



2015 Children, Youth, and Economic Strengthening Webinar Series

Part 2: Youth Savings Groups: Delivering Integrated Services

Thursday, October 8, 2015 at 9:30am EDT

Rachel Lindley



David Panetta



John Schiller



Claire Simon





POLL #1

Savings Groups in the Financial Landscape (and more)

Expand access to financial services to the unreached (11 million + members in 70 countries

But also....

- Strong appeal to women
- Appropriate « starter system » for youth
- Appropriate as platforms for other development objectives
- Build social capital
- Can serve as drivers for local social & economic development



Plan and Savings Groups

- Discovered SGs in Niger (thru CARE) in 2003
- Now in 27 Plan country programs (22 in Africa)
- 1.35 million members (97% in Africa)
- 82% women
- 210,000 children and youth (< 25 years)
- Complements Plan's community-based child-focused approach; appropriate for working with the rural poor; marginalised & excluded groups; builds social capital; contributes to better household economic resiliency; promotes social & economic change

Why Savings Groups for Youth?

- A low-risk way to introduce large numbers of youth to savings, credit and money-management
- Experiential -- emphasizes the practical and leads to monetary and other asset gains
- Serve as a platform for other services - more formal financial education, life skills & entrepreneurship training
- Important element in preparing youth for employment/entrepreneurship



Youth Program Approach

- Youth participation in design, mobilization, training, technical assistance, monitoring & management resulting in youth leadership development & understanding governance
- Savings Groups as the entry point and organizing mechanism
- Other services to develop skills & knowledge and sustain interest
- Extensive use of youth village agents & peer educators



Strategies to Reach Girls & Young Women

- Preliminary consultation with parents and community leaders
- Start with existing youth groups
- Create demonstration Youth Savings Groups
- Girls in group leadership positions receive coaching and have majority status as group members
- Female village agents and peer educators as outreach promoters and trainers
- Youth advisory boards to develop higher level leadership and influence project policy/operations
- Life skills training and safe environments for discussion and learning to sustain interest beyond just financial services

Appeal of Savings Groups Membership to Girls

- The regularity of meetings, growth of savings, uses of money and tangible rewards - a growing sense of accomplishment & empowerment, development of social capital (became evident over time)
- Ability to help the family financially and be less dependent on parents
- Ability to further one's education



Plan's Savings Groups As Platforms for Other Services

- Entrepreneurship training for youth in India
- Linkage with Aflatoun/Aflateen rights and business training in Egypt
- Strengthening health insurance cooperatives in Togo
- Malaria prevention in Mali
- Training in child protection in Colombia
- Combating early marriage and teaching reproductive health to young girls in Sierra Leone
- Linkages to formal financial institutions in Kenya and Tanzania

However....

Other activities are sometimes added to SGs with inadequate attention to the following:

- Needs analysis with attention to feasibility and risk assessment
- Good implementation planning among all stakeholders with attention to an appropriate delivery system
- Plausible theory of change, with expected outcomes understood and linked to an M&E plan
- Assessment of probable sustainability & replicability

Two Significant Experiences

1. Youth Microfinance Project in Niger, Senegal & Sierra Leone (4 $\frac{1}{2}$ years)
 - 89,000 youth < 25 years
 - Financial services, financial education, life skills
2. Banking on Change in Egypt, India, Ghana, Kenya, Tanzania, Uganda, Zambia (3 years)
 - 120,000 youth < 25 years
 - Financial services, financial education, enterprise training, employability



Questions?

For more information regarding Plan's work with Savings Groups, please contact john.schiller@plan-international.org.



POLL #2



Emerging Evidence from the Banking on Change Youth Savings Group Model



What is Banking on Change?

Shared goals:



- **Improve quality of life for poor people by increasing access to financial services**
- **Focus on a savings-led approach to microfinance as the basis for financial inclusion**
- **Complemented by skills training, IGA support and linkage**
- **Harness skills and expertise of all three partners to deliver value for business and society**



What have we achieved so far?

Phase 1: 2009 – 2012

- Reached over 500,000 people in 11 countries via informal savings groups
- Facilitated direct links with formal banking, adapting Barclays financial products and services to meet savings groups' needs
- Average savings per member: \$58

Phase 2: 2013 – 2015

- Focused on youth economic empowerment
- Formed 11,301 Youth Savings Groups (YSGs) across 7 countries, reaching 236,229 members, of whom 120,085 are under 25 (66% women)
- Worked with over 8,000 VSLAs from Phase 1 (170,000+ members) to deliver further financial education and business skills training, and to link mature groups to formal bank accounts (3,000 groups linked to date)
- Trained 305,946 members in financial literacy, 143,669 in business skills and 48,406 in Employability skills to date.
- 87,670 new IGAs set up during Phase 2, of which 38,242 by youth

Youth Savings Group Model: What is it?



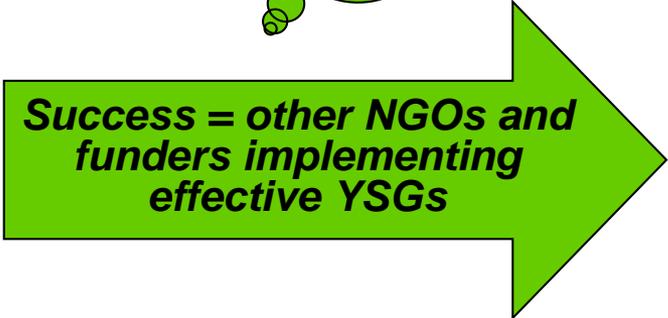
*A "How To"
Guide*



*Youth Economic
Empowerment*



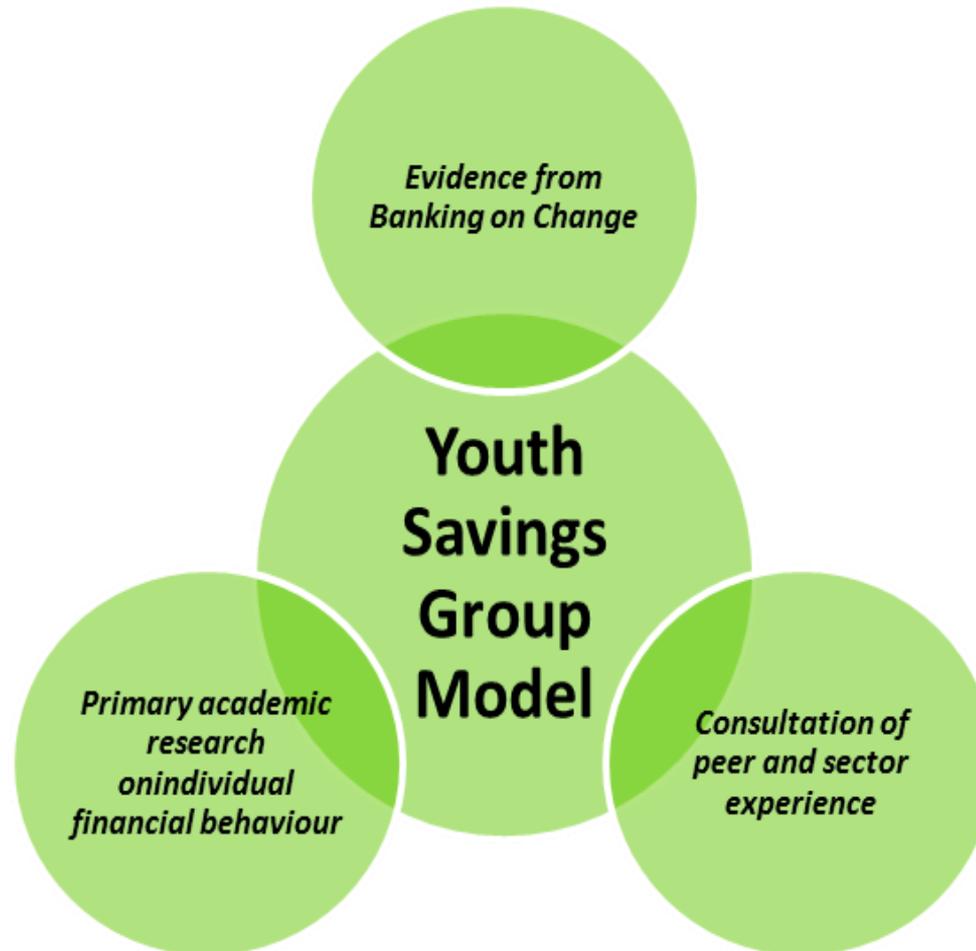
*The
Consultation*



*Success = other NGOs and
funders implementing
effective YSGs*

- Programming principles for policymakers and practitioners (INGOs/NGOs) wanting to integrate YSGs into their work
- Its starting point is that YSGs are an effective way to support young people to manage their finances, build assets, learn new skills and start businesses
- The Model is grounded in the experiences of Banking on Change but draws on the work of peer programmes and organisations
- Our ambition is to scale the use of YSGs as a tool to support youth economic empowerment

Youth Savings Group Model: How is it being developed?





YSG Model: Emerging Principles and Programming Implications

A) TARGETING AND FORMING YSGS

- *Principle 1. “Young people have their own spaces; reach them where they are.”*
- Programming Implication: Plan to invest more time and resources in youth friendly, peer-based and gender sensitive outreach. To identify and attract youth beneficiaries for a YSG programme, involve young people themselves in the targeting; Youth Village Agents should be recruited from existing successful YSGs where possible. Do not forget community and parental outreach.
- *Principle 2. “Young people in YSGs may have very different needs, reflecting their different backgrounds and life stages; consideration must be given to the composition of the group”*
- Programming Implication: The core VSLA principle that groups should be self-selecting should not be compromised with YSGs, but facilitators should consider that group formation, management and quality can in some cases be strengthened by focusing on more homogenous (age, life-stage, goals) membership. Care should be taken not to exclude particularly marginalised young people and to integrate the most vulnerable youth.
- *Principle 3. “YSGs can be just as successful as VSLAs – but standard VSLA practices may need adapting to meet the needs of young people.”*
- Programming Implication: Carry out a scoping exercise or initial needs analysis followed up by further consultation at regular intervals as young people gain more experience as YSG members and can identify their (evolving) preferences and needs more clearly with time – then adjust the VSLA methodology accordingly.
- *Principle 4. “Both saving and borrowing involve risk, especially for young people; protection is essential.”*
- Programming Implication: Protect YSG members, particularly the most vulnerable, by ensuring risk management – including child protection - is considered at every stage of the programme.

YSG Model: Emerging Principles and Programming Implications

B) SUPPORTING YSGs FOR SOCIAL & ECONOMIC EMPOWERMENT

- *Principle 5. “YSGs can be a strong platform for the provision of tailored training and support to build the skills and capacity of young people.”*
- Programming Implication: Complement group formation with financial education training, enterprise, vocational and life skills training, to support the birth and growth of sustainable livelihoods. Ensure trainings are youth-friendly, interactive, effectively delivered and supported by refresher trainings as necessary. Consider including mentoring and coaching for young people too.
- *Principle 6. “YSGs can strengthen members’ welfare and resilience.”*
- Programming Implication: The retention of a social fund (perhaps earmarked by the groups for specific purposes e.g. school fees, health emergencies, funeral expenses) by YSGs should be strongly encouraged to provide an additional buffer for the group and a safety net for individual members.
- *Principle 7. “Linking to a formal financial institution can be a logical and attractive next step. Where there is demand, link responsibly.”*
- Programming Implication: Where there is demand for linkage by young people and YSGs, programmes should engage with formal financial institutions to ensure that products and services are appropriate and linkage is undertaken with adequate bank literacy training and support for YSGs’ needs and rights. Linkage should be carried out in accordance with the [Linking for Change Savings Charter](#) Principles.

YSG Model: Emerging Principles and Programming Implications

C) SCALING & SUSTAINING YSGs

- *Principle 8. “YSGs should foster youth governance, leadership and representation at group level and beyond”.*
- Programming Implication: Ensure young people take on a participatory, lead role in designing, as well as subsequently implementing and managing YSG programmes. Where possible, connect mature savings groups to wider youth-governed networks and bodies at district, regional and national levels representing youth’s voice and interests in society. Youth’s growing citizenship and advocacy power can open the door to influencing public stakeholders in favour of YSGs’ replication and scaling up (through integrating them into financial inclusion policy and programme initiatives) to support broad youth economic empowerment.
- *Principle 9. “Continuous learning is critical to enhance the quality and sustainability of YSGs and YSG programmes”*
- Programming Implication: Embed rigorous monitoring and evaluation tools into all elements of the programme, and ensure that data collected can be disaggregated by age, gender and disability at a minimum. To enhance ownership and sustainability, include young people in the development and delivery of M&E systems and build in regular reviews to take account of beneficiary feedback and adapt programming accordingly.



Youth Savings Group Model - Next Steps

October – December 2015

- **Consultation period:**
 - Global Youth Economic Opportunities Conference, CYES Webinar, SG2015 Conference
 - More interviews/roundtables with young people, practitioners, funders and other stakeholders
- **More evidence from Banking on Change**
 - Endline Evaluation
 - Final Evaluation
 - IDS Research
- **Endorsements from stakeholders**

Early 2016

- Final launch of Youth Savings Group Model

Success = other NGOs and funders implementing effective YSGs



Questions for the audience

1. From your experience, do you have more evidence to support any of these Principles – or to disprove them?

- In particular, Principle 2 (homogeneity of YSGs)
- Principle 6 (use of social fund by YSGs)
- Principle 8 (YSGs fostering youth governance and advocacy)?

2. What additional differences have you seen between YSGs and VSLAs?

3. How can we make YSGs even more effective for young women?

4. What measures you have you built into your programme to ensure YSGs are sustainable?

5. How can technology help make YSGs more scalable?



THANK YOU!

For further information on Banking on Change, please visit our website: www.Barclays.com/bankingonchange

You can find more information and updates on the Youth Savings Group Model here: [YSG Consultation](#)

For further information about the Linking for Change Charter: [Linking for Change](#)



Questions?



POLL #3

Main Considerations for Program Monitoring and Sustainability

1. Main Considerations for Program Monitoring

Information Management

- [SAVIX](#) management information system (MIS)
 - Identify differences in performance across groups, trainers, areas and implementing organizations
 - Essential tool for program management, quality assurance and reporting

Limitations

- The MIS focuses on **short-term financial performance of groups**
- Limitations and particular relevance for youth and integrated programming
 - **SCOPE**
 - Economic capabilities (assets, knowledge, skills, attitudes and networks)
 - **TIME**
 - Volatility and time-sensitivity of MIS indicators
 - Youth as a transition from childhood to adulthood

2. Main Considerations for Sustainability

Concepts of Sustainability

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Sustainability of ACCESS to GROUPS	% of targeted communities that continue to have operational groups - of a determined number and/or standard - beyond the project period or other defined period of time
Sustainability of ACCESS to APPROPRIATE FINANCIAL SERVICES	% of participants that have continued access to a suite of appropriate financial services - formal or informal - that is plausibly attributed, in some part, to the promotion of Savings Groups

Sustainability

- The conceptualization and measurement of sustainability has profound effects on operations, monitoring and results measurement
- YSG programs should have a clear sustainability statement; for each component, in integrated programs



Questions?