth livelihoods, general youth livelihoods programming in low and middle-income countries helped frame existing programming. Finally, due to the changing nature of conflict since the "war on terror" began in 2001, this mapping only includes programs published since that date.

Limitations

This programmatic mapping focused on grey rather than peer-reviewed literature because the purpose of the mapping was to document existing agency policy and practice rather than the evidence-base for effective interventions. The subsequent REA explored the limited peer-reviewed literature, but also expanded to include rigorous impact evaluations published in the grey literature to better understand the evidence base for livelihood interventions. The grey literature used in this mapping included policy briefs, discussion papers, program guidance documents, and case studies that lacked rigorous evaluation. Additionally, the mapping excluded country-specific programming materials and only included documents printed in English.

Typology of Livelihoods Programming

There is no globally recognized definition for youth livelihoods, leading to challenges in developing a coordinated international programming response. The programmatic mapping revealed coordinated educational and livelihood strategies for youth. Below are common definitions for non-formal education and livelihood strategies.

Non-formal Education

Intervention	Description
Accelerated Learning	Programs allowing youth to complete a number of educational years in a shortened time period through learner-centered, participatory methods (Olenik & Takyi-Laryea,

Intervention	Description
	2013).
Alternative Education	An alternative to public school formal education responding to multiple youth development needs including crime prevention, democracy building, girls education, health education, social integration, and workforce development. These programs are usually implemented cross-sectorally with government and civil society (Olenik & Takyi-Laryea, 2013).
Bridging Program	Short-term targeted intervention to facilitate out-of-school youth re-entry into the education system (e.g., language acquisition, adjustment between home and host country education systems) (INEE, 2016).
Numeracy & Literacy Program	Programs focusing on basic reading, writing, and mathematical abilities (INEE, 2016).

Livelihoods Programming

Intervention	Description
Active Labor Market Programs (ALMP)	Public funding linked to subsidized work training with the objective of helping youth obtain employment. Takes 4 forms: (1) supply-side ALMPs increase employability through training; (2) demand-side ALMPs create jobs that would not otherwise exist in the private and public sector; (3) combination demand-and-supply-side ALMPs provide job search assistance; and (4) entrepreneurship and self-employment ALMPs focus on the informal sector (Izzi, 2013).
Agricultural Education Training	Training in agricultural methods such as farming, crop and animal science, spacing methods, bed and ridge construction, organic farming, composting and manure, and pest and disease control (Chaffin et al., 2015).
Apprenticeship, Mentorship, Internship Program	On-the-job training in which participants are paired with a skilled worker in a particular trade to gain practical skills (WRC, 2013).
Capital Injection	Provision of conditional or unconditional cash, grants, or livestock for new enterprise development (Blattman et al., 2013).
Work Readiness Training (also called Job or Employment Readiness)	Training in skills that help youth find and keep employment such as the ability to search for a job, set career goals, write a resume, interview, and function in a professional environment

	(e.g., professional demeanor, work place skills [punctuality, politeness, patience, willingness to learn], communication skills) (Zeus & Chaffin, 2011; Buscher, 2008; UNESCO, 2010; WRC, 2013; Olenik & Takyi-Laryea, 2013).
Entrepreneurship Training	Provides instruction in how to start a business and may provide access to seed funding (EQUIP3).
Financial Literacy Training	Knowledge about how to use and manage money to make good financial decisions. This includes the ability to read, analyze, manage, and communicate financial conditions affecting material wellbeing, discern financial options, and plan for the future (Making Cents).
Information and Communication Technology (ICT) Training	Training in communication through technical devices or applications including cellular phones, computers, radio, satellite systems, and television (Kumar, 2008).
Job Placement Program	Direct referral and placement of participants into available jobs (WRC, 2013).
Life Skills Training	Transferrable skills that build personal and social assets to prepare youth for success in the labor market and participation in society (WRC, 2009). These skills fall into 3 categories: (1) social and interpersonal skills (e.g., assertiveness, communication, cooperation, empathy, negotiation, refusal), (2) cognitive skills (e.g., critical thinking, decision-making, problem solving, self-evaluation, sequences), and (3) emotional coping skills (e.g., positive self-image) and self-control (e.g., managing feelings, moods, stress) (Olenik & Takyi-Laryea, 2013).
Livelihoods Training	Training in lower-skilled, informal, primarily home-based industries (e.g., sewing, knitting, vegetable gardening) (Zeus & Chaffin, 2011).
Microfinance	Provision of financial services (e.g., credit, savings, insurance, loans) to low-income self-employed individuals (Brau & Woller, 2004).
Technical Vocational Education Training (TVET)	Comprehensive term referring to general education, technical training in trade (e.g., carpentry, plumbing, electricity), and practical employability skills (e.g., financial literacy, business/financial management, employment/job/work readiness skills (Zeus &

	Chaffin, 2011; Buscher, 2008; UNESCO, 2010; WRC, 2013).

Key Stakeholders in Youth Livelihoods Programming

Certain multilateral, bilateral, and nonprofit agencies consistently arose throughout the search for programming and policy materials related to youth livelihoods programming in conflict. The primary donors for youth livelihoods in conflict are the Danish International Development Agency (DANIDA), Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale (GIZ), MasterCard Foundation, the Norwegian government, the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC), and the Swiss International Development Cooperation (SIDA), although other donors included the Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA), the Department for International Development (DFID), ILO, UN agencies (UNICEF, UNDP, UNHCR), Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD), USAID, and the World Bank (IRC, 2012). In fiscal year 2010, CIDA invested US$156 million into child and youth programming in 8 conflict-affected countries; the ILO managed 52 youth-employment programs totaling US$123 million; and the World Bank spent US$4.8 billion on child and youth development (IRC, 2012). In 2012, 61% of UNHCR field staff indicated spending less than US$50,000 annually on youth programming per country, and 23% indicated spending less than US$5,000 annually (Evans, 2013).

Key Findings

Conflict-Affected Youth and Livelihoods General

Conflict-affected youth are described as living in a state of "limbo" without access to post-primary education, choice in livelihood, legal right to work, or durable solution to their displacement (Evans et al., 2013). Within the humanitarian and development aid community, youth are an "invisible majority" (Evans et al., 2013). Almost every agency noted that youth are singularly categorized as either children or adults, and that in youth-specific programming, diversity among youth is discounted. However, youth are a heterogeneous group composed of able-bodied, disabled, HIV positive, unaccompanied, trafficked, lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender youth who may be formally or non-formally educated, in or out-of-school, professional or non-professional singles, adolescent parents, combatants, or ex-combatants from

diverse cultural, political, and socioeconomic contexts (Zeus, 2010; Zeus & Chaffin, 2011; (Evans et al., 2013).

All agencies recognized the dangers of displacement for youth. Conflict-affected youth are at risk of violence, exploitation, abuse, labor and sex trafficking, and recruitment into armed groups (Zeus & Chaffin, 2011; Buscher, 2008). Displacement causes significant loss of financial capital, natural resources, and social connections as youth experience disrupted education, limited employment opportunities, loss of skill sets, and lack of parental mentoring for traditional livelihoods (WRC, 2013; Buscher, 2008). Conflict-affected youth explicitly noted that food insecurity, poor hygiene, and poor health are a direct result of their inability to earn an income (Buscher, 2008). Family disintegration and loss of caregivers following conflict can force youth to take on adult roles and responsibilities to provide for their families or conversely, youth may become socially stagnated due to their inability to reach cultural milestones related to adulthood (Zeus & Chaffin, 2011; Stern, 2007; Olenik & Takyi-Laryea, 2013; Evans et al., 2013). For young males in particular, the limbo state of "youth-manhood" can cause frustration and hopelessness (Olenik & Takyi-Laryea, 2013). Restricted movement due to neighborhood insecurity and host country policy lead youth to feel isolated and increases the incidence of anxiety and depression (WRC, 2013). Additionally, youth have more difficulty accessing education than young children (Zeus & Chaffin, 2011).

Programming

Prior to 2007, youth programming fell into three categories: emergency camp funding, reintegration funding, and development-oriented funding (IRC, 2012). After 2007, due to a shift in funding, the United Nations created a three-pronged approach to job creation: short term livelihoods recovery and stabilization through emergency employment and reintegration; medium-term local economic recovery through microfinance and vocational training; and long-term policy and institutional reform (*ibid*). An evaluation of UNHCR's youth programming found that it was "ad hoc, minimal, and dependent on lead program staff, in-country expertise, interest, and funding" (Evans et al., 2013). Few programs specifically target displaced youth in camp settings (WRC, 2011). Chaffin (2001) points out that there is resistance from child-focused (here defined as ages 0-18) programming to promote livelihoods for fear of endorsing child labor. Here, the definitional confusion of youth demonstrates how youth categorization as either

children (ages 0-18) or adults (over age 18) creates policy and programming frictions within the humanitarian and development community. Youth range in age from early adolescence to over age 18. ILO standards specify that the minimum age for admission to employment for member states cannot be less than 15 years, unless economic and educational facilities are insufficiently developed, in which case the minimum age of employment is 14 years (ILO, 1973). Furthermore, the ILO only explicitly prohibits employment of children under age 18 for "the worst forms of child labor" (i.e., slavery, prostitution, illicit activities, or employment harmful to the health or morals of children) (ILO, 1999). The stance of child-focused (here defined as ages 0-18) agencies on resisting livelihood programming is thus both impractical and unsupportive of international labor policy, as conflict-affected youth under the age of 18 have limited options for education.

Most livelihoods programming in conflict settings is TVET (Chaffin, 2001; Evans et al., 2013). Unfortunately, most TVET programs reinforce gender stereotypes (e.g., males are trained in electricity and carpentry; females are trained in sewing and hairdressing), leading to fewer income opportunities for female youth (Buscher, 2008). Weaknesses in livelihoods training programs include a lack of follow-up with participants after conclusion of the program, a lack of female teachers to encourage female youth participation, and a lack of access to microfinance options (WRC, 2013; Chaffin et al., 2015; Buscher, 2008). Few programs address work readiness skills and there are minimal comprehensive multi-sectoral empowerment programs (Buscher, 2008; IRC, 2012). In terms of livelihoods options, there is a dearth of opportunities for safe and dignified income generation, thus self-employment in the informal sector is the main livelihood option for conflict-affected youth (WRC, 2013; IRC, 2012). Most youth in the informal sector employ multiple livelihood strategies to make ends meet (Chaffin, 2010). There is a need not only for the development of toolkits for youth-related programming across different sectors (IRC, 2012), but also for information sharing regarding teaching methodologies for livelihood interventions.

Funding

Research on funding indicates that all donors fund youth programs, but with varying efficacy (IRC, 2012). A shift has occurred in funding with an increased emphasis on effectiveness that, while important, has led to stricter requirements regarding cost effectiveness, impact, and value

(*ibid*). This has decreased investment in less quantifiable conflict-affected youth programming such as pilot mental health, education, and livelihood interventions that lack evidence or rely on qualitative or longitudinal data (*ibid*). A review of funding mechanisms related to conflict-affected youth livelihoods funding indicated that donors have shifted to concentrate on fewer countries with greater commitments to said countries. Additionally, alignment with partner country priorities has reduced opportunities to work with thematic areas that do not align with country government priorities, including youth programming (*ibid*). A shift from project modality towards comprehensive programmatic approaches has reduced funding towards pilot projects (*ibid*). Within UNHCR, staff has indicated that a lack of funding is the greatest barrier to working with youth (Evans et al., 2013). The Norwegian Refugee Council's (NRC) Youth Education Pack (YEP) is used in 13 countries globally. A cross-country evaluation of the program found that practitioners struggled to source and maintain business startup toolkits, despite findings that their availability and quality was the main determinant for success following YEP enrollment (Chaffin et al., 2015). However, the evaluation also found improved donor focus on economic development and employment creation, particularly regarding access to finance, entrepreneurship, private sector development, small and medium enterprises, and agriculture driven growth (*ibid*).

Trends in Conflict-Affected Youth Livelihoods Programming

Definitional Confusion

The search for programs targeting conflict-affected youth livelihoods revealed a shortage of targeted programming for this population. There is a wealth of programming information for general livelihoods programming in low-income settings and for refugees as a general population, but a lack of programming specifically for conflict-affected youth. An emerging theme across programming guides is definitional confusion about youth, which leads to their invisibility in policy and programming (Chaffin, 2001). UNHCR, for example, lacks an official definition for youth, leading to an absence of specific guidance, policy, and programming (Evans et al., 2013). Additionally, most donors do not separate programming for children from programming for youth, categorizing youth under 18 as children and over 18 as adults (IRC, 2012).

Many programs consider youth programming to be cross sectoral, thus youth needs are addressed across sectors as part of a wider population of concern (Evans et al., 2013; IRC, 2012).

Youth programming and service provision is thus sector oriented, implicitly covering groups without focusing on them as a specific group (Evans et al., 2013). There is an assumption that general development programming will benefit youth because age is considered a crosscutting issue (Zeus, 2010; IRC, 2012). Youth are not specifically targeted by livelihood interventions, but rather, categorized into the general population that livelihoods programs serve (Buscher, 2008). Agencies do not know how to mainstream youth across sectors to ensure that youth issues are prioritized (IRC, 2012). Few donors have specific youth-focused departments, thus policy responsibility covers multiple departments (IRC, 2012). Due to this definitional confusion and cross-sectoral approach to funding and programming, there is a service gap for this population, leading to their deprioritization. This problem is exacerbated by policy absence regarding youth (IRC, 2012; Evans et al., 2013). Currently there is no mandate for youth livelihoods programming across any agency (Chaffin, 2001).

Barriers to Access

Agencies identified a number of barriers affecting conflict-affected youth's access to livelihoods programming. Conflict-affected youth are often uninformed about their legal rights both in and out of camps (WRC, 2013). Governments restrict refugee rights to work by requiring legal work permits, enforcing encampment (i.e., requiring documentation to exit camps), or restricting access to financial resources such as bank accounts (WRC, 2013). In addition to legal barriers, safety is a significant concern for youth seeking employment. Insecurity in unsafe neighborhoods restricts movement: males are susceptible to gang recruitment and females fear gender-based violence (WRC, 2013; Buscher, 2008). Adolescents cited harassment from police and discrimination from local communities, as well as cultural challenges in learning the local language, as barriers to program attendance (WRC, 2013). Program attendance can also be costly: tuition costs, travel costs, and opportunity costs of losing work to attend programming prevent youth participation (WRC, 2013). Youth livelihoods programs often have short or strict time scales, which prevent youth with diverse needs (e.g., youth with household responsibilities, youth parents) from participating (WRC, 2013). There is also a perception that TVET and education programs, in particular, are outdated, irrelevant, or inadequate for job market preparation (Zeus & Chaffin, 2011; WRC, 2013). Extreme poverty and poor health are also barriers to enrollment (Buscher, 2008).

Youth Bulge Theory

An emerging trend in conflict-affected youth livelihoods programming stems from "youth bulge theory," which proposes that large demographic youth populations combined with economic and social factors (e.g., poor governance, poor economy, high degrees of ethnic/religious polarity) make countries more vulnerable to conflict (Collier & Hoeffler, 2000; Urdal, 2004; USAID, 2005). The common rhetoric is to stereotype youth by gender: males are perceived as a threat to stability and females are perceived as vulnerable victims rather than as active agents, stripping both genders of agency over their decision making and life choices (Evans et al., 2013; Zeus & Chaffin, 2011). There are four general hypotheses in the literature to explain why youth join conflict:

1) Greed/Opportunity: this argument posits that youth join armed conflict to maximize economic, political and social benefits. Based on this framework, interventions should support broad youth job creation opportunities to raise the opportunity cost of participating in armed conflict.

2) Grievance: this argument posits that youth join armed conflict as a response to perceived injustice. This theory suggests that interventions use targeted youth job creation programs that address inequalities between groups.

3) Psychology: this argument posits that developmentally, youth are prone to engage in violence and thus programming should support job creation to prevent restless youth from following their natural propensity to engage in violence.

4) Social Political Exclusion: posits that youth join armed conflicts as a response to perceived marginalization and recommends that job creation programs address perceived political exclusion (Walton, 2010).

Additional hypotheses for youth involvement in conflicts are: large youth cohorts perceiving their strength in numbers; large youth cohorts straining public service systems and eroding government support; and marginalized youth cohorts joining armed groups to gain power (USAID, 2005). Youth bulge theory posits that youth with limited access to employment, low family support, distrust in authority, and limited opportunities for success through education or work join extremist groups who promise a better future (USAID, 2005). Further, membership in

armed groups provides immediate economic benefits through payment, looting, or perceived ethnic power in the future (USAID, 2005).

Youth livelihoods programming has thus become a strategy in U.S. and international counterinsurgency policy. Because governments are willing to invest in youth livelihoods under the pretense that investment increases national security, agencies have adapted livelihood development strategies with the goal of decreasing youth involvement in armed conflict. Development and humanitarian aid agencies have felt increasing political pressure to contribute to initiatives that prevent radicalization and extremism (IRC, 2012). USAID's Youth and Conflict toolkit states, "Targeted job training and employment is a critical element in dampening incentives for young people to participate in violence."

The problem with this typology is that it is not evidence-based, and thus programs do not demonstrably have the intended effect of reducing involvement in violence, or providing youth with long-term sustainable employment. In a 2013 report, the Overseas Development Institute (ODI) reported a severe shortage of empirical evidence linking employment creation programs to increased stability in fragile contexts (ODI, 2013). There is insufficient research linking youth, livelihoods, and violence prevention to develop effective intervention approaches (IRC, 2012). Zeus and Chaffin (2011) note that the youth bulge is erroneously perceived as a threat to stability and security. Instead of being viewed as a threat, youth should be recognized for their potential to contribute to development and stability (IRC, 2012).

Needs in Conflict-Affected Youth Programming

Policy & Programming Needs

Need for Cross-Sectoral Partnerships

Addressing weak labor markets requires a systems-level approach to conflict-affected youth livelihoods. Agencies should work with national actors to map existing programs, build capacity, and advocate for refugee inclusion (WRC, 2013). Strategies for youth employment are more successful when connected to macro-policy (Zeus, 2010). In order to facilitate the transition from school to work, it is necessary to coordinate with stakeholders to understand the local economy and labor market (Zeus, 2010). Numerous agencies found that local governments perceived non-formal education (including livelihoods programming) as sub-standard to formal education (WRC, 2013; Zeus & Chaffin, 2011). Accreditation was highlighted as an important need for non-formal education (including livelihoods) programming (Chaffin, 2001; Buscher, 2008).

Cross-sectoral partnerships with governments and the private sector also facilitate the transition from education to employment by creating apprenticeship, internship, and mentorship opportunities; increasing international and national accreditation; and accessing land and facilities for businesses (Zeus & Chaffin, 2011; WRC, 2013). IRC identified a need for capacity building of youth advocacy networks (IRC, 2012). Despite acknowledgement of this need, NRC had difficulty finding willing or capable in-country partners with the YEP program (Chaffin et al., 2015).

Need for Data

There is a lack of quantitative age and gender disaggregated data, evidence of impact, and shared lesson learning across agencies on the needs of youth programming (IRC, 2012; Chaffin, 2001; WRC, 2013; Evans et al., 2013). There is limited data on existing disparities across education, social background, and youth unemployment (Zeus & Chaffin, 2011). In particular, there is a lack of comprehensive evaluations on youth in conflict-affected contexts (IRC, 2012). A lack of longitudinal studies prevents programs from knowing the long-term impacts of programming (Zeus & Chaffin, 2001). There is a tendency for programs to measure success based on the number of youth trained rather than the number youth gaining sustainable employment (WRC, 2013). Additionally, multi-component programs struggle to identify which intervention components work to achieve particular outcomes, thus there is a need for better research to link component indicators to specific youth outcomes (Olenik & Takyi-Laryea, 2013).

Need for Demand-Driven Programming

Most agencies found that conflict-affected youth livelihood programs rarely matched local market demands (Buscher, 2008). These supply-driven programs (i.e., programs designed based on donor assumptions) are insensitive to market needs and often lead to an oversaturation of youth trained in the same skill (Chaffin, 2001). This in turn decreases the likelihood of job placement for youth, and results in high program drop out rates (Chaffin, 2001). There is a need for locally grounded, financially viable programs aligned with national country economic goals (Zeus & Chaffin, 2011). NRC's YEP evaluation found that youth often had limited employment options following graduation, partially due to market saturation with prior YEP graduates (Chaffin et al., 2015). In order to develop market-driven programs, donors and implementing

agencies should conduct market assessments to have a comprehensive understanding of the informal sector and connections to the formal sector (IRC, 2012; Olenik & Takyi-Laryea, 2013).

Need for Comprehensive, Holistic Services

Virtually every agency underscored the importance of comprehensive, holistic programming to transition youth from childhood to adulthood and from education to employment. Youth development is cross-sectoral and encompasses health; water, sanitation, and hygiene; protection; early recovery; education; and livelihoods (Zeus, 2010). Conflict-affected youth need access to secondary education to build upon existing academic and life skills; scholarships for continued education; and flexible non-formal education to address education interruptions, account for youth's balancing education with income, and prepare youth for durable solutions (e.g., integration, return reintegration, or resettlement) (WRC, 2011). Holistic programs link life skills with livelihoods to provide multi-pronged approaches for youth success (Zeus & Chaffin, 2011). Evaluations have found that holistic approaches, that are flexible and structured, are most successful in meeting conflict-affected youth's needs (Zeus, 2010). Programs should combine elements of health education, peer interaction platforms, numeracy and literacy, accelerated learning and/or bridging programs, transferrable life skills, job skills training, market-linked vocational training, microfinance (including access to microloans, savings accounts, and banking options), entrepreneurship training, mentorship programs, youth employment creation, startup kits, and work placement (Zeus & Chaffin, 2011; WRC, 2011; WRC, 2013; Evans et al., 2013). WRC recommended incorporating protection strategies into livelihoods programs to protect youth from labor-related exploitation and abuse (WRC, 2013). Chaffin et al. (2015) found that when programs reduced NRC's YEP to TVET only, employers reported that graduates lacked life skills. The YEP review also found that youth struggled with interpersonal challenges in cooperative business groups following the training, highlighting the need for training that includes interpersonal skills building (Chaffin et al., 2015).

Youth Needs

Need for Youth Participation

All agencies emphasized the importance of youth participation in livelihoods program design, implementation, management, monitoring, and evaluation, although notably few agencies

indicated that they incorporated this into practice (WRC, 2013). Youth participation empowers youth by recognizing their abilities, interests, and strengths in decision-making. Zeus (2010) defines empowerment as the attitudinal, cultural, and structural processes that allow young people to gain abilities, agency, and authority to make decisions and implement change. Furthermore, youth engagement in programming allows programs to address their current needs and future aspirations (Evans et al., 2015). There is a cross-agency trend not to build upon youth's existing skill sets or account for their future aspirations, leading to youth frustration and non-participation (Buscher, 2008; WRC, 2011).

Need to Include Vulnerable Populations

The programmatic mapping research revealed a large quantity of gender oriented programming across numerous agencies, which were excluded for the purposes of this mapping. Among the documents included for this mapping, there were conflicting reports surrounding attention and outreach for vulnerable populations. WRC (2013) reported that livelihood programming targets and mostly benefits vulnerable youth (including females), and a review of UNHCR conflict-affected youth programming found that the agency has more programs for females than males (Evans et al., 2013). However, the majority of agencies called for increased attention and outreach to adolescent girls, out-of-school youth, youth with disabilities, and ethnic/religious minorities (IRC, 2012; WRC, 2013; Zeus & Chaffin, 2011; WRC, 2011). Globally, marginalized and vulnerable youth populations are more challenging to reach (IRC, 2012; Zeus & Chaffin, 2011).

Need for Community Networks for Youth

Violence and displacement disintegrate families and disrupt youth social networks and communities. This disruption affects the ability for youth to use networks to secure employment. Multiple agencies identified connections with host communities as key to accessing economic opportunities for youth by reducing tensions between refugee and host communities (WRC, 2013; Zeus & Chaffin, 2011). This can be accomplished by connecting to refugee self-help organizations in urban settings and by building referral systems with community based organizations (WRC, 2013). The literature shows that partnering with communities builds ownership, relevance, and sustainability (Olenik & Takyi-Laryea, 2013). Various agencies

identified partnerships between youth and adults as important to livelihoods development. Engagement with community adults allows youth to not only find role models, but to learn intergenerational skills that they may have lost due to family disintegration (WRC, 2013). However, partnerships between youth and adults in livelihoods programs are uncommon (Chaffin et al., 2015).

Need for Transferrable Skills

> *With uncertain futures that could include repatriation or resettlement to a third country, emphasis on transferable skills is a must (Zeus & Chaffin, 2011, p.11).*

Agencies identified similar youth needs in conflict settings, particularly the need for transferrable skills, livelihood skills, and access to employment (Zeus & Chaffin, 2011; WRC, 2011; Buscher, 2008). In one evaluation, employers noted that resettled refugee youth were unprepared in job readiness skills (e.g., punctuality, patience, politeness, willingness to learn) and were thus relegated to entry-level positions (WRC, 2013; Buscher, 2008). There is a need for training to be linked to increased income by determining youth needs, benchmarking successful programs, and utilizing local knowledge in program design (Zeus & Chaffer, 2011).

Recommendations

Funders

Funders should invest more funding for age, gender, and disability disaggregated data and context-specific analyses of youth in fragile contexts. More importantly, these investments will require funders to think pragmatically about the definition of youth as ranging beyond age 18. Research should be systematic and have explicit objectives. Funders should create a system with specific monitoring of expenditure on youth (IRC, 2012). Funders should share their findings on cost-effectiveness by improving monitoring and evaluation on youth programming across sectors. Funders should focus on which approaches are most effective and why, and should subsequently channel funding towards specific youth populations needing specific interventions (IRC, 2012). Funders should mainstream youth components into sectoral programs, but maintain youth livelihoods development as its own sector (IRC, 2012). It is important for funders and practitioners alike to designate a unit responsible for youth programming (IRC, 2012). Although further research should be a priority, funders should presently invest in youth development in

conflict settings and finance small pilot projects that could increase the evidence base (IRC, 2012).

Practitioners

Policy Recommendations

Policy Advocacy with Funders, Governments, and Across Sectors

Practitioners should advocate with funders about different forms of youth engagement by challenging the assumption that youth benefit from generalized livelihoods and development programs for adults (IRC, 2012). Practitioners should establish relationships and encourage participative data collection with multi-sectoral stakeholders including the government, civil society, and the private sector (WRC, 2013). In refugee contexts, practitioners should advocate for equal treatment of refugee youth in their rights to education (particularly the right to secondary and tertiary education) and their rights to work. Practitioners should advocate for more stringent regulation of the informal labor market in both internal and external displacement settings (particularly domestic workers) to protect conflict-affected youth from abuse and exploitation (WRC, 2013). However, advocacy for market regulation should focus on the rights and needs of youth to prevent states from using these regulations to further infringe on youth rights (e.g., deporting migrant youth, barring youth from work under pretense of child labor laws). In both internal and external displacement settings, practitioners should coordinate with national governments to develop comprehensive market-driven, performance-based continuing education and livelihoods training plans focusing on vulnerable groups with youth participation (Zeus, 2010; Chaffin, 2010). These programs should be connected to national strategies for youth employment and should include national accreditation for these programs (WRC, 2013; Chaffin, 2010). Practitioners should strengthen intersectoral coordination at the global level to develop multiple approaches to youth livelihoods. In particular, there should be greater coordination between the education and economic sector for youth programming. The purpose of intersectoral policy and programming is to increase attention on the needs of conflict-affected youth and to coordinate integration of youth into the larger employment community through youth-targeted approaches.

Create Platform to Share Best Practices

In order to share best practices and recommendations, agencies should improve communication about program success and failures. One potential avenue is to create an online platform with shared resources mirroring the Active Learning Network for Accountability and Performance in Humanitarian Action (ALNAP), Humanitarian Practice Network (HPN), INEE, and the Sphere Project. There is a need for shared, purposeful, interagency, practice-based learning strategies for conflict-affected youth livelihoods development (WRC, 2011; WRC, 2013).

Increase Data Collection

It is imperative to justify the importance and rationale for investment in conflict-affected youth livelihoods to increase funding. Currently, there is a shortage of program impact evaluations and an abundance of descriptive program studies (WRC, 2011). Preliminary planning assessments should collect disaggregated data (e.g., age, sex, socioeconomic status) to increase targeted programming (WRC, 2011). For unaccompanied youth or youth without documentation, age can be estimated based on a combination of the youth's memory, physiological indicators, and age corroboration from any available sources close to the youth. Undocumented youth can also be categorized as "undocumented" for data collection purposes, creating an independent category to better document the volume of unaccompanied and undocumented youth. There should be a greater use of quantitative and qualitative research methods and longitudinal program monitoring and evaluation to follow participant progress after completing interventions (Chaffin, 2010; WRC, 2011). Funders and practitioners in the humanitarian aid and development sector should partner with external researchers to conduct rigorous impact evaluations (Chaffin et al., 2015). Program success should be based on participant abilities to secure and maintain employment as opposed to the number of participants served (WRC, 2013; Chaffin et al., 2015). Programming should be based on theories of change to better measure program impact (Chaffin et al., 2015). Agencies should incorporate more rigorous monitoring and evaluation systems for youth programming that involves continuous evaluation regarding participation, processes, and outcomes (Zimmerman, 2014). It would be ideal to develop a set of tools that could be used across agencies with varying youth ages to measure outcomes including assets, educational aptitude, and life skills (Olenik & Takyi-Laryea, 2013). Programming should be based on evidence of what works for different subgroups of conflict-affected youth, and data collection

should include participation from academics, civil society, and governments (IRC, 2012; WRC, 2011; Chaffin et al., 2015).

Programming Recommendations

Holistic Participatory Programming

Agencies should take comprehensive holistic approaches to livelihoods programming for conflict-affected youth to increase participation and improve outcomes. These approaches create multiple reinforcing assets in youth, and should be a combination of non-formal education, financial literacy, ICT skills, work readiness skills, life skills, language, and on-the-job training (WRC, 2011; WRC, 2013; Chaffin, 2010). The goal of livelihoods programming should be to increase transferrable skills and create a seamless transition from school to work for conflict-affected youth (WRC, 2013).

In fragile contexts globally, youth have proven to be highly effective at locating and engaging their marginalized peers for inclusion in activities (Chaffin, 2010; Zimmerman, 2014). Agencies should involve youth from the onset of emergencies to increase youth buy-in (Zimmerman, 2014). Agencies should ensure youth participation during the assessment, development, implementation, monitoring, evaluation, and management of livelihoods programs to ensure that programs build on youth's existing skills and account for their goals and aspirations. Youth leadership affirms them as capable actors in society (Zimmerman, 2014). Agencies must address access barriers by improving youth access to information about livelihoods programming and engaging youth at the local and national policy level (WRC, 2011).

Adjust Programming to Meet Needs of Diverse Populations

Practitioners should account for diversity among conflict-affected youth in programming rather than taking a one-size-fits-all approach. This requires input from youth about their barriers to participation, and greater flexibility in program modules to accommodate the various needs of youth. Module packages should be offered as stand-alone or combination interventions depending on youth needs and funding (Chaffin et al., 2015). These accommodations may include flexible hours for working youth (e.g., after-work, evening, and weekend hours); accelerated learning programs, catch up courses, and online/distance learning for out-of-school youth (e.g., teaching through ICT, mobile training, and cooperatives); and childcare and home-

based income strategies for youth parents (Chaffin, 2010; WRC, 2011; WRC, 2013). Practitioners should provide meals for participants to encourage attendance (Chaffin et al., 2015). Programs should be accepting of students from different educational backgrounds by accommodating lower education levels with supplemental literacy and numeracy programs (WRC, 2011). For youth who must work, it is important to provide flexible, modular programming allowing them to build life skills, relationships, and livelihood skills while remaining employed (Chaffin, 2010). To address gender disparities, practitioners can adopt girl-friendly approaches, portray women in non-traditional roles, use gender equitable language, and provide both sanitary and security services to increase female attendance (Chaffin, 2010; WRC, 2011). Agencies should explore agricultural education training and agro-processing as alternatives to TVET in rural environments.

Successes in Livelihoods

The best livelihoods programs set realistic expectations in terms of outcomes (WRC, 2011). Agencies should define timelines with exit strategies to determine service delivery and investment priorities (Chaffin et al., 2015). Agencies have found that providing follow up services such as advising, mentoring, and further training to program participants is helpful in sustaining job placement (WRC, 2011). Additionally, ICT, job search abilities, and entrepreneurship have been found to make youth marketable in conflict settings (Olenik & Takyi-Laryea, 2013).

Distance education has proved to be a promising approach to increase participation, particularly mixed models of online learning with in-person tutoring (Zeus, 2010). Student-centered participatory pedagogical approaches have shown to be useful for conflict-affected youth livelihoods (WRC, 2011). Accelerated learning programs using condensed curricula help youth catch up on lost education and non-formal education programs have proven to address access barriers for youth (Zimmerman 2014). Multi-component programs are associated with increased self-esteem, lower depression, and lower aggression among conflict-affected youth (Olenik & Takyi-Laryea, 2013). Findings indicate that youth experience increases in health behaviors (e.g., personal hygiene practice, protective sexual behaviors) from interventions that include a health education or life skills component (Olenik & Takyi-Laryea, 2013).

Increase Financial Capital

To ensure that livelihood programs lead to paid sustainable employment following program completion, agencies should conduct market assessments in all settings where livelihood programming is being considered. WRC has created a market assessment toolkit that could be useful in this endeavor (see Bidwell et al., 2013). Additionally, agencies should partner with financial service programs to provide credit, management of personal and business finance, and savings for youth (WRC, 2011; WRC, 2013). For example, WRC (2013) found that small business incubation systems in Somalia increased self-employment. In this model, established migrant small business owners withheld a portion of new migrant employee pay to train the employee in how to run a business. The pay was accumulated until the employee had sufficient funds to start a satellite business in a new location, with the original owner maintaining a share of the new business. Chaffin et al. (2015) recommend experimenting with cash transfers as an alternative or complement to livelihood development toolkits.

Increase Social Capital

To build social capital for conflict-affected youth who have often been separated from family and social networks, agencies should work to build informal local youth networks in safe places (IRC, 2012). Agencies can also work to pair youth with adult role models from the community, and can facilitate volunteer programs to improve relationships with host communities (WRC, 2013). Agencies should also build relationships with civil society, government, and the private sector to create employment opportunities for youth (WRC, 2011). Building partnerships with communities, parents, and educators ensures ownership, relevance, and sustainability of livelihoods programming (Zimmerman, 2014). These opportunities can include partnerships with private firms for training, which promotes competition and thus improves quality among trainers, as well as partnerships for apprenticeships, internships, and mentorships (WRC, 2011; WRC, 2013). Religious groups are a strong source of community support in numerous contexts, and should be viewed as an asset (Zimmerman, 2014).

Discussion

The programmatic mapping revealed a tendency across agencies to conduct and report similar literature reviews about livelihoods programming for conflict-affected youth: a duplication of efforts with no cross-agency coordination or information sharing. One of the primary challenges

in adapting conflict-affected youth livelihoods programming is the categorization of youth as a crosscutting subject area, at the same time as different definitions are used to delineate the category into children (below age 18) or adults (above age 18). This broad and unclear categorization of youth causes funding and programming to be divided across sectors (i.e., education, health, livelihoods), implicitly covering youth without focusing on them as a specific group. This vertical approach to youth programming occurs despite cross-agency recognition that youth benefit from comprehensive cross-sectoral programs. Additionally, despite recognition of the value of livelihoods programming for conflict-affected youth, agencies widely recognize a lack of funding to adequately implement programs.

A common theory driving existing funding and programming is the use of livelihood programs as a counterinsurgency strategy in fragile states. In this framework, youth are broadly categorized as "lost generations," "looking for trouble," or "ticking time bombs" for violence (Izzi, 2013). Governments and donors have increased investment in youth livelihoods programs as a counterinsurgency strategy despite data indicating that this alone is ineffective to deter youth involvement in armed groups. Although increased funding to youth livelihoods is positive overall, this approach disempowers youth by categorizing them as potential enemies that need to be controlled, and ultimately fails in both increasing youth employment and decreasing youth involvement in violence.

The mapping identified a variety of intervention approaches for youth livelihoods in conflict, with TVET identified as the most common strategy. Agencies underscored the value of work readiness training programs and multisectoral holistic youth programs, but identified a shortage of both in the field. Most importantly, agencies identified a lack of data to guide the development and implementation of livelihoods programming for conflict-affected youth. This is problematic given increased donor focus on cost-effectiveness and evidence-based practice. Troublingly, donors demand evidence of effectiveness, but do not provide sufficient funds to allow for this evidence to be collected.

IV. Rapid Evidence Assessment (REA)

Introduction

The programmatic mapping revealed a lack of evidence regarding livelihoods programming for conflict-affected youth, yet funders continue to invest into this area. The purpose of this REA is to identify the empirical evidence base for effective conflict-affected adolescent livelihoods programming.

Methodology

REA methodology was used for this rapid literature review due to the short timeframe of the search and the limited existence of rigorous evaluation designs (Appendix 2).

Search Strategy

The REA initiated with the development of the research question: what types of livelihoods programs are effective in securing and maintaining employment, increasing income, and/or improving health outcomes for conflict-affected youth? The research methodology initiated with intuitive research methods using the following key term combinations:

Concept	Key Terms
Conflict-Affected	Armed Conflict, Conflict, Displace, Fragile context, Humanitarian emergency, Refugee, Violence, War
Youth	Adolescent, Child, Teenager, Youth
Livelihood	Livelihood development, Economic development, Workforce development, Job readiness, Technical, Vocational, Remedial, Education, Entrepreneurship, Microfinance, Income support, Apprenticeship, Internship, Mentorship
Program	Intervention, Program, Training
Evaluation	Evaluation, Effectiveness, Impact Assessment, RCT

The first search strategy involved searching existing systematic reviews and meta-analyses of livelihood interventions for conflict-affected youth. After consultation with a medical and economic librarian, the second search strategy identified the following databases for peer-reviewed English literature.

- Medicine: Cochrane, Global Health, Medline

- Economics: Econlit

- Education: Academic Search Premier, Education Resource Complete, ERIC

Third, bibliographic mining of literature identified during the programmatic mapping and initial research strategy identified additional resources. Fourth, recurrent authors were searched by

name for additional sources. Finally, a manual search of the grey literature (e.g., ALNAP, the Educational Quality Improvement [EQUIP123] program, Google Scholar, ILO, Poverty Action Lab, Secure Livelihoods Resource Consortium, UNDP, USAID, World Bank Library, and the Youth Employment Inventory [YEI]) identified during the programmatic mapping and initial review was used to supplement the limited peer-reviewed English literature relating to livelihoods programming for conflict-affected youth.

Eligibility Criteria

Inclusion Criteria

Documents subject to full review were those that adhered to the following criteria:

(1) Publication described an intervention administered in a conflict, post-conflict, or fragile state;

(2) Youth aged 15-35 of both genders were specified as primary recipients of the intervention or evaluation component (age range was expanded due to the limited number of rigorous studies for this topic);

(3) Publication described a livelihoods intervention;

(4) Publication utilized an experimental randomized or quasi-experimental research design or provided information about an impact evaluation;

(5) Outcomes of interest included: securing employment, sustaining employment, increased earnings, or improved health outcomes.

Exclusion Criteria

Non-English publications and those published before 2001 were excluded from this study.

Search Results

Existing Systematic Reviews

There are currently no systematic reviews or meta-analyses related specifically to livelihood interventions for conflict-affected youth, although numerous agencies have conducted general reviews, which were combed for inclusion (Appendix 3).

Author & Grey Literature Search

Traditional systematic review of databases was unsuccessful in uncovering sufficient evidence-based literature related to conflict-affected youth livelihoods programming. An

alternative strategy involved searching the publications of recurring authors cited in the literature related to this topic. The World Bank database revealed the YEI, the first comprehensive database providing comparative information on youth employment interventions globally. The database contains over 400 youth employment programs from 90 countries and includes data about program design, implementation, and achieved results (YEI, n.d.). This dataset was manually combed for all impact interventions conducted in fragile states.

Included Studies (Appendix 4)

The search identified a total of 3299 documents, of which 75 titles, abstracts, and executive summaries were manually screened for relevance because they related to youth and livelihoods in conflict, post-conflict, or fragile settings (a number of these titles were duplicates). The systematic reviews revealed a total of 764 interventions, 14 of which were manually searched. The database search revealed roughly 1900 articles, 15 of which were searched. Bibliographic mining of programmatic mapping materials and author searches revealed another ~35 studies, 10 of which were searched. The grey literature search revealed roughly ~600 interventions, ~35 of which were searched. Unfortunately, the majority of ILO's impact evaluations on youth livelihood programs in fragile states were not publicly available, and the short time period of this REA made outreach to authors impossible. Ultimately, only 8 of the 75 manually searched documents were included for review.

Key Findings
Types of Interventions, Strength, & Direction of Association

Intervention	Description	Studies	Strength of Association in Isolation	Direction of Association
Agricultural Education Training	Training in agricultural methods to increase production.	UNDP, 2011	Weak	Increased average income (in combination)
Apprenticeship, Internship, or Mentorship Program	Pairing with a skilled worker for on-the-job training (WRC, 2013).	ARC, 2006; McKenzie et al., 2016; Attanasio et al., 2011	Strong	Increased securing employment Increased work time
Business & Financial Literacy	Teaches how to use and manage money to make good financial decisions (Making Cents).	Bruhn & Zia, 2011	Medium	No effect on business creation or survival No effect on business income

				No effect on business growth Improved business practices and investments
Cash Grant for Startup	Provision of cash to invest in development of skilled trade or business.	ARC, 2006; Blattman et al., 2013	Strong	Increased business assets Increased work time Increased income
Life Skills Training	Teaches transferrable skills that prepare youth for success in the labor market and participation in society.	ARC, 2006; MCI, 2015; UNDP, 2011	Medium	Increased income (in combination) Increased securing employment (in combination) Increased work time (in combination)
Microenterprise (Entrepreneurship) Development	Combination of activities aimed to help youth develop small businesses. Definition varied by evaluation.	ARC, 2006; UNDP, 2011	Weak	Increased income (in combination)
Technical Vocation Education Training (TVET)	Teaches general education, technical training in trade, and practical employability skills (Zeus & Chaffin, 2011; Buscher, 2008; UNESCO, 2010; WRC, 2013).	MCI, 2015; Medina & Nuñez, 2005; Attanasio et al., 2011; UNDP, 2011	Medium	Increased securing employment (in combination) Increased work time (in combination) Increased income (in combination)
Work Readiness Skills Training	Training in skills that help youth find and keep employment) (Zeus & Chaffin, 2011; Buscher, 2008; UNESCO, 2010; WRC, 2013; Olenik & Takyi-Laryea, 2013).	McKenzie et al., 2016	Strong	Increased securing employment (in combination) Increased work time (in combination)

Geographic Regions and Population

The included impact evaluations assessed interventions conducted in Afghanistan, Bosnia-Herzegovina, Colombia (2), Guinea, northern Uganda, Sierra Leone, and Yemen. Afghanistan and Yemen are considered to be in active conflict (UCDP, 2016). Bosnia-Herzegovina, Colombia, Guinea, northern Uganda, and Sierra Leone are categorized as post-conflict countries

(UCDP, 2016). The populations targeted by these interventions ranged in age from 15-35. A large quantity of included and excluded studies categorized youth as ranging from ages 15-35 due to the definitional variation of youth across cultures. Due to the limited amount of research available on livelihood interventions for conflict-affected youth, this REA adapted the broader categorical definition than the standard 15-24.

Study Quality

Three studies (Orazio et al., 2011; Blattman et al., 2013; McKenzie et al., 2016) in this REA were categorized as strong quality; three as medium quality (Bruhn & Zia, 2011; Medina & Nuñez, 2005; MCI, 2015); and two as low quality (ARC, 2006; UNDP, 2011) based on the source of the publication, the quality of research methodology, and sample size. It was difficult to isolate the effects of specific livelihood strategies because most studies aggregately evaluated interventions with multiple components. Only 3 studies evaluated singular interventions: Blattman et al. (2013) evaluated unconditional start-up grants; Bruhn and Zia (2011) evaluated business and financial literacy training; and Medina and Nuñez (2005) evaluated TVET. Additionally, 2 studies evaluated multiple intervention programs in one country (Medina & Nuñez, 2005; UNDP, 2011).

Outcomes & Impact

The outcomes of interest for this REA were secured employment, sustained employment, increased work time, increased earnings, or improved health outcomes (including mental health) post intervention. Most interventions used a combination of livelihood strategies to improve youth outcomes, making it difficult to determine the impact of singular interventions.

Review of Literature Reviews

Existing literature reviews revealed conflicting reports of livelihood intervention impact for conflict-affected youth. Betcherman et al. (2007) reported no major differences across intervention categories (i.e. ALMPs, entrepreneurship, skills training, or multicomponent interventions) in terms of impact, implying a need for policymakers to consider programming tailored to the specific needs of youth in different contexts. In an evaluation of livelihood programs for all ages in fragile states, Blattman and Ralston (2015) found that skills training and

microfinance had little impact on poverty relative to program cost, but capital injections stimulated self-employment. Both entrepreneurship and TVET programs were found to positively impact youth in low and middle-income countries.

Singular Interventions

Cash Grants

Blattman et al.'s (2013) intervention aimed to help impoverished and unemployed youth in northern Uganda become self-employed artisans through the provision of unconditional cash grants to start skilled trades. Grant recipients saw increases in business assets by 57%, hours worked per week by 17%, and earnings by 38%. More specifically, grant recipients saw an increase in capital stocks of US$219 two-years post intervention (a 131% increase over controls) and of US$130 four-years post intervention (a 57% increase over controls). Grant recipients increased their weekly work hours by 4.1 hours two-years post intervention and by 5.5 hours four-years post intervention, representing a 17% increase in work hours compared to controls. Grant recipients also increased their earnings by US$8.50 (41% increase compared to controls) at midline and US$10.50 (38% increase compared to controls) by end line (Blattsman et al., 2013). In terms of gender differences, females in the intervention group increased business assets by more than 100% compared to controls and males in the intervention group increased stocks by 50% compared to controls. Although weaker in quality, ARC's (2006) evaluation of the grant component of the PATHWAYS program in Guinea found that grant recipients reported income increases ranging from 18% to 365% (average of 55%) and 60% of grant recipients saw an income increase of at least 50%.

Financial Literacy Training

Bruhn and Zia (2011) evaluated the effectiveness of a 6-module business and financial literacy-training curriculum on business creation and survival, business performance, business growth, and business practices/investments in Bosnia-Herzegovina. Unfortunately, they found no significant effects of financial literacy training on business creation and survival, business performance (in terms of increased profit), or business growth. However, they found that participants adapted better business practices than controls: 10.6% more likely to invest savings in business; 16.5% more likely to implement new production processes; and 22% less likely to

use personal finance accounts for business finances. Unfortunately, 39% adherence to treatment due to reported time constraints for non-participants weakened the impact of their study.

TVET

Medina and Nuñez (2005) evaluated the effectiveness of public sector TVET, private sector TVET, and TVET of the Servicio Nacional de Aprendizaje programs in Colombia on income, finding that only private sector training on male youths had an effect on increasing income. However, their findings were of medium quality as the scope of their data was broad (i.e., national survey data) and not based on randomization.

Aggregate Interventions

Internship + (Work Readiness Training or TVET)

McKenzie et al. (2016) evaluated the effectiveness of a joint 2-day work readiness training and 6-month internship program on securing employment, increasing employment, and increasing monthly earnings for youth in Yemen, finding that the probability of work during the internship period increased by 42% for the intervention group compared to controls. The intervention also increased work time for the intervention group by 3.4 months/year during the intervention time period, and by 4.7 hours more per week after the intervention.

Attanasio et al. (2011) evaluated the effectiveness of a combination program providing 3-months of in-classroom TVET and 3-months of on-the-job training on securing employment, increasing employment time, and increasing monthly earnings for low-income youth in Colombia. The program had significant effects on female youth, increasing employment by 6.1%, increasing monthly workdays per month by 1.46, increasing work hours per week by 3.41, and increasing salary by 22% compared to controls. For male youth, the combination program increased the likelihood of formal sector work by 5.3% (Attanasio et al., 2011).

Life Skills + (TVET or Grants, Apprenticeship, & Microcredit)

Mercy Corps International (MCI) (2015) evaluated the effectiveness of their INVEST program in Afghanistan, which provided a combination 6-month TVET and life skills training to increased employment placement, employment sustainability, and work time for youth. The

combination program increased the likelihood of employment by 36% and the probability of having paid work in the last four weeks by 12.7% (MCI, 2015).

American Refugee Committee's (ARC) (2006) combination program of life skills training and microenterprise development (i.e., startup grant, apprenticeship program, and microcredit access) sought to increase income for youth in Guinea. The combination program decreased the number of participants making less than US$1/day by 10% (ARC, 2006).

Agriculture + Life Skills + TVET + Enterprise Development

UNDP (2011) evaluated 17 youth livelihood programs in agricultural education training, life skills training, TVET, and enterprise development in Sierra Leone, finding that, in aggregate, the programs increased average income from 69%-300% (average of 197%).

Limitations

The REA identified few rigorous academic studies evaluating the effectiveness of specific livelihood interventions for youth in conflict, post-conflict, and fragile settings. For this reason, the review expanded to include grey literature documenting impact evaluations of programs in these settings. The rigor of these impact evaluations varied substantially: only four were RCTs, quasi-experimental designs lacked randomization, and multiple evaluations had high attrition rates. Additionally, two evaluations (Medina & Nuñez, 2005; UNDP, 2011) measured the cumulative impact of multiple programs on employment and income in a given country, making it impossible to distinguish which interventions contributed to the increased income and employment. Similarly, for programs with multiple components, the aggregate impact data made it impossible to determine the impacts of individual intervention strategies. Furthermore, most studies relied on self-reported survey data, which is unreliable. The REA only included documents printed in English, limiting the number of inclusion studies. Finally, a significant challenge of the REA was defining conflict, post-conflict, and fragile settings for inclusion and exclusion of studies. Many evaluations were categorized as taking place in these settings, despite regional variations and time frames of conflict. This definitional variation made it difficult to assess whether programs truly influenced outcomes for conflict-affected youth, or for youth populations more generally (e.g., Kenya, Nigeria, Uganda).

Recommendations

Similarly to the programmatic mapping, the REA emphasized the need for greater research to evaluate the effectiveness of different livelihood strategies in increasing income and employment for conflict-affected youth. Based on the literature, cash grants for startup enterprises; on-the-job training through internship placements and apprenticeship programs; and TVET programs based on market assessments were successful in increasing income and employment. Financial literacy in isolation was not helpful for these outcomes.

Discussion

Despite global recognition of the needs of conflict-affected youth, this review reveals a severe shortage of rigorous evidence detailing the effectiveness of specific livelihood interventions on income and employment for conflict-affected youth. Of thirteen livelihood strategies identified in the programmatic mapping (i.e., ALMPs; agricultural, entrepreneurship, financial literacy, ICT, life skills, livelihoods, on-the-job, TVET, and work readiness training; capital injections; job placement programs; and microfinance), the REA found evaluations for only eight (i.e., agricultural, on-the-job, entrepreneurship, financial literacy, life skills, TVET, and work readiness training; and capital injection), and these were often applied in tandem, making it difficult to measure the true impact of any intervention in isolation. Only four of eight total included studies or evaluations used an RCT design to measure impact. The majority of program evaluations in the grey literature were process evaluations providing limited data about program impact on income and employment.

The findings of this REA demonstrate a complete failure by policymakers, practitioners, and researchers to adequately address youth livelihoods in conflict settings. The lack of data is more startling given the documented importance of livelihoods programming for conflict-affected youth and the heavy investment by donors to these effects. The REA reveals an accountability failure to beneficiaries, practitioners, and donors alike. For youth, lack of data-driven programming is a waste of their time, energy, and investment. For practitioners, lack of data-driven programming leads to decreased funding for this area of work. For donors, lack of data-driven programming is a failed development investment. The REA points to the need for an accountability framework for both donors and practitioners to measure impact and improve youth employment.

V. Concluding Recommendations

The purpose of this thesis project was to identify existing livelihoods policy and programming for conflict-affected youth through a programmatic mapping and to bridge the gap between policy, programming, and research by identifying evidence-based livelihood interventions that work for conflict-affected youth through a REA. The programmatic mapping highlighted four themes: 1) a shortage of data on what works for whom; 2) a need for cross-sectoral programming approaches for conflict-affected youth; 3) a tendency towards donor-driven programming approaches specifically related to counterinsurgency strategy; and 4) an absence of youth-specific programming and policy due to their categorization as a cross-cutting thematic area. The REA supported the programmatic mapping, finding a severe shortage of evidence for conflict-affected youth livelihoods programming**.** Taken together, the thesis project reveals a catch-22: donors do not want to invest in programs without evidence and practitioners cannot rigorously evaluate interventions without sufficient donor investment. Moreover, the catch-22 applies to the very category of study: there is little clarity on who is the young person of concern, and when programs clearly delineate age groups, they tend to categorize youth as children (under age 18) or adults (over age 18), or merge attention to youth as related to young men's involvement in armed groups.

In a study of donor behavior in financing humanitarian aid, Smillie and Minear (2003) found that the effectiveness of humanitarian aid is compromised by numerous factors, including donor-driven intervention approaches and a lack of standard definitions, timeframes, and priorities for practitioners. The programmatic mapping emphasized the challenge of channeling resources for youth across sectors. The definitional confusion of youth leads to a disjointed effort in policy and programming across all sectors. An absence of a clear policy mandate for the protection of youth (ages 15-24) further isolates them from receiving assistance: youth are simultaneously everywhere and nowhere. Further exacerbating this challenge is the difficulty of categorizing conflict-affected youth livelihoods. Livelihoods programming for conflict-affected youth falls on the nexus of humanitarian aid and development work. Humanitarian aid typically provides assistance on the basis of need following the principles of proportionality, neutrality, impartiality, and independence (Smillie & Minear, 2003). Conflict-affected youth fall directly under the umbrella of humanitarian aid. Contrastingly, livelihoods programming involves

economic development and sustainability. This categorical confusion can lead to further challenges in addressing the livelihood needs of conflict-affected youth.

It is notable that market driven livelihood approaches are more successful in securing youth employment than donor driven approaches. In the last 20 years, there has been an increase in interactions between political-military strategy and humanitarian aid (Smillie & Minear, 2003). Humanitarian aid is often viewed as a complement to political strategy, with more resources diverted towards conflict prevention (*ibid*). Youth livelihoods programming is often used as a direct political strategy to decrease young men's involvement in armed conflict. To date, there is no causal evidence linking youth employment to decreased conflict, and programs that have set out to evaluate this connection have shown that programs with this objective do not work (Proctor, 2015). This donor-driven approach to programming has proven ineffective in multiple sectors of humanitarian and development aid including youth livelihoods in conflict. Effective interventions in conflict-affected youth livelihoods require a reevaluation of this programming approach.

Limited data from the REA shows that cash grants for startup enterprises, on-the-job training through apprenticeships and internships, and demand-driven TVET programs are successful in increasing income and job placement for conflict-affected youth. However, both the REA and the programmatic mapping revealed a severe shortage of rigorous impact evaluations for livelihood interventions in conflict, post-conflict, and fragile states. These findings point to a problematic policy and programming structure in which donors, practitioners, and researchers recognize the need for, and subsequently demand, evidence about what programs work for whom in conflict settings, but there is no real knowledge exchange or evidence production.

These findings lead to the fundamental question: how do we build accountability to agencies and donors for holistic youth wellbeing, and more specifically, what can we do to increase adoption and scale-up of evidence based interventions for conflict-affected youth? Below are a set of recommendations to address the circular problem of youth livelihoods programming: although donors demand evidence-based results, limited funding is directed towards piloting programs and collecting data to evaluate the effectiveness of different livelihood approaches.

1. **Youth should be an independent policy and programming category within bilateral, multilateral, and nongovernmental organizations.** Rather than categorizing youth as

either children (under age 18) or adults (over age 18), or incorporating youth across different sectors for programming, agencies should develop a specific programming office dedicated to the multiple needs of youth (as a broad age category). This office would coordinate across sectors as needed for the provision of services, but would operate with the specific mandate to provide for youth.

2. **Donors should invest in pilot livelihood intervention programs with rigorous impact evaluations that identify the effectiveness of specific interventions on specific youth populations.** These pilot studies should take the form of both independent training modules (e.g., effects of TVET on income generation and employment) as well as cross-sectoral modules (e.g., health education and TVET on income generation, employment, and health outcomes). These interventions should be based on theories of change that connect individual program components (e.g., TVET) to specific indicators (e.g., increased income), providing evidence for how the connection works (Chaffin et al., 2015). These interventions can be piloted in different contexts, modified, and implemented in others.

3. **Practitioners should embed monitoring and evaluation (M&E) into livelihood intervention strategies**. To maximize the impact of livelihood interventions in conflict settings, implementing agencies should incorporate M&E into routine program implementation. Although this may require an initial increase in resources, the evidence collected from these interventions will increase impact and result in greater funding from donors.

4. **Agencies should create a web platform to share research and best practice for youth livelihoods programming in conflict.** Due to increased attention to effectiveness and accountability in the humanitarian aid sector, a number of web platforms have emerged with the intention of increasing information sharing across agencies (i.e., ALNAP, HPN, INEE, YEI, and Secure Livelihoods Resource Consortium). However, data on youth livelihoods is disaggregated across these platforms and most platforms fail to include the resources or evaluations of large bilateral and multilateral organizations (e.g., ILO, UNDP, USAID). Currently, no single platform contains data regarding all impact evaluations conducted for youth livelihoods programming in conflict settings. The

substantial number of literature reviews regarding youth livelihoods in conflict settings found during the programmatic mapping point to a need for combined data sharing.

Conclusion

The purpose of this thesis project was to understand existing policy, programming, and research regarding livelihoods for conflict-affected youth. The review revealed substantial gaps in critical data for effective programming, despite a global recognition of the need. The hope is that this project can contribute to existing literature, but more importantly, provide preliminary recommendations for policymakers and practitioners to better serve the needs of this highly vulnerable population. Given the significant correlation between employment and positive health outcomes for youth in conflict settings, these initial recommendations can help inform policy and programming to increase employment, increase income, and consequently improve both physical and mental health outcomes for youth in conflict settings.

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Appendices

Appendix 1: Programmatic Mapping Included Documents

	Included Documents
Conflict-Affected Youth Livelihoods Programming	Buscher, D. (2008). Marginalizing youth: how economic programs fail youth in post-conflict settings. New york, NY: WRC. Chaffin, J. (2010). Framing Paper 1: Education and Opportunity: Post Primary Income Growth. New York, NY: INEE. Chaffin, J., Buscher, D., and Ng, T. (2015). Strategic Research into the Youth Education Pack Model. New York, NY: WRC. IRC. (2012). Youth and Livelihoods: Investing in a Youth Dividend. New York, NY. WRC. (2011). Tapping the Potential of Displaced Youth: Guidance for Non-formal Education and Livelihoods Development Policy and Practice. New York, NY. WRC. (2013). Economic Empowerment of Urban Refugee Youth: Key Principles. New York, NY. Zeus, B. (2010). Framing Paper 3: Whole People, Holistic Approaches: Cross-Sectoral Action and Learning. New York, NY: INEE. Zeus B. and Chaffin, J. (2011). Education for Crisis-Affected Youth: A Literature Review. New York, NY: INEE Adolescent and Youth Task Team.
Conflict-Affected Youth Programming (General)	Evans, R., Forte, C., and Fraser, E. (2013). UNHCR's Engagement with Displaced Youth. Geneva, Switzerland: UNHCR. Lowicki, J., & Pillsbury, A. (2000). Untapped potential: adolescents affected by armed conflict, a review of programs and policies. New York, NY: WRC. Sommers, M. (2001). Youth Care and Protection of Children in Emergencies: A Field Guide. Fairfield, CT: STC.
Conflict-Affected Youth Education Programming	Burde, D. (2005). Education in Crisis Situations: Mapping the Field. Washington, D.C.: USAID. Olenik, C. and Takyi-Laryea, A. (2013). State of the Field Report: Examining the Evidence in Youth Education in Crisis and Conflict. Washington, D.C.: USAID. Zimmerman, L. (2014). Ensuring Protection and Education in Emergencies: Lessons Learned from Youth and Adolescent Programming. Geneva, Switzerland: Global Education Cluster.
Conflict-Affected Youth Livelihoods and Peacebuilding Programming	Proctor, K. (2015). Youth and Consequences: Unemployment, Injustice and Violence. Seattle, WA: Mercy Corps International. USAID. (2005). Youth and Conflict: A Toolkit for Intervention. Washington, D.C. Walton, O. (2010). Youth, armed violence, and job creation programs: a rapid mapping study. Birmingham, UK: GSDRC.

Appendix 2: REA Methodology

A Rapid Evidence Assessment (REA) methodology provides a structured and rigorous research and quality assessment of existing evidence about a policy or practice issue using systematic review methods to search and critically appraise existing research, but are not as exhaustive as a systematic review (DFID, 2015a). The transparency of the review processes and decisionmaking allow for a rigorous and systematic analysis of existing research and evaluations during a limited timeframe (ILO, 2015). REA was used in this context due to a short timeframe and the limited availability of primary evaluations with rigorous evaluation designs.

The process for this REA was as follows:

1) Development of a clearly defined research question: what types of livelihoods programs are effective in securing and maintaining employment, increasing income, and/or improving health outcomes for conflict-affected youth?

2) Definition of a search strategy and inclusion and exclusion parameters (i.e., time period, geographic scope, language):

Inclusion Criteria	Description
Publication Date	2001-2016
Language	English
Geographic Location	Fragile State, Conflict, Post-Conflict Setting: due to the definitional confusion of conflict, post-conflict, and fragile states, this review used the following criteria for geographic identification: 1) Documents that explicitly made note of the state's conflict, post-conflict, or fragile state status; 2) Data from the Uppsala Conflict Data Program, the Fund for Peace Fragile States Index, and the g7+ organization; 3) States that repeatedly appeared in searches using the terms "conflict", "post-conflict", or "fragile"; 4) For states with regional variation in conflict (e.g., Colombia, Kenya, Nigeria, Uganda) – the intervention regions were identified and cross-referenced for conflict-specific interventions.
Target Population	Youth aged 15-35 (age range was expanded due to the limited number of rigorous studies for this topic)
Intervention Type	Life skills training; apprenticeship/internship/mentorship programs; job readiness training; entrepreneurship training; financial literacy; job placement programs; livelihoods training; microfinance programs; technical vocational education training; agricultural training; information and communications technology training

Evaluation Method	Experimental randomized design (i.e., random assignment, quasi-random assignment, non-random assignment with matching, non-random assignment with statistical control) or quasi-experimental design (i.e., use of comparison group, pre-post tests)
Outcomes	Securing employment, sustaining employment, increasing employment, increased earnings, or improved health outcomes (including mental health)

3) Data screening, coding, and appraisal according to parameters related to the quality of evidence: degree of relevance to REA question, reputation of sources, and robustness of research methods.

- Screening: Selected document abstracts and executive summaries were screened for inclusion criteria (above)

- Coding: framework to identify best available evidence for the review including topic, source reliability, research methods, and sample size.

- Appraisal: expanded on coding template to include information on the quality of the methodology of each document.

4) Detailed analysis and synthesis of the literature using a detailed recording grid before consolidation of evidence base. Key findings were extracted from each study, and documents were synthesized to answer the REA question and address gaps in the literature. The qualitative thematic synthesis provided information about intervention types and impact on beneficiaries.

Appendix 3: REA Systematic Reviews

Citation	Scope of Review	Findings/Relevance
Angel-Urdinola et al., 2010	Summary analysis of 17 active labor market programs in Arab-Mediterranean countries based on the YEI.	Study simply benchmarked programs against international best practices rather than evaluating impact. Not conflict-specific but included studies in several fragile states (e.g., Algeria, Egypt, Gaza and West Bank, Lebanon, Syria, and Yemen).
Betcherman et al., 2007	Summary of data available on 289 interventions in 84 countries on the YEI in 2007.	Found that most common intervention for youth is skills training, but there were no significant differences across categories of interventions in terms of impact and cost effectiveness. Not conflict-specific but included programs from Bosnia-Herzegovina, Colombia, and Uganda.
Blattman & Ralston, 2015	Literature review of unspecified number of studies evaluating evidence-based interventions for labor market and entrepreneurship programs in poor and fragile states.	Found that skills training and microfinance had little impact on poverty reduction, but capital injection increases self-employment. Not youth or conflict specific.
Cho and Honoroti, 2014	Meta-regression analysis of 37 impact evaluations of entrepreneurship programs in developing countries.	Found that entrepreneurship programs had a positive impact on youth, business knowledge, and practice but no translation to increased income. Not youth or conflict specific, but included 5 studies involving youth and 3 in fragile states.
EQUIP123, 2012	Summary of 26 of EQUIP3's youth livelihoods, literacy, and leadership programs.	Found that youth need practical, marketable skills; income and networks to earn; actionable information about opportunities; and affiliation. Heavy focus on performance rather than impact evaluations. Not conflict specific.
ILO, 2015a	Thematic evaluation of 240 ILO projects in 11 post-conflict, fragile, and disaster-affected states.	ILO's most common interventions are upstream (e.g., training, technical advice, capacity building) and downstream (e.g., training) approaches, followed by livelihoods. Approximately 12% of the interventions involved youth livelihoods. ILO evaluations were not publicly available for inclusion.
ILO, 2015b	Systematic review of 29 of ILO's youth and women's employment programs in the Middle East North Africa region, a large portion of which occurred in fragile states.	Found that ILO short-term participation and implementation targets were reached; stakeholders had positive views of programs; employment during project period was difficult to assess; and short-term projects were linked into

		technical approaches within countries. ILO is improving the quality and relevance of education and training; promoting entrepreneurship and business development; and enhancing labor market efficiency. ILO evaluations were not publicly available for inclusion.
Pompa, C., 2014	Literature review of 14 TVET and skills training interventions in fragile and conflict-affected countries.	Found that holistic and well-designed TVET programs can potentially significantly improve livelihood opportunities, but could not adequately assess return-on-investment of TVET programs. Not youth specific, and did not restrict the search to impact evaluations.
Tripney et al., 2015	Systematic review of 26 TVET interventions to increase employment of youth in low-and middle-income countries.	Found that the overall mean effect of TVET on paid employment and earnings were positive; the effect on work time was positive but insignificant. Not conflict specific but included 5 studies conducted in conflict/post-conflict settings (Bosnia-Herzegovina and Colombia).
USAID, 2013	Literature review of 33 studies focused on youth education in crisis- and conflict-affected settings.	Found that holistic programming is most common approach to youth education in conflict. Identified need for data collection in conflict. Suggested youth participation in programming. Heavy focus on performance rather than impact evaluations.

Appendix 4: REA Included Studies

Study	Intervention	Design	Sample Size - Study Quality	Data Collection & Analysis	Outcomes of Interest
ARC (2006) Evaluation Report	PATHWAYS (Guinea) Combination Approach: 1) Community involvement 2) Life skills training (5-module) 3) Microenterprise development (startup grants, apprenticeship, microcredit)	Quasi Experimental	5000 youth accepted; 4617 completed Weak No randomization No statistical analysis No data on long term impacts	Study uses a self-designed KAP assessment. Pre-post quantitative survey at 1 year. No information on statistical analysis.	Income
Attanasio et al. (2011) Journal Article	Jovenes en Accion (Colombia) Combination Approach: 1) TVET (3-month) 2) Internship Training (3-month)	Experimental (RCT)	3540 youth; 81.5% completion Strong	Pre-post-post quantitative Survey at baseline, end of program, & 13-15 months follow-up. Stratified random assignment Weighted average of program effects Regression analysis	Employment status Work time Income Formal/Informal Employment
Blattman et al. (2013) Journal Article	Youth Opportunities Program (Uganda) Unconditional Cash Grant for Startup	Experimental (RCT)	11288 youth; high response rate (97% baseline, 85% at 2 years, 82% at 4 years) Strong	Pre-post-post quantitative survey at baseline, two years, and four years after intervention. Stratified random assignment Weighted average of program effects Least squares regression analysis	Income
Bruhn & Zia (2011) Working Paper	Partner Microcredit Foundation (Bosnia-Herzegovina) Business & Financial Literacy Training (6-module)	Experimental (RCT)	445 youth; high attrition (39% attendance in in treatment) Medium	Pre-post-post quantitative survey at baseline, six months, and one-year. Stratified random assignment Difference in means tests Regression analysis	Business creation and survival Business income Business growth Business practices and investments
McKenzie et al. (2016)	Enterprise Revitalization and Employment Pilot (Yemen)	Experimental (RCT)	583 youth; 78.7% response rate	Pre-post quantitative survey at baseline and 19-months post	Securing employment

Working Paper	Combination Approach 1) Work Readiness Training (2 days) 2) Internship (6 months)		at end line Strong	intervention. Stratified random assignment Difference in means Regression analysis Cancellation of 2nd year of program due to conflict.	Work time Income
Medina & Nuñez (2005) Working Paper	3 Program Categories: SENA Program, public sector programs, private sector programs (Colombia) TVET	Natural Experiment	6657 youth Medium	Cross-sectional comparison using existing quantitative national survey data. No randomization	Income
Mercy Corps International (2015) Evaluation Report	INVEST Program (Afghanistan) Combination Approach (3-6 month) 1) Life skills training 2) TVET	Quasi-experimental	1129 youth Medium	Cohort comparison quantitative survey Logit regression Least squares regression No randomization	Securing employment Income
UNDP (2011) Evaluation Report	17 youth employment programs (Sierra Leone) Programs focus on: 1) Agricultural education training 2) Enterprise development 3) Life skills training 4) TVET	Quasi-experimental	376 youth Low	Cohort comparison quantitative survey Stratified random sampling Regression analysis No randomization	Income