

Slido Questions from the Youth Panel at the InnovATE Symposium

The following questions and answers are those that were unable to be answered during the “Co-Creating Agricultural Education and Training Systems for Youth Development” plenary session of the InnovATE Symposium on June 8th and 9th. Answers are provided by panelists Glen Shinn, of Global Consulting Solutions and Texas A & M University; Julieta Mazzola, EARTH University; Lisa Lauxman, 4-H USDA; and Miles Sedgwick, Rana Labs and AgriJoven Project.

Q: To Earth University: Do you have a challenge on community fatigue in interacting with students who come year in and out for experiential learning?

Julieta Carolina Mazzola: The course (Work Experience – Community Escenario) is working in parallel with and guided by a Community Development Program (CDP). The CDP, with the community, defines the strategic lines and the objectives that the University is going to work in the communities. This CDP and the community define a project from 3 to 5 years that could include technology transfer, trainees in sustainable agriculture and good practices, the strengthening of organizational capabilities, capacity building in entrepreneurial aspects, and others. The CDP has 3 professional experts (social, economic and environmental) that are going to work alongside this project. So, the course and the interaction with students is part of this development project and the communities are motivated to be part of both processes the development project and the academic process (Course); the farmers, groups, associations, schools and other community members can select it along the period.

Hazel Wilson Nash:

Accelerated Primary Program certified by Ministry of Education

FADCANIC's accelerated primary program offers young people who have dropped out of school by third grade, a flexible curriculum to re-engage with their education and obtain a sixth grade certificate. The program is six months long and it covers the core subjects of Math, English, Spanish, and Life Skills in daily five-hour sessions. Once they are certified they can continue their education in any local school or chose a vocational trade of their choice.

Community based vocational courses

For youth who have not completed secondary school- FADCANIC offers short and flexible community based vocational courses in different trades of their interest which includes: employability training, business training, and seed funding for small youth business; individual

support services for job placement for participating youth, professional references to support the youth's job search, and personalized tutoring and coaching to develop youth business plans.

Q: How is nutrition integrated into curriculum at these institutions?

Julieta Carolina Mazzola: I can give an example related with the course Work Experience – Community Escenario (EARTH). In this course, the university students have the opportunity to work with primary school's students teaching classes about environmental and ecological aspects (water, soil, air, biodiversity and waste management), the importance of agriculture, vegetables and good nutrition, constructing green houses, vegetable gardens, and planting vegetable with them. These vegetables are part of children's diet because they are going to eat them for lunch in the Cafeteria. This is a good example of experiential learning; they plant the vegetables, they know their characteristics/properties and eat them.

Q: Youth efforts often focus on education. However, many youth are lost to the school system between primary and secondary school. How do we capture those who have been LOST to the school system?

Glen Shinn: No quick, easy solutions are available. Early interventions reduce "dropout losses." Important to distinguish between "reactive rescue" and "proactive engagement." Pittman et al., (2003) provides five suggestions on "recapturing" youth. Rodríguez & Conchas. (2009) ask, "what do youth voices tell us? One voice says, "I can turn to the 'club' and they would make me feel like I am somebody."

Pittman, Irby, Tolman, Yohalem, & Ferber (2003). Preventing Problems, Promoting Development, Encouraging Engagement: Competing Priorities or Inseparable Goals? Retrieved from <http://forumfyi.org/files/Preventing%20Problems,%20Promoting%20Development,%20Encouraging%20Engagement.pdf>

Rodríguez & Conchas. (2009). Preventing Truancy and Dropout Among Urban Middle School Youth Understanding Community-Based Action From the Student's Perspective. Retrieved from <http://journals.sagepub.com/doi/pdf/10.1177/0013124508325681>

Over 25 percent of the world's population is less than 15 years old. The figure is 41 percent in the least developed countries and 16 percent in more developed countries.

Q: YD efforts seem to focus a lot on education and work skills. What about programs to empower youth and provide sense of community and identity?

Miles Sedgwick: AgriJoven Youth Savings and Loan groups (YSLAs) provide youth a sense of community and identity. First, the groups meet weekly so consistency is key in keeping youth engaged. Additionally, each youth group has a technician that serves as a mentor and a trainer which continues to build trust and motivation among the group. During the formalization of each group, the YSLA design their group name and rules for their group. Many groups are based in indigenous communities and programming is adapted to complement their needs.

Glen Shinn: Youth organizations (4-H clubs, FFA chapters, Boys & Girls Clubs) organize at the local (community) level and structured through “program of activities” that are developed with youth voice. “Members” are given responsibilities for programs with guidance from “advisers.” Experiences are structured step-wise as “1) learning to do; 2) doing to learn; 3) earning to live; 4) living to serve.” Respect and recognition are products of collaboration. A sense of ownership is fostered.

Q: What is the connection of AgriJoven to formal school-based agricultural education?

Miles Sedgwick: At the moment, there is not a formal connection in place. However, other projects we are involved in do have formal connections with schools throughout Guatemala, including some ag high schools that receive USDA/USAID support. There is certainly a case to be made that the technical skills we are building would benefit traditional learning approaches and will look for ways to make this happen in the months ahead – this is a great idea.

Q: Have any of you worked with youth to empower them to create the programs that THEY want for their development? How can we give them the voice and a "seat at the table" in developing YD programs?

Miles Sedgwick: The Youth Savings and Loan program within AgriJoven is a great way to get youth to contribute towards acquiring new technologies to help in their agricultural production, and the decision they make on what to acquire is largely left up to them. We have created a video about this in our overview of the program here:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=uYqpdrunAS0>

Q: How has the 4-H program been adapted to serve other contexts around the world?

Lisa Lauxman: 4-H is a model program which has been adapted within the U.S. as well as globally. HOW... well, there is definitely components that are similar in the skill development area and the emphasis on relationships between youth and adults is consistent. Teaching methods, the learn by doing, varies somewhat depending upon the system of relationship to education within a country.

Glen Shinn: 4-H programs follow a developmental continuum of 1) “awareness, interaction, and mastery” to measure student learning and success, and 2) students move along a developmental continuum as they as mature and develop leadership skills.

Q: How do you manage youth academic training and 4-h activities?

Lisa Lauxman: Youth academic training and 4-H activities. First I would suggest that 4-H is more than activities and does include the ability to enrich, enhance, even support the youth’s academic training or skill development necessary within the formal school setting. 4-H even helps other youth-serving participants gain their badges. 4-H’s adaptability is what allows for the youth academics to be enhanced as it’s in the experience, the intentionally framing the learning to go beyond the academics, the memorization, to challenge youth, to have them explore further the what if’s and the whys.

Q: How can we better use American ag ed resources (ffa, 4-H, Ag ed departments and extension) to support international Ag ed programs?

Lisa Lauxman: Find an extension land-grant partner institution that is already doing work in country. There are examples of this already where states/cities/universities have relationships within a country. Building upon that creates a sustainable relationship.

Glen Shinn: A strategy for enhancing global engagement in agricultural education is described at https://www.ffa.org/SiteCollectionDocuments/Ag_Ed_Global_Engagement_Strategy.pdf
One source of instructional materials is described at <https://www.myimsservices.com/>

Q: How can international 4-H programs benefit American 4-H programs and students?

Lisa Lauxman: There are opportunities through the State 4-H Int’l exchange program to help the U.S. program broaden. I suggest connecting to build relationships for both youth and adults, paid and volunteers to learn more exchanges and study tours.

Q: How are you combatting the challenges posed by the lure of migration, youth violence, the drug trade, and other "alternative economies" - particularly with young men and the pressures of "masculinity.

Miles Sedgwick: The purpose of the video production trainings we provide at Rana Labs are primarily directed at youth who live with the lure of migration, violence, drugs and other social challenges. For both young men and women in our workshops, the opportunity to create videos not only to express themselves but to learn a trade they can use to generate income is a major factor in their decision to attend. We often see in our workshops that participants open up on camera far more than they would have otherwise. We also use the video trainings as a way to engage youth with new agricultural technologies – bringing experts from other USAID and private sector partners – so that youth can see not only video but also agricultural technologies as a way for them to be pioneers within their communities.

Hazel Wilson Nash: Promoting, Mass media non- violence campaign, Facebook de Change now let's do it <https://www.facebook.com/CambiaAhoraNi/>

Educational Fairs for young Mothers (16 -25 years), Responsible Fatherhood training for young Fathers (16-25 years).Safe vacation campaigns. link: <https://www.facebook.com/Fadcanic-127637583978610/>

Decent jobs through employment or self-employment, providing non-refundable in kind- “seed fund” for youth with viable business plans. FADCANIC also coordinates with local institutions promotional youth business fairs.

Q: Have you observed spillover effects of youth interventions on adults in the communities? What are some examples?

Lisa Lauxman: This was how 4-H started – as a spillover effect of changing practices in farming, food safety, to the skeptical adults – who had to see it to believe it 😊

Miles Sedgwick: One of the AgriJoven youth – Judith – was exposed to biological control agents through her group's relationship with an exporter. Judith saw the positive effect in terms of product quality and profitability on her community's demo plots. The exporter then facilitated a visit to the manufacturer of the biological control products. Judith was so motivated with what

she saw that she excitedly told her parents about this experience and they are now considering switching from synthetic chemicals to biological products.

Glen Shinn: Youth development is one element of a larger community development effort. In many communities, risk aversion and uncertainty cut across economic, social, political, and cultural issues. By encouraging youth as agents of community change, adults can observe “innovation” without risking investments or social status. In the late 19th century, children’s corn clubs and tomato clubs began using “innovative” practices in small trial plots. In an effort to promote the benefits of “scientific farming methods”, Seaman Knapp (1903) conducted carefully planned field demonstrations. Demonstrations reduce uncertainty and risks while encouraging broader trials and adoption.

Hazel Wilson Nash: In the case of FADCANIC’s Agroforestral and Environmental school, it is still too early to see substantial impacts at higher levels. There are examples of new farming techniques being adopted in the communities because of the work of the students, but such impacts are still quite weak. This, however, is natural given the short history of the school and the large time scale necessary for such processes to take hold. Nevertheless, there is every reason to expect that in the long term, the School will have an impact on production methods in the villages.

Q: Curious on efforts to connect curriculum to Youth Org activities: How are developing the Career Readiness/Interpersonal Skills through the curriculum in a leadership laboratory of Youth Org?

Glen Shinn: The *JMG [Junior Master Gardener] Teacher & Leader Guide* provides elementary teachers with the tools to teach the world of gardening with eight chapters of novel, hands-on and proven lessons. The curriculum also helps develop life skills, includes career exploration and provides opportunities for students to culminate the JMG experience with service-learning projects. As students complete areas of study, they can earn different recognition certifications including designation as Certified Junior Master Gardeners. More information is available at <http://jmgkids.us/> and <http://jmgkids.us/teachers/standards/>.

Additionally, the Texas Master Gardener Program is a volunteer development program offered by Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service. The volunteers are highly trained and provide proven, research-based educational programs to the citizens of Texas. More information is available at <http://mastergardener.tamu.edu/> and <http://mastergardener.tamu.edu/become/texas-master-gardener-volunteer-agreement/>

Q: 4-h and FADCANIC Are government programs; EARTH is independent with its own endowment; the Guatemala program is a USAID project. How do these funding differences influence ability to avoid politics?

Miles Sedgwick: At Rana Labs, our primary goal is to create opportunities for youth and stimulate knowledge-sharing across the region. With proper guidance, we try to shape videos that will advance agricultural extension. It is not our role to influence or engage with politics, so this has never been an issue.

Lisa Lauxman: First of all, 4-H has no direct funding line – it's at the discretion of the extension director within each land-grant institution to determine to support positive youth development. 4-H has been a political lever for funding Cooperative extension. The unleashing of the "green machine" of youth and adults does influence and certainly there are pros and cons. Yet, it's the sustainability that is critical. 4-H in the U.S. has a strong public-private partnership with many private support coming locally, through state 4-H foundations and with the National 4-H Council. It's critical to really consider how to build support publically and privately for positive youth development programs.

Hazel Wilson Nash: FADCANIC is and NGO, not a government program, It receives outside funding from diverse sources (Norwegians, Austrians, USAID, and others). In the intermediate term, it might be possible to achieve that some of the running costs of the Agroforestral School – for instance teacher salaries – are covered by the Ministry of Education. There are, however, dangers that an increased state influence over the running of the School may lead to the deterioration of the quality of the services provided. It is worth considering whether closer links and cooperation with the state should be established.