



Skills and Knowledge for Youth Empowerment (SKYE)

Agadez Region, Niger

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Niger Ranks **174th of 177** on the UNDP Human Development Index

The Agadez Region :

48% of total land area

3% of the population

75% in urban areas

Total Population - 14 million

Youth: 75% under 30, 25% between 15 - 30 years old

Urbanization and Migration: 22% in urban areas with increasingly large number of youth having migrated to urban centers in the past few decades

SKYE Objectives

To Alleviate the causes that attract youth to delinquency such as lack of employment, ignorance of local governance and limited participation in decision-making processes.



Goal - Youth are empowered to take the lead in their own development and to be positive drivers in the development of Agadez Region.

SKYE Pre-Assessments

Held two community led participatory assessments

Partners: Garkuwa (Maradi Youth Association), Care Niger

Conducted an Extensive **Market Research Study** used to inform program design



Key Design Elements

Built upon existing youth structures – Associations and Fadas (informal youth associations)

Peer Educators

Life Skills Modules



Key Activities

Peer Educators: Life Skills Trainings and Restitutions

Vocational Skills trainings/Apprenticeships/ Internships



Key Activities Cont.



Income Generating Business Planning/Training

Financial Services

Community Development Programs & Exchange Visits

Challenges



Delays in initial program start-up compounded by 2 year time limit

Ambitious Program Design - limited internal capacity to manage all aspects of the program, specifically the loan program

Inadequate capacity of vocational training centers and local trainers

Challenges, cont.



Low levels of literacy and basic education among Peer Educators

Postponement of income generation and enterprise development activities

Limited external capacity of Financial Institution (BRS) to properly manage youth based loan portfolios

Increased regional insecurity

Results – Youth Empowerment

Stronger sense of citizenship

85% of youth in the program, compared to 57% for those outside the program, **feel concerned about the successful functioning of their community.**

81% of beneficiaries, compared to 64% for those outside the program, **understand their rights as human beings and as citizens of the country.**

25% of youth in the program have more friends whom they trust

90% of youth in the program **believe that they have access to government services** compared to 48% for those who are not in the program (even if they have similar rights).

Results, cont.

Vocational Skills

- 73% of Peer Educators increased their income
- 83% of PEs deem they are capable of demonstrating increased skills due to acquired vocational skills
- 95% of targeted youth participated in initial assessment process

Financial Services

- 43% of youth participants accessed the Loan Program, which was operational in Jan. 2008
- 29% of PEs who received loans are meeting their repayment commitments
- 42% of PEs surveyed who received loans are satisfied with the loan services

Lessons Learned

Assessment - Need more rigorous Initial assessments – specifically of training centers and the capacity for enterprise development and a loan program

Program Design - Phased approach was inefficient - enterprise development/income generation aspects of the program should be run concurrently with the Life skills/Vocational trainings



Lessons Learned, cont.

Life Skills Training – Life Skills Modules developed by Mercy Corps staff in SKYE were positive and effective – youth expressed high levels of satisfaction with the Peer Educator trainings and subsequent life skills and vocational trainings

Significance of Community Links – Deep links to the community ensured that the SYKE program was able to continue to function after Mercy Corps staff was forced to move to Tahoua due to escalating violence

Loan Program – Need for an outside technical partner that can monitor the process of the microfinance loans; loan program must adapt to the context of youth

"True individual freedom cannot exist without economic security and independence. People who are hungry and out of a job are the stuff of which dictatorships are made."

Franklin Roosevelt

