TAAP’ing into Mongolia’s Emerging Leaders

As World Learning prepares to launch its new USAID-funded Leaders Advancing Democracy (LEAD)-Mongolia program for emerging leaders, we are beta-testing a TAAP Gender and Inclusion Assessment methodology which includes a landscape mapping and data collection to inform the design of the program and recommendations for integrating inclusion in the content of the program. On the ground in Mongolia this involves consultations with gender, disability, LGBT, youth, rural and nomadic populations and Kazakh minority community members as well as civil society, government and private sector stakeholders. Lines of inquiry include how key policy issues in Mongolia –
environment and urbanization, anti-corruption and transparency, unemployment and poverty alleviation – are experienced by people marginalized from power, agency and access – and to reveal opportunities for inclusion such as government policies, technology, peer networks, and local initiatives.

The LEAD-Mongolia program will help build the country’s next generation of democratic leaders through leadership programs, international exchanges and interaction with colleagues within Mongolia and counterparts from the United States and selected Asian countries. Promising young leaders from the public, civil society, media, and private sectors will work collaboratively to realize their vision for positive change in Mongolia. As Jidjig Dulamsuren, Vice President of the Mongolian National Association of the Deaf noted in one of the TAAP Inclusion consultations, “These young people are very driven and so passionate. But they need to be heard.”

LEAD-Mongolia seeks to be an inclusion leader and integrate inclusion efforts from start to finish. In the coming weeks LEAD-Mongolia will travel to 13 different aimags (provinces) across Mongolia to visit different groups, community leaders, and civil society groups to ensure broad, inclusive outreach. “The program will identify, select, and partner with some of Mongolia’s best and brightest up-and-coming democracy advocates,” explains LEAD-Mongolia Project Director, Adam LeClair. “If we want to model democratic leadership, then we must also model inclusive leadership. We’re keen to identify Mongolian Emerging Leaders who will be not only be the country’s next generation of democracy champions, but also the next generation of inclusion leaders who are open to the voices of their peers from all communities. The TAAP Assessment is a critical first step to achieving this. It allows us to really understand where the inclusion entry points are.”

The program plans to weave inclusion into all major activities. For example, LEAD Emerging Leaders will carry out Action Plans where they apply newly gained skills to community impact or advocacy projects, which presents opportunities to include voices from various groups. LEAD-Mongolia hopes that, by the end of the program, participants will report positive changes in their own understanding of the benefits of inclusion and able to identify opportunities for integrating inclusion in their own work.

Photo of Jidjig Dulamsuren, VP, Mongolian National Association of the Deaf, Courtesy of World Learning, Mongolia
Tapping into Restless Youth for Accountability and Inclusion

Youth-led development agency Restless Development is rolling out a new program, Accountability Advocates, that taps into the ability of marginalized people to gather data about the issues facing their own communities, and use that information to hold decision-makers to account. This kind of participatory monitoring is crucial for international development programs, in order to make sure that they work for everyone, with no one left behind. Accountability Advocates empowers young people, who are frequently excluded from policy decisions that affect their lives, to monitor the impact that development programs have on their communities, and to ensure that their governments deliver on development promises.

Accountability Advocates works by training young people to conduct research in their communities, using surveys and interviews with community members and service providers to monitor how development commitments - like Tanzania's Youth Manifesto, or post-earthquake reconstruction in Nepal - are being kept. Restless Development then supports its young Advocates to analyze their findings and use this information to advocate for better conditions for their communities. Advocates in Uganda have already secured policy changes - including a new program to prevent child marriage in Napak, and a law to provide public bathroom facilities in Moroto. Catherine Martin, Restless' Program Funding Manager, notes, "The Accountability Advocates model is a natural fit with an approach like TAAP, as members of marginalized communities need to be able to hold decision-makers to ensure that future development is truly inclusive." We're proud to have Restless Development's creative and youth-led approaches in the TAAP Inclusion Community of Practice!
Dignity Centre Stage: 4 Propositions

We highly recommend this essay by World Bank’s Global Lead for Social Inclusion, Maitreyi Das, about dignity and what it adds to the discourse on inequality and social exclusion. The essay presents four propositions as examples of why dignity matters in public policy, especially for highly unequal contexts. In doing so, it takes forward the narrative constructed in the report, Inclusion Matters: The Foundation for Shared Prosperity that focuses on the flip side of social exclusion – social inclusion. The report brought the idea of dignity into the mainstream lexicon of the World Bank as it defines the amorphous notion of social inclusion as ‘the process of improving the ability, opportunity and dignity, of persons disadvantaged on the basis of their identity, to take part in society.’

The essay explores four propositions through examples that highlight the relationship between dignity and public policy outcomes – two from the health sector, one from the area of sanitation and the last from education. While these propositions draw upon some global evidence, Das applies them to current policy issues in India. In each case, exclusion based on caste and tribe is salient. (Published in the Indian Journal: Seminar 672, August 2015)

Unequal Access: The challenge of Intersecting Vulnerabilities Among Syrian Refugees

As of August 2016, over 4,800,000 Syrians have sought refuge in neighboring countries and even 14 months ago, over 1 million had already been injured, according to data collected by IFRC, OCHA, and UNHCR.

On a quarterly basis The Equal Access Monitor is published by Handicap International's team responding to the Syrian crisis and the plight of refugees in neighboring countries. The purpose of this publication is to raise the awareness of humanitarian actors about issues related to inclusion (and exclusion) of people with disabilities, older people, people with injuries and chronic diseases who may face tremendous barriers to access crucial humanitarian services, ostensibly provided for all refugees.

One of the key challenges reported in The Equal Access Monitor is the lack of sex, age and disability-aggregated data that feeds the “persistent invisibility in humanitarian responses and leads to a lack of consultation and involvement in interventions.” The June 2015 issue of the Equal Access monitor focused on “Intersecting vulnerabilities.” Intersectionality is about the ways in which our multiple individual identities – such as age, race, gender, employment status, ability status, etc. – intersect in ways that can compound inclusion or exclusion we experience from others, within institutions and through systems and policies. Several key publications have highlighted the importance of intersectionality in development design and programming, but the situation in
Syria with refugee populations highlights additional vulnerabilities such as legal status and accompaniment. The article highlights examples of two good practices that are being used in humanitarian initiatives with Syrian refugees in Jordan: the Vulnerability Assessment Framework (VAF) and referral mechanisms that facilitate close collaboration amongst service providers. The June 2015 issue of the Equal Access Monitor concludes with a powerful message, that “in order to really be able to respond to the crisis in Syria and other countries, we must be able to identify the existing power dynamics, listen to the unique experiences of refugees, and collaborate with all persons in an inclusive way.”

As the TAAP Inclusion Toolkit is developed it is hoped that it will further strengthen the capacity to respond to the complexity of programming needs in contexts of conflict and displacement by drawing upon the learning documented in publications such as The Equal Access Monitor (Article courtesy of Myroslava Tataryn, Handicap International Canada). 

Photo @Sara Pierre/Handicap International

Social Norm Strategies: A Cautionary Tale

A recent article in The Guardian, “Social norm strategies do work – but there are risks involved” provides thoughtful discussion on efforts to harness the power of social norms to promote sustainable behavior. The author cautions that “although social norms are a tried and tested method of influencing behavior, their effectiveness hinges on positive norms being available for promoting in the first place.” He notes that, to be effective, social norm approaches have to be combined with more direct engagement strategies. Food for thought for those of us working to promote inclusive behavior. 

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