

Conflict Prevention

The working group on Conflict Prevention had a broad and general discussion. Raising all different issues, questions and proposals, both to the World Bank (WB) and to youth in general.

The WB can have a role in Conflict resolution and prevention. But the WB lack the moral position of the type United Nations enjoy.

- Therefore the WB needs to be more “UN-style” in the methodological approach.
- The WB is not able to reach the MDGs and reduce poverty without democratic governance, active participation at all levels and justice at social and economical levels. The WB needs to be more of a democratic institution.
- Currently young people don't see the WB as part of the solution, but part of the problem.

Topics/issues/questions:

- Empowerment and capacity building among youth is needed for them to be able to work on Conflict Prevention and Resolution.
- Talking about preventing conflicts, we need to talk about the roots of the conflicts as well. There are still many active conflicts around.
- We can not talk about Conflict prevention, without dealing with conflict resolution. How to fight existing, and preventing future conflicts?
- The model the WB has promoted has reinforced conflicts around the world; does the WB have a strategy for when the national governments attack young people raising a voice against the model of the WB?
- Sierra Leone: One of the most violent conflicts, with a background in excluding youth from the decision-making process. Most of the involved participants in the conflict were rural youth. To prevent this investments in rural areas are needed. In Africa everything is overly centralized, leaving few possibilities for the rural areas. This is not only about infrastructure, but also social structures.
- Knowing the situation in Chechnya; how can the WB give millions of dollars to Russia? The WB need to put more strings and conditions on loans, emphasizing a non-violent and peaceful culture.
- In this regard, the conditions for bank lending and especially the Poverty Reduction Strategy Papers (PRSPs) and the Country Assistance Strategies (CAS) play a crucial role as they are the ones which put the guidelines to the components development should take into account. It is therefore the most important request to channel our political efforts in order to get young people and national youth policies and programs as conditions and indicators into these very effective tools when it comes to concrete WB financing and government actions.
- Youth need to find communication channels. They need to be able to build trust among themselves, and have the chance to change attitudes. An example being the Peace Cruise of WOSM in 1999. With the aim to create a channel for dialogue among youth on the Middle East. Youth need to meet each other, and to be able to learn about each other. To support the WB should facilitate meetings like this.

- Youth need access to the WB; being facilities, experts or funds. If possible providing opening at the WB-offices around the world. Instead of reconstructing, build infrastructure for youth! Give us spaces to act.
- Youth feel disconnected, as governments have not provided enough channels of participation. When youth don't see a future, violence is easily the next step.
- Language and cultural barriers being obstacles for approaching youth. Young people can empower youth to speak out
- The WB being an agent for young people, and empowering youth: "My government will listen to what I say, if I can show that I'm working with the WB"
- Youth need real power to transform the environment they live in

Proposals:

- Facilitate youth exchanges
- Use non-formal education
- Build "youth-infrastructure/space"
- Support micro-proposals/projects
- The WB can influence national policies. The governments should be forced to show policies dealing with youth problems, and the WB should use the youth NGOs as watchdogs to test the indicators of the policies.

Conclusion:

All social "ills" are related, whether it is HIV/AIDS, poverty, illiteracy or hunger. Conflicts can cause social "ills", making conflict prevention and resolution something more than dealing with war/peace-issues. The working group believes that there is a need for thinking in broad, cross-sectorial policies. This having in mind the vicious circle; poverty leading to conflicts, conflicts leading to poverty