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Children Speak

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A Newsletter of the Organization for the Protection of Children's Rights

Message from the President

The Copenhagen Summit has come to a close without delivering a deal despite the ramifications of its decisions on the future of humanity. The end of the meeting saw leaders of the US and the BASIC group of countries (Brazil, South Africa, India and China) chiselling out a last-minute deal in a back room as though the nine months of talks leading up to this summit, and the Bali Action Plan to which they had all committed two years previously, did not exist. Can we afford such decisions? Don't the world's children deserve better?

Hope lies in people and organizations around the world working for the betterment of children, and in sustainable best practices that have been developed by them. In this issue, we put forth 4 such projects from the United States of America, Guatemala, Canada and Namibia.

Through trust and truth, Roca, an organization dedicated to youth development, aims to transform their lives focussing on aspects such as increased financial literacy,

employment retention and decreased criminal delinquent behaviour. For its part, Grupo Ceiba in Guatemala provides hope for children and youth on non-formal education and employment training delivered through its 'Street University'.

A group of secondary school students and college graduates have joined to form a Youth Action Committee to provide justice, empowerment and voice to children, while young researchers at the University of Namibia work towards decreasing the incidence of HIV / AIDS among children and youth / adults through education.

These groups and people have contributed positively to the lives of youth and children. Their commitment needs to be understood and these models need to be emulated by all who are concerned with a sustainable future. ■



Riccardo Di Done



TRUTH, TRUST, TRANSFORMATION



**By Anisha Chablani, Deputy Director, Roca,
Chelsea, Massachusetts, The United States of America**
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Roca means rock in Spanish. The objective of Roca is to create a foundation as solid as a rock for young people to change their lives through truth, trust and transformation.

It starts with being truthful about everything: what is going on with young people, the challenges in their lives, the realities of their communities, that change is hard but possible, and what we can and can't do for them. Then we build trust through long-term relationships and stay in them with young people, and the adults and institutions in their lives. Transformation comes through participation in life skills, education and employment. We are hopeful no matter what and believe that as long as people are alive, everything is possible.

Why We Are Here

Roca's mission is to help disengaged & disenfranchised young people move out of violence & poverty. The organization's goals are:

- To relentlessly engage young people in transformational relationships over long periods of time.
- To create opportunities for young people to develop competencies in life skills, education, and employment.
- To demonstrate a powerful solution for young people to move out of harm's way and become economically independent.

Theory of Change

When young people are re-engaged through positive and intensive relationships they can gain competencies in life skills, education and

employment that move them toward living out of harm's way and towards economic independence.

Who We Serve

Roca's target population is 14-24 year olds who are:

- Street, gang and/or court involved
- On the verge of dropping out of school, or being expelled or have dropped out
- Young stressed parents facing multiple barriers
- Refugees and immigrants struggling with language barriers, trauma, isolation and lack of supports

What We Are Accountable For

- Engagement - Sustained constructive peer & adult relationships
- Economic Independence
- High School Graduation/Connection to post-secondary education (in school youth)
 - Increased Educational Gains (out of school youth)
 - Employment Retention
 - Increased Financial Literacy
- Out of harm's way
 - Decreased Criminal/Delinquent Behavior
 - Decreased Pregnancies
 - Increased Social and Emotional Skills

How We Do It

Roca has developed a comprehensive and strategic intervention model designed to

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Alternative Education & Training

By Carlos Enrique de León Andrade
Virtual Education Coordinator and Legal Representative,
Grupo Ceiba Association, Guatemala

www.grupoceiba.org/ www.tgc.grupoceiba.org



The Street University

This program allows us to have primary contact with youth in the streets through cultural, sport, and artistic activities. We also have a training and education center and the Central American Youth Parliament on Drugs, Youth Violence and Development.

Alternative Formal Education

This program works with children and young people between 2 and 25 years of age, many of whom are beyond the scholastic age that the traditional educative system does not accept. This program works on virtual mode and is certified through the Ministry of Education of Guatemala.

Educational Enterprise

This program trains children and youth over 14 years to graduate as technicians in diverse technological specialties, in addition to courses in human development and labor.

After being certified, students enter a curriculum bank where the Office of Labor Services helps them find work and places them in companies in the country or who form part of the cooperative of technological services in a Technological Park.

Case Study

We work with children from 2 years of age in pre-scholastic education to young people 25 years of age, in addition to assisting parents with free courses in computers and in pursuing secondary or higher education.

This is done by means of identifying social networks, organizing group discussions with parents and community leaders, democratizing communication services, and setting up Centers of Human Development that are opened



to the public 7 days a week.

Methods

The programs allow flexible schedules to allow students to focus on approved studies. We use technology as a support tool. Efforts are directed to fortify youth in human development and

learning. We also provide educational scholarships for students with limited possibilities providing them financial support to continue their studies.

Results

Grupo Ceiba works with children and youth that live in marginal areas and has 90% permanence in the different programs. Currently, Grupo Ceiba has 1,500 direct beneficiaries and 5,000 indirect beneficiaries. We have two cooperatives: one which reconditions and repairs computers and the other for web page and graphic design. Both cooperatives are administered by past program

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Justice, Empowerment, Voice



Emily Chan, Community Development Lawyer,
Justice for Children and Youth, www.jfcy.org

The Youth Action Committee (YAC) at Justice for Children and Youth (JFCY) is comprised of young people - in secondary school (ages 13 – 17) or recent secondary school graduates who are in their first year of university or starting out their careers - from diverse backgrounds who bring their unique perspective to addressing legal issues facing youth.



The mission of the JCY is legal assistance for young people: justice, empowerment, voice.

The mandate of the Youth Action Committee is to raise awareness of the legal rights of young people, reach out to the community, connect youth to useful resources, and act as an advisory committee to JFCY.

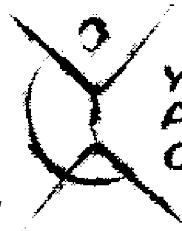
A YAC member holds the volunteer position of Youth Coordinator. YAC members are involved at every stage of the programming - from scheduling, setting agendas, to project selection, research and implementation. JFCY staff involvement, especially with respect to legal content, is continual and plays a supportive role in YAC activities.

Setting

The majority of meetings take place in the JFCY boardroom. YAC members have on-site access to a staff facilitator and office resources. Meetings and activities also take place outside of the JFCY offices. For example, when YAC is making a presentation or facilitating a workshop.

Intervention

JFCY has a confidentiality policy that is explained and a contract for each volunteer to sign. YAC members take on the responsibility to



YOUTH
ACTION
COMMITTEE

train new members on the anti-oppression framework that govern their activities.

Methods of Measurement

Methods of measuring success have been informally gauged through YAC member's feedback, level of involvement in YAC activities, and level of involvement in JFCY activities.

YAC activities includes

- Attendance at meetings (for training, goal setting and project development),
- Preparation and training for new members,
- Taking on responsibilities for research and preparation work outside of meetings, and
- Making presentations for youth and other audiences.

JFCY activities includes

- Being a youth advisory committee,
- Providing consultations to our policy committee,
- Presentations at our Annual General Meetings,
- Having a YAC member be a member of our Board of Directors.

Some of YAC's Recent Activities

- Initiatives to educate young people about their rights to an education, including the

development, publication and dissemination of public legal education materials,

- Challenging the disproportionate impact of school fees on lower-income students
- Raising awareness about special education needs
- Meetings, presentations and discussions on various legal issues with JFCY's policy committee
- Assist JFCY in training volunteer lawyers to represent students facing education issues

Results:

Our members self-report that being a part of this program has increased confidence, knowledge and leadership skills. Many of our members have won awards and bursaries for their activities. ■

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Alternative Education & Training

participants.

This program regularly confronts two main difficulties. First is the wave of violence that currently exists in the country which causes many students to desert these programs. Second is the economic factor which causes youth to be absent due to demands of work and providing for their families.

Future Research

Our focus will be on finding ways to retain students in the different programs, to increase the amount of educational scholarships to attract and benefit more students.

We will also be looking for alliances with companies that are committed socially, seek increases in subsidy from the Ministry of Education, and continue with the support of the Monterrey technological Institute in Mexico. ■

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TRUTH, TRUST, TRANSFORMATION: ROCA

support sustainable behavior changes over time. Roca's intervention model is based on commonly accepted stages of behavior change and includes:

- Transformational relationships (Roca's intensive case management model)
- Relentless outreach and follow up
- Life skills, educational and pre-vocational, and employment programming
- Work with institutional partners

A Framework for Change

Change is a process that happens over time and in stages. These *Stages of Change* include:

- Pre-Contemplation = NO
- Contemplation = MAYBE
- Planning = GETTING READY
- Action = ACTING DIFFERENTLY
- Sustaining = MORE THAN 51%

As change is often difficult for any of us, relapse is often part of the process and can happen at any point in the stages of change.

How We Use the Stages of Change

- Assessment of where young people are in relation to their readiness, willingness, and ability to change
- Guide to inform youth workers' use of self in their work with young people
- Foundation for designing engagement and competency building programming that meets people where they are at

Performance Based Management

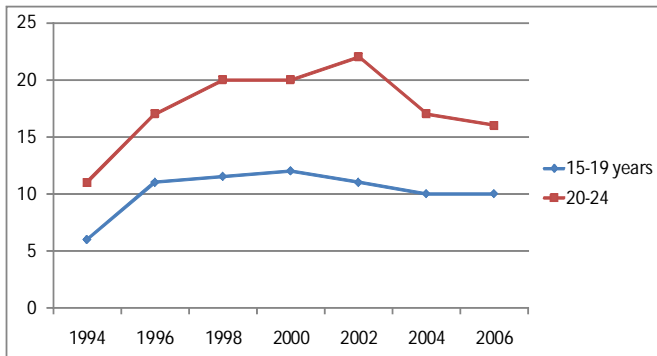
Efforts to Outcomes Database-customized to:

- Reinforce model and support intentional and strategic work with young people that drives to outcomes
- Understand the process of change over time
- Track youth worker contacts/efforts, participant attendance, staff supervision and competency development
- Measure outcomes through assessments, skill attainment scores, employment placement and retention
- Run individual staff, program, and organizational reports on key performance indicators ■

Behavior Change Communication (BCC)

for HIV/AIDS at the University of Namibia

By Janet Ananias, Lecturer, University of Namibia, Windhoek, Namibia



HIV/AIDS prevalence rate amongst youth (Sources, MOHSS)

Namibia are selected. About 500 participants - students from African countries such as Zambia, Zimbabwe, Angola, Botswana, Tanzania, are divided into smaller groups among social workers. The Programme is guided by already existing National and Institutional Policies such as:

- UNAM HIV/AIDS policy
- National Policy of HIV/AIDS in the Education sector

Goals of the Programme

- Reduce HIV/AIDS infection rate among young people
- Increase knowledge & skills to prevent HIV infection
- Paradigm shift in terms of sexuality & cultural beliefs and practices

Tools & Ways to achieve the goals

- Group discussion, awareness campaigns, role plays, presentations, films
- Twice a week hourly contact for 5 weeks
- Program is repeated twice a year due to number of participants

Program content

- Basic Medical aspects of HIV/AIDS
- Psychosocial factors such as culture, gender, poverty, peer pressure, alcohol and drugs,
- Behavioral change: communication skills, assertiveness, decision-making skills, goal setting

Setting

Different venues at the University of Namibia such as class rooms, auditorium, Olupale square

Case study

In the first year, male and female students in the age group of 18 to 20 years representing young people from the various regions in

- National Policy on HIV/AIDS
- National Policy on Orphans and vulnerable children

Methods to determine success

Verbal and written evaluations at end of the programme

Results

- More than 5000 young people were reached through the program
- Program resulted into open discussions about taboo topics
- Participants challenged each others belief systems.

Changes in behavior

The 2006 National Sentinel Survey Report reveals a decrease in the HIV/AIDS prevalence in the age groups 15-19 and 20-24 years.

Limitations

Time: The program lasts for five weeks only, and can be extended.

Size of participants: Many students were reached though the program, but smaller groups may result in better outcomes

Follow-up to be strengthened

Future research

To understand what was the impact of this intervention on the youth to bring about behavioral change. ■