



October 2015
Briefing

The Nairobi Intergenerational Design Challenge

An initiative inspired by a collaboration between the World Economic Forum Global Agenda Councils on 'Ageing' and on a 'Demographic Dividend (DD)', which seeks to pinpoint strategic action to harness older populations for advancing the empowerment, education and employment of youth - and thus the prospects for a DD - in developing countries in Africa and Asia.

In October 2015, the 'Nairobi Intergenerational Design Challenge' (NIDC) brought together 30 youth and elders from different social classes and contexts in a unique one-and-a-half-day dialogue forum, followed by two days of smaller group deliberations.

Drawing on personal experiences and insights into citywide dynamics, the participants jointly diagnosed an extant 'divide' between generations in Nairobi - and the potential benefits of bridging it. Building on their analyses NIDC contributors generated bold ideas and concrete designs for three mutually reinforcing pilot projects that promise to promote the Education, Empowerment and Employment of underserved youth in Nairobi by drawing on the experience and motivation of the old.

Central Perspectives

1. A profound lack of communication and exchange between young and old currently marks life in Nairobi, driven by stereotypes and, often, mutual blame
2. Yet, older adults' experience – their capacity to reflect on previous life stages, on mistakes and errors made and, from these, to distil a 'wisdom' on what really matters – is of critical value for young people in both professional and private spheres
3. The limited engagement of Nairobi youth with such experience contributes to a lack of moral compass, of meaning and belonging – and, all too often, to apathy or cynicism, drug or alcohol abuse, and a dearth of the very skills they need to successfully navigate life and careers
4. At a collective level, the generational divide undermines societal cohesion and moral capital in Nairobi, and a capacity to truly learn from history
5. Older Nairobians across settings are motivated to share their experience and 'walk with' the young
6. Many shared concerns, in fact, exist between old and young generations and offer a basis for explicit cooperation between them

Three Pilot Project Designs



Project 1

A focused media drive, through radio, new media and editorials, to stimulate a citywide conversation and debate on the intergenerational divide – and the value of addressing it.

Project 2

A school-based intergenerational mentorship program - centered on a transfer of life skills, values and emotional support to vulnerable children and adolescents in two of Nairobi's slums.



Project 3

A professional- and business-skills transfer mechanism for out-of-work graduates and existing youth empowerment initiatives.



PROJECT 1: Focused media drive on Nairobi's intergenerational divide

Rationale

Despite its consequence, the lack of understanding and engagement between old and young in Nairobi remains virtually unacknowledged and unexamined in the city's popular discourse and debate. It thus remains unchallenged - and is perpetuated.

Approach

- Creation of incisive, thought provoking content for radio, new media, and editorials in both English and Kiswahili – and centering on 'real' stories, personal reflections, focused discussions and documentaries, where appropriate drawing on project 2 and 3 actors
- A coordinated, sequenced broadcast through existing media platforms with extensive reach to all age groups
- A tracking of and, where relevant, engagement in, discourses ensuing from the broadcasts

Aims

1. To stimulate a city-wide 'conversation' - encompassing all ages - on the nature and impacts of the intergenerational gap
2. To raise recognition and reflection on pervasive stereotypes of old and young
3. To engender alternative visions of relationships between the generations
4. To foster a groundswell of awareness and debate to underpin projects 2 and 3



PROJECT 2: School-based intergenerational mentoring in two Nairobi's slums

Rationale

- In addition to limited engagement with the older generation, children's and adolescents' lives in Nairobi slums are marked by poor relationships with-and guidance from parents
- The lack of opportunity to be heard, to be understood and to be mentored leaves young slum dwellers vulnerable not only to alcohol and substance abuse, but to early pregnancy, school drop out and, for some, criminality
- At community level the generational gap undermines security and precludes a chance for joint action to redress core problems of slums as a whole
- Elders within and outside of the slum communities, as well as committed older youth, are keen to support the vulnerable children and adolescents in order to enhance their future

Aims

1. To enhance the self-esteem, life skills and core values of vulnerable slum dwelling children and adolescents
2. To foster understanding and respect between the generations involved in the mentorship and, through ripple effects, in the two communities, more widely

Approach

- Based in selected low cost private schools in Korogocho and Viwandani
- Targeting pupils aged 6-9 years; 10-11 years and 12-15 years
- Face-to-face mentoring of pupils by a volunteer team of committed elders within the locality and from elders' groups in neighboring non-slum communities
- Additional mentoring by older youth engaged in slum peer support initiatives and project 3
- Careful, participatory design process to forge effective mentoring content, form and structure - informed by formative research, and external expertise from school-based intergenerational programming in other settings
- Essential training for volunteer team to ensure effective mentorship delivery



PROJECT 3: Professional and business skills transfer for out-of-work young adults

Rationale

- Nairobi's out-of-work graduates, as well as young adults seeking out existing youth empowerment programmes are often unprepared for, and unable to successfully negotiate a ruthless economy and employment market
- A lack of basic career and life skills, as well as of sector-specific experience narrows their opportunities – and undermines their self-esteem, motivation and confidence
- Few mechanisms exist through which such young adults are able to receive guidance on the essential or sector-specific skills they need
- Retired or still active older professionals and entrepreneurs in Nairobi are positioned-and many desire to, transfer their deep experience to the younger generation to meet this require

Aims

1. To enhance out-of-work young adults' confidence and capacity to successfully navigate and harness existing employment and business opportunities in Nairobi and beyond
2. To foster rapport between the generations involved in the skills transfer and, through ripple effects, in Nairobi, more broadly

Approach

- Convening of a corps of retired or still active older professionals and entrepreneurs ready to share experience on (i) general career/life skills or (ii) sector-specific professional, business or vocational skills with out-of-work young adults
- Focus on five focal sectors identified in Kenya Vision 2030 and DD strategy: agriculture, financial services, health, education, ICT and media

Out-of-work graduates

- Web-based call for, and limited (N) registration of interested out-of-work graduates
- Convening of three successive general career/life skills transfer dialogues between older 'corps' members and all registered graduates
- Subsequent initial sector-specific exchange forums (one for each focal sector) to pinpoint specific professional, business or vocational skills requirements and relevant experience
- Matching of individual older 'corps' mentors with small number of graduate 'mentees' in each focal sector, followed by 3 -month informal, tailored interaction between them.

Youth empowerment programs (YEP)

- Mapping, screening, selection of existing youth empowerment programs (YEP) in Nairobi
- Convening of networking forum between older 'corps' members and YEP representatives
- Independent arrangement of skills-transfer engagements between 'corps' members and YEP

Small projects sometimes have the biggest impact in people's lives. What's your small project that can change people's lives?



Implementation, Coordination & Oversight

- Realization of all three pilot projects will be staggered over 24 months to foster and capitalize on synergy and cross-fertilization between them

On the ground project activities to be carried out by already identified local implementing partners/bodies.

- Overall co-ordination, planning, monitoring and evaluation of the three projects to rest with a small, dedicated secretariat within APHRC.
- Oversight to remain with 'steering committee' comprising NIDC design group members as 'vision bearers' and three external members from UNFPA, the International Federation on Ageing and the WHO Department of Ageing and Lifecourse.

Steering Committee
NIDC design group members
+3 external members: UNFPA, IFA, WHO

Vision bearers:
Oversight, Advisory, Facilitation, Policy Engagement

NIDC Projects Secretariat
housed within APHRC

Planning, Coordination
M&E, Media/Public Engagement

Local Implementing Partners
Project 1

Local Implementing Partners / Bodies
Project 2

Local Implementing Partners / Bodies
Project 3

Every generation has a problem we have to solve. When we find that problem, we find our purpose.



What an old person can see while seated, a young person can't see even while standing.



The NIDC is led by the African Population and Health Research Centre (APHRC) building on its work on the APHRC/African Union/United Nations Economic Commission for Africa Working Group on 'Ageing and a Demographic Dividend in Africa'. The initiative was supported by the World Health Organization Department of Ageing and Lifecourse, UNFPA and the International Federation on Ageing.

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