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Opportunity vs. Access: What does it Mean for Inclusion?

(Courtesy of Karen Ross, [The Experiment in International Living](#))

As we work to finalize the TAAP Inclusion toolkit, we are reminded that precision in the concepts of social inclusion is key to reaching true understanding and amplifying the voices, dreams, and dignity of all people.

The Experiment's Karen Ross **highlights the differences between opportunity and access**, delineating that opportunity is a “favorable juncture of circumstances” that creates space for **something to happen**. **Access, however, is more closely linked to the concept of self-determination in that lack of access may restrict a person's means of entry or approach to something.**

Ross offers the useful example of farmers working with a development organization to illustrate how opportunity does not necessarily make way for access:

Opportunity: **OnlyHope gave farmers an opportunity to grow their skills and understanding of crop rotation with free workshops during off-season in the winter.**

Access: **Dez was told about an opportunity to learn about crop rotation for free and was excited about being able to go because it was off-season. However, because Dez has two children and OnlyHope did not offer child-care, the opportunity was not accessible for him. Similarly, Amore could not access registration to the crop rotation workshop because it was only available online.**

It is clear from this example that opportunity does not always pave the way for inclusion. “The **crux of inclusion as a catalyst for change lies in shifting structures, attitudes, knowledge, and practices,**” says Ross, “thus, OnlyHope illustrates how **the lack of creating comprehensive access to opportunities falls short of inclusion.**”

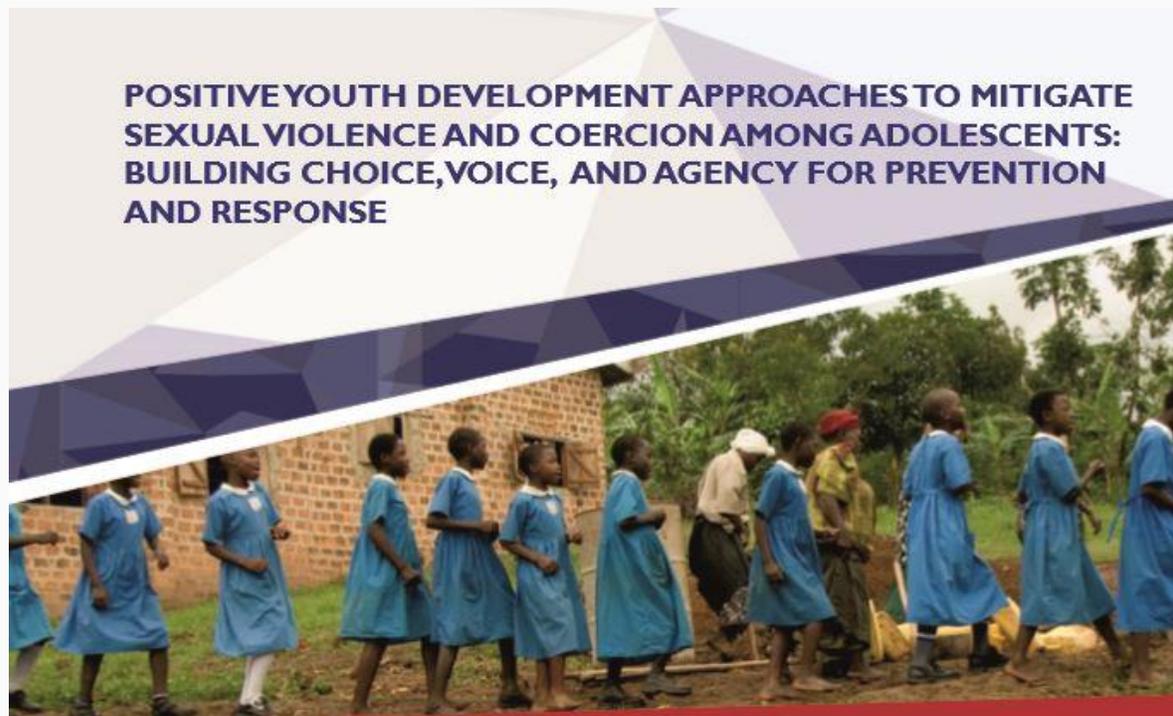
Another example:

Opportunity: **The local summit on gender issues in Montgomery County was an opportunity for Kasi to voice their concerns and support for the transgender community, especially within their religious community.**

Access: **Kasi attended the local summit on gender issues in Montgomery County only to realize that conversation was centered on cis women. Kasi was dismissed when bringing up issues for transgender or intersex people, which barred access to dialogue that was necessary and relevant for their community. In addition, no space was set aside for prayers, an integral part of Kasi's religious practice.**

As these illustrations highlight, international development programs that seek to ensure access to sustainable development priorities such as education, water, vaccines, and justice, must integrate inclusion sensitivity, i.e., awareness of individuals and organizations that recognizes the difference in how marginalized and excluded groups have voice, access, and experiences to contribute.

Photo: Courtesy of The Experiment in International Living, LGBTQ+ Rights & Dutch Culture in the Netherlands.



**POSITIVE YOUTH DEVELOPMENT APPROACHES TO MITIGATE
SEXUAL VIOLENCE AND COERCION AMONG ADOLESCENTS:
BUILDING CHOICE, VOICE, AND AGENCY FOR PREVENTION
AND RESPONSE**

New Resource: PYD Approaches to Mitigate Sexual Violence and Coercion among Adolescents: Building Choice, Voice and Agency for Prevention and Design

This technical [brief](#), made possible by USAID's YouthPower Learning initiative, highlights the role of positive youth development programs in building assets such as social skills, agency, and youth empowerment to reduce sexual coercion, and promising examples from different contexts.

Sexual violence and coercion are some of the most concerning and prevalent issues of our time. Nearly one in three adolescent girls report that their first sexual experience occurred under coercion or force, with anecdotal evidence showing that one in five adolescent boys

also experience sexual violence before the age of 18. These acts of violence can have a substantially negative impact on the physical, psychological and social development of the child, and as a result, it is crucial that measures are taken to prevent and protect against them at all levels of society.

The Positive Youth Development approach aligns well with the TAAP emphasis on transforming agency, access and power. By increasing adolescents' agency and empowerment, youth are able to expand their ability to make and act on strategic life choices that benefit themselves, rather than conforming to social norms that can cause harm. Three pathways are identified that can increase empowerment;

1. Transforming the way an adolescent sees themselves
2. Increasing opportunities for advancement and alternatives to the status quo – specifically education and alternatives to early marriage – and building influence in the community through increased mobility and visibility
3. Making their voices heard

Soft skills are identified as essential to this process; increased assertiveness and communication are needed to enable youths to feel comfortable in challenging gender-inequitable beliefs and attitudes, as well as empathy, social skills and positive attitudes which can help in effective communication and building self-esteem.

Chelsea L. Ricker, an independent consultant who co-leads the Gender and Positive Youth Development Community of Practice for YouthPower Learning, developed the brief. She notes that “We increasingly see evidence of what we’ve always known – that the same social norms that drive inequality, stigma, and discrimination also fuel sexual and gender-based violence among adolescents. Working through a holistic, positive youth development approach to ensure that adolescents and young people have the skills and voice they need to understand, question, and even shift these social norms positions them to break through the cycle of violence and create a new, more inclusive community for themselves.”

A number of programs have had to overcome a myriad of difficulties, including a lack of access to at-risk out of school adolescents, social taboos around the discussion of sex and sexual assault, and insufficient protection from and recognition of sexual violence by the local legal system. Despite these obstacles, the report names a number of successful programs that have succeeded in empowering adolescents in speaking up against sexual violence and increasing their agency to protect themselves against harmful actions. The [IMpower program](#), introduced by No Means No Worldwide in Kenya and Malawi, has successfully reduced rates of sexual assault, harassment and gender-based violence for both male and

female adolescents. By increasing positive attitudes towards gender equality, youth are more willing to intervene to prevent harassment, bullying and violence against others through a curriculum of empowerment and life skills including self-defense techniques, negotiation and de-escalation. Similarly, the [ISHRAQ program in Egypt](#) works with out-of-school girls, community members and parents to promote change in gender norms. Girls are empowered to speak about delaying marriage and staying in school, with the community increasingly accepting of female mobility, rights and capacities.

The PYD report suggests that there is cause for significant optimism for a reduction in the number of incidences of sexual violence and coercion. The improvements in empowerment and communication seen in both male and female adolescents clearly demonstrate that programs that build assets and agency can reduce stigma, build empathy and modify social norms that contribute to violence, coercion and suppression. However, it is important to note that the projects have thus far been focused in African and South American contexts. More evidence will be needed in European, the Middle Eastern and Southeast Asian contexts to fully realize the implications of the program and to further assist those in need against sexual violence, coercion and exploitation.

Photo: Report Cover "PYD Approaches to Mitigate Sexual Violence and Coercion Among Adolescents: Building Choice, Voice, and Agency for Prevention and Response", USAID's *USAID's YouthPower*, 2018.



Celebrating Humanity and Inclusion (HI)

We join Humanity and Inclusion (formerly known as Handicap International) in celebrating their new name and logo. The new identity unifies, for the first time in HI's 35-year history, their programs under one logo with a strong symbol – the hand. Immediately recognizable,

the hand transcends language and culture. It conveys both warmth with a wave/welcome, and outrage conveying 'stop!', as in "Stop Bombing Civilians!"

Jeff Meer, U.S. Executive Director of Humanity & Inclusion notes "Our work at HI is based on **four pillars: humanity, inclusion, commitment and integrity. We include everyone in our programs without exception and champion each individual's right to dignity. We advocate for the inclusion of and participation by everyone. We value differences. HI is bold in committing to pragmatic and innovative solutions, especially to fight injustice. And we work professionally and transparently at all times.**"

HI has developed an internal "toolbox" on inclusive project design. **This helps guide program staff when they seek to include all kinds of vulnerable groups – older people, women, ethnic/religious minorities and of course those with disabilities – in partnership with HI in the field. The toolbox is updated regularly with new approaches and field-tested strategies. One great resource developed in Mozambique helps to raise awareness of the importance of including children with disabilities at school. This [story](#) includes a short video used to demonstrate what inclusion looks like, and helps to normalize it for students, teachers and parents. An online game accompanies the video, and lets people experience what it's like to be excluded.**

The way that HI's field and advocacy work ties to the brand is clear. "By 'humanity,' we mean support for **basic humanitarian principles, human rights, neutrality and independence. HI's programmatic approach is rooted in the core humanitarian approach of promoting human welfare. And by "inclusion," we mean everyone participates – I believe this comes close to the "universality" that is important to TAAP. We design our programs specifically to include marginalized groups in ways that allow for listening, open-mindedness and collaboration.**" This can be seen in many of their programs, but one recent [example](#) from Bangladesh is of a program that gives Rohingya mothers and children opportunities to talk openly in a safe space about their anxieties – quite a challenge with a community that has been through so much, and also comes from a culture where talking about feelings is uncommon.

Way to go, HI!

Logo: Courtesy of Humanity and Inclusion (HI), 2018.

This Week's TAAP Staff Pick:

7 Lessons We Learned While Making Gender Equality Happen

Joshua Graff, a manager at LinkedIn, [describes](#) how he set a goal three years prior to ensure that the LinkedIn EMEA Marketing Solutions team would be 50/50 gender equal by 2017. Graff took on the issue using in-depth training sessions aimed at uncovering unconscious bias, developing diverse interview panels for the hiring process and shedding light on the use of gendered language. Graff discusses seven commendable practices for pushing a workplace towards diversity, and acknowledges that achieving gender balance in leadership and management roles “are just one of our efforts to build the team we want.”



Hope and Impact: Countering Trafficking Through Development

In this moving [op-ed](#), the CEO of Winrock International details the importance of investing resources into programs designed to help victims of human trafficking restart their lives after being sold into slavery. In this piece we meet Saifal and Kalam, two Bengali day laborers looking to work abroad in Malaysia, to make more money for their families. After selling everything they owned in exchange for legal papers, the two men found themselves detained for seven days, their papers confiscated, and sold into modern-day slavery by their only point of contact in the country.

After braving an escape attempt and being detained again by Malaysian police, Saifal and Kalam were finally able to make it back to Bangladesh and be with their families again a year after their ordeal had begun.

Bangladesh Counter Trafficking-in-Persons project (BC/TIP), funded by USAID, uses a multi-level approach and works with NGO's in the local community to address the issue of human trafficking. Survivors like Saifal and Kalam utilize BC/TIP's support for accommodation, medical help, trauma counseling, legal assistance, livelihood skills development and vocational training.

After taking a BC/TIP sponsored entrepreneurship class, Saifal and Kalam met Mahmud who had also been in forced labor in Malaysia. The three men used their newly developed skills to take another risk: starting their own farming business, leasing fields to other farmers. With a little help, these men were able to lift up themselves and their families and create a space for themselves in a system that was previously inaccessible to them.

Local programs such as ANIRBAN, offers trainings to vulnerable populations about the many ways that traffickers try to exploit individuals, pointers on how to safely migrate to other countries for work, and offers a platform for survivors like Saifal and Kalam to share their stories, and play a role in preventing similar experiences for occurring. Projects like BC/TIP place resources within the reach of people who historically have lacked both opportunity and access, and the result is communities of determined individuals empowering themselves.

Photo: Mahmud, Kalam and Saiful (left) take their produce to market, Courtesy of **Winrock International**.



Participatory grantmaking helps to shift power relations in Mexico

This [article](#) follows the journey of Fondo Semillas, a non-profit dedicated to improving the lives of women in Mexico by investing in groups and organizations carrying out this broad mission. They invited former and current grant recipients, staff and board members, and key

allies in the Mexican feminist movement to be a part of the decision-making process for the next pool of grant recipients. Fondo Semillas highlights that while their newly designed participatory grantmaking model isn't perfect, it does more than grant money: it creates a space for activists to share what is working for themselves, to hear from their peers, and to collaborate towards the common goal of advancing the Mexican feminist movement.

Photo: Courtesy of Fondo Semillas: "In an advisors forum organized by Fondo Semillas, 40 activists discussed the state of feminist organizing in Mexico", 2018.

Inclusion Nudges

We recommend checking out Inclusion Nudges (www.inclusion-nudges.org) a non-profit initiative that "nudges for inclusion"! The founders of Inclusion Nudges understand the importance of addressing the behaviors that block true inclusion from becoming a pillar of an organization, and present practical techniques for implementing more inclusive policies and practices. In the Inclusion Nudges [Guidebook](#), the authors break this down into three aspects:

1) Feel the Need, which targets changing individual behavior and making the brain feel urgency to restructure, not just rationalizing that inclusive behavior is important. They are often called "aha" moments that evoke visceral emotions from people to demonstrate the depth of unconscious behaviors.

2) Process, which address how to make your organization's processes, such as candidate screening, promotions, performance reviews, successor planning, team collaboration and decision-making, more unbiased and inclusive. This nudge is focused on mitigating the systemic consequences of unconscious bias.

3) Framing, which is about changing mindsets. The guidebook developers urge uses to think of diversity and inclusion in terms of unequal allocation of resources, to prompt sensitivity in readers who have difficulty understanding the concepts.

One of the most compelling sections of this guidebook is on the common reasons why inclusion and diversity work can get "stuck", highlighting the gap between diversity and inclusion initiatives and the achievement of anticipated goals. The authors advocate for "micro-interventions", or the tiny opportunities we have to "outsmart" our brains, and redirect our actions in a way that truly reflects inclusive practice because research shows that an awareness of unconscious bias is not enough to actually change actions. They define

inclusion as being focused on “fostering the **structure, culture, and mindset that creates a feeling in employees that they ‘fit’**”.



Got Inclusion?

We want to hear from you! Please share your inclusion activities, success stories, upcoming events, and intriguing resources. Send to TAAP@worldlearning.org.

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