

Livelihoods

Livelihoods initiatives should be part of every humanitarian programme engaging young people.¹³² Young people with adequate human, social and financial capital can contribute to creating sustainable economies and peaceful, prosperous societies. Acquiring the tools for earning a livelihood, such as life skills, training, job search assistance and other support, not only helps young people to find employment but also enhances their self-esteem, confidence and sense of control over their lives, while also lowering the likelihood that they will engage in risky behaviours such as substance abuse, violence and premature sex.¹³³ The International Labour Organization (ILO) is supportive of older adolescents (15 years and above) working, as long as the work is safe and supportive to their development.

Crisis-affected young people often have a harder time integrating into the labour market for social and psychosocial reasons,¹³⁴ because of missed education, the poor quality of the education system, lack of documents to show their qualifications, or because they are barred from working or from leaving their community. Often their only livelihood options are in the informal economy, where income is erratic, the lack of a contract leaves them vulnerable to exploitation; working conditions are poor; and social protection is weak or non-existent. For young people attempting to earn a living on the street, the risks of crime and violence can be high.

Young people (especially, but not only, young women) also face disproportionate barriers to accessing land, pasture and other natural resources for their livelihoods, compounding the problems of joblessness and food insecurity. Access to these resources is often controlled by elder-led systems of governance that exclude young people from meaningful decision-making and systematically deny them their rights when disputes occur. In many countries, young men cannot get married without providing an adequate dowry of livestock, cash and/or agricultural goods; therefore being excluded from accessing land, pasture and other resources also means being denied the ability to marry. Lacking viable livelihood options, vulnerable young people are often forced into dangerous and illicit forms of resource extraction such as poaching, cattle rustling, charcoal burning and artisanal mining – which increases their risk of criminalization, as well as recruitment into armed groups. Youth may need help with negotiating rental agreements for farmland, negotiating for durable access to land, pasture and natural resources, and support to be included in decision-making bodies and dispute-resolution mechanisms (see the [TIP SHEET ON HLP](#) ▶).

Young people are also often excluded from financial services, either by policy or prejudice. As they mature and become heads of households, young people need access to and a working knowledge of savings and loans to start a business, and to grow and protect their assets.

Agencies support a wide array of economic strengthening interventions for young people: cash or voucher assistance (CVA; see [BOX 18](#) ▶); income-generating activities; infrastructure and public works projects; livestock and farming support; financial inclusion (microcredit, savings); access to markets (value chain development, market systems approaches); job creation and entrepreneurship; and technical and vocational education and training (TVET); among others. Financial inclusion efforts fall into two categories: providing access to credit, and support for savings mechanisms. Group savings programmes such as village savings and loan associations (VSLA) are a hybrid of both, providing a variety of services normally provided by formal financial institutions.

Box 18: Cash or voucher assistance (CVA)

CVA is increasingly the preferred economic strengthening tool in humanitarian settings because of its greater flexibility, higher client satisfaction, scalability, and lower cost.¹³⁵ Some agencies have set ambitious targets for increasing the amount of their assistance delivered in the form of cash. CVA can be delivered unconditionally, or with conditions such as taking children to a health clinic or attending school/training. There are currently no reliable data indicating how many young people are direct beneficiaries of CVA in the wake of a humanitarian crisis.

Some agencies are reluctant to give cash to young people, especially those under 18. But, however concerning it may be, many adolescents are working in humanitarian settings, supporting their families and handling cash. Even when Livelihoods programmes do not directly engage with them, adolescents are affected by these household economic interventions because they usually work in household microenterprises.¹³⁶ Restricting them from directly accessing cash assistance may be putting them, and those in their care, at further risk of negative coping. The Alliance for Child Protection in Humanitarian Action now recommends including adolescents as direct beneficiaries of cash assistance.¹³⁷

However, CVA carries the risk of community jealousy, stigma, bullying and theft. Agencies should assess and mitigate the risk from cash assistance to young people, using the tools below.

Keep in mind: The blending of services and cash is likely to be more effective than either component of an intervention on its own. There is great scope for complementarity between cash and sector-specific programming in ways that can create impact.¹³⁸



Resources

Alliance for Child Protection in Humanitarian Action, **Cash Transfer Programming and Child Protection in Humanitarian Action: Review and opportunities to strengthen the evidence**, 2019, <https://resourcecentre.savethechildren.net/library/cash-transfer-programming-and-child-protection-humanitarian-action-review-and-opportunities>

Cash Learning Project (CaLP), **Minimum Standard for Market Analysis**, 2018, www.cashlearning.org/downloads/calp-misma-en-web.pdf

The Cash Learning Partnership (CaLP), **Programme Quality Toolbox**, 2020, <https://www.calpnetwork.org/resources/programme-quality-toolbox>

The Transfer Project, **Adolescents**, <https://transfer.cpc.unc.edu/adolescents>

United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), **Guide for Protection in Cash-based Interventions**, 2016, www.womensrefugeecommission.org/gbv/resources/1280-protection-in-cash-based-interventions

TVET remains popular among young people and implementing agencies, despite the high cost, a disappointing record of connecting young people to employment, and an overemphasis on 'blue-collar' trades. TVET is still widely implemented today, mostly for its non-economic benefits: increased self-confidence; social interaction; community recognition, etc. While there is limited evidence that employment programmes by themselves can curb engagement in political violence, they are still a preferred approach of actors working to promote stability in fragile and conflict-affected countries.¹³⁹

The best training approaches for displaced young people are those that can lead to durable solutions upon return, resettlement or local integration.

Regardless of the type of Livelihoods programme, agencies should be concerned about who accesses services, how they are designed and publicized, and how they benefit young people. Young people should be engaged in a participatory process to understand local labour and goods markets, as well as the markets where they may eventually (re)settle. They should not be vocationally streamed according to discriminatory sociocultural norms – for example, by sex or gender identity.

Box 19: From school to work

Education and livelihood issues are intertwined, and the best humanitarian programmes for young people work to find linkages between the two. For example, a market assessment or labour market analysis is needed to inform a Livelihoods programme, but also helps to ensure that training is demand-driven and that courses offered by Education actors are relevant. Tackling the livelihood needs of crisis-affected young people requires agencies to create pathways from the world of education and work. Understanding labour market information helps stakeholders (policy makers, private sector employers, students and their parents, education and training providers, and others) to make more informed choices related to their career, or public and private workforce investments.¹⁴⁰ One factor that has been associated with greater success is the early involvement of the private sector (private companies) in connecting educated and trained youth with job opportunities.

"Invest in youth education that tackles employability skills."



NRC, UNICEF and UNFPA consultations with Syrian refugee and Jordanian young people in Jordan



Tip sheet

Key actions for Livelihoods programming at each stage of the humanitarian programme cycle (HPC)

| HPC phases | What to do | Tips for young people's participation |
|--------------------------------------|--|--|
| Needs assessment and analysis | <p data-bbox="92 853 188 947">1</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> → Collect data on the differing needs of young people with regard to Livelihoods, and analyse these data disaggregated by sex, age and disability. → Analyse data to understand: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> → how young people are currently and were previously engaged in earning a livelihood; → livelihood assets of young people, the skills they possess and those that they would like to gain; → the main barriers (social, cultural, health-related, educational, financial, etc.) that young people face when trying to support themselves and their families. → Compile youth-related findings from joint market assessments, such as the Emergency Market Mapping and Assessment (EMMA), Market Information and Food Insecurity Response Analysis (MIFIRA), Rapid Assessment for Markets (RAM), political economy analysis (PEA), gender assessments, or any youth labour market assessments conducted by the government or individual agencies. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> → Hold consultations – grouped by age and sex of participants – with a diverse cross-section of young people to identify needs and barriers with regard to livelihoods. → Seek feedback from young people on facilitators and barriers to accessing safe and decent work opportunities. |

HPC phases

What to do

Tips for young people's participation

Strategic planning

2

- When analysing demands in the labour market, ensure that the Livelihoods response plan addresses the needs of young people identified during the needs assessment, and from any other data on young people and the labour market.
- Ensure that the project activities and outcomes in the Livelihoods response plan directly address the specific needs of young people.
- Specify in the Livelihoods response plan opportunities to access training and skills development in related sectors, notably Shelter, WASH, Health, Food Security and Nutrition, in order to build the human, social and financial capital of young people – including those living in vulnerable situations – through age-appropriate linkages between education, training and livelihoods.
- Ensure the Livelihoods response plan considers:
 - whether refugees or internally displaced persons (IDPs) can work or start businesses without being exposed to legal or protection concerns;
 - which paperwork, qualifications and skills are needed by young people to access available jobs;
 - which skills training is relevant to the context and linked to labour market survey findings and research into durable solutions.
- Assess potential risks to young people's, especially adolescent girls', safety and well-being that may arise due to participation in Livelihoods programming including cash-based interventions.

- Facilitate the participation of adolescents and youth in strategic planning to enable them to identify opportunities and mitigate risks in the Livelihoods sector.
- Involve a diverse cross-section of young people in the design of Livelihoods programmes.

Resource mobilization

3

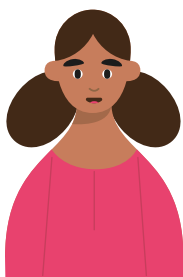
- Gather information and disseminate key messages on young people's needs and priorities to influence the Livelihoods sector funding priorities.
- Report to donors and other humanitarian stakeholders on gaps in funding for Livelihoods programmes for young people.

- Engage young people in developing advocacy messages for Livelihoods sector funding.
- Seek young people's views and feedback, especially on how their needs are being addressed, and how they're being engaged in the Livelihoods sector, when developing proposals and reports for donors and partners.

| HPC phases | What to do | Tips for young people's participation |
|--------------------------------------|--|---|
| Implementation and monitoring | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> → Implement Livelihoods programming that targets the needs of young people and draws on their capabilities, such as by: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> → connecting Livelihoods programmes with technical and vocational training and formal or non-formal education, as well as psychosocial support; → linking vocational training to real job opportunities and on-the-job training, cultivating a cadre of businesses, local authorities and NGOs who could offer apprenticeships to graduates of youth education programmes; → referring young people wishing to pursue their own businesses to business management and entrepreneurship training, financial services and mentorship programmes; → designing programmes that offer a diverse menu of skills training options, such as: United Nations languages, skilled trades, information and communication technologies (ICTs), health care and accounting; → provide training and opportunities for young people to engage in specific skills for emergency response – e.g., humanitarian principles, Sphere Standards, monitoring and evaluation, DRR, Health – to enhance their employability among humanitarian agencies. → Combine economic strengthening interventions with non-economic interventions that include: protection messaging; health, including sexual and reproductive health (SRH); life skills; environmental education; psychosocial support; and peace initiatives. → Partner with skilled CVA providers to find an appropriate cash or voucher modality for young people, starting with those living in vulnerable situations, and ensure that young people are aware of these opportunities. → Involve young people in Livelihoods education and campaigns, and provide them with information about Livelihoods relevant to young people in their communities. → Develop and maintain a feedback mechanism for young people to provide their perspectives on the effectiveness and quality of Livelihoods programmes. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> → Engage youths as trainers and mentors for younger adolescents in programmes to provide guidance in the transition into employment. → Engage young people in the efforts to minimize the environmental impact of programmes, including through sustainable sourcing of raw materials. → Consult young people in the ongoing monitoring and adaptation of Livelihoods programmes, including training programmes and job placements. |



| HPC phases | What to do | Tips for young people's participation |
|--|---|---|
| <p>Implementation and monitoring</p> <div style="background-color: #0070C0; color: white; border-radius: 50%; width: 40px; height: 40px; display: flex; align-items: center; justify-content: center; margin: 10px 0;">4</div> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> → Address barriers or biases in Livelihoods programming that may compromise the safety of adolescent girls and young women, and other at-risk groups. → Ensure that the process for identifying Livelihoods programme participants is discussed and understood in the local community and made transparent, so that Livelihoods interventions do not further exacerbate any pre-existing tensions in society.¹⁴¹ → Manage young people's expectations around employment outcomes following technical and vocational training and offer follow-up support to help them find work or succeed in self-employment. → Support development of 'green' livelihoods, such as in recycling, methane capture and use, renewable energy, etc. → As appropriate, work in coalition with other agencies and young people to advocate for refugees' right to work, and/or freedom of movement. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> → Engage youths as trainers and mentors for younger adolescents in programmes to provide guidance in the transition into employment. → Engage young people in the efforts to minimize the environmental impact of programmes, including through sustainable sourcing of raw materials. → Consult young people in the ongoing monitoring and adaptation of Livelihoods programmes, including training programmes and job placements. |
| <p>Operational peer review and evaluation</p> <div style="background-color: #0070C0; color: white; border-radius: 50%; width: 40px; height: 40px; display: flex; align-items: center; justify-content: center; margin: 10px 0;">5</div> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> → Review projects within the Livelihoods response plan to assess to what extent the needs of adolescents and youth were effectively addressed through humanitarian programming. → Document and share good practices on addressing the Livelihoods needs of young people. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> → Facilitate the participation of young people in project reviews. |



"Support innovative ideas in livelihoods such e-marketing and do not stick with traditional livelihoods programming such as tailoring. This will require an understanding of what is new and which sectors have potential."