

Building the evidence base for what works

Evaluation Clinic highlights the importance of using impact evaluations to generate a body of knowledge on youth entrepreneurship programs



“My facilitation skills are severely handicapped by my handwriting,” joked Constanze Lullies, from the Jacobs Foundation. Ms. Lullies facilitated one of the live case studies.

The live cases analyzed during the Clinic were chosen by YEN’s Evaluation Taskforce through a call for proposals launched in September 2010. Of the 87 youth entrepreneurship projects that responded to the competitive call for proposals, four projects, from Ethiopia, Kenya, Malawi, and Tanzania, were chosen to receive assistance under the Evaluation Clinic. Projects that were eligible had to be from Sub-Saharan Africa.

“More and more foundations like us are now interested in funding these kinds of studies. Foundations are saying, yes, we want the evidence – show us what works,” said Constanze Lullies, from the Jacobs Foundation.

The Clinics are part of the sixth component of the *Unleashing African Entrepreneurship* initiative which is implemented through a partnership between the Youth Employment Network and the Youth Entrepreneurship Facility (YEF). The Clinic was sponsored by the Jacobs Foundation, the Danish-led Africa Commission, and the Swedish International Development Agency (SIDA).

“The benefit for us has been in re-designing our questionnaires and being sure we are asking the right questions,” said Mushi Sulaiman, research coordinator for BRAC’s Empowerment and Livelihoods for Adolescents program in Tanzania. BRAC is an international NGO. “It is important for us to get into the networks that work on the area of youth entrepreneurship and communicate our findings.”

“Based on the seminar, I’m really hoping that some impact evaluations will be conducted and that we have the opportunity to share them with youth employment practitioners and draw conclusions on whether our designs are working,” said Mr. Pilgrim.

About the Clinics

Evaluation Clinics are intensive 3-4 day trainings that focus on knowledge sharing and learning between youth entrepreneurship programs with the goal of improving current evaluation practices.

The Clinics provide funding for evaluations as well as access to specialized knowledge and support via hands-on consultations from evaluation experts.

By the end of the Clinic, case studies should have a draft work plan for the evaluation in place, which they will use to compete for seed funding to finance the actual evaluations. In this round the seed fund is USD 180,000. The YEN Evaluation Taskforce will make the final selection.

It was all work and some fun at the Youth Employment Network’s most recent Evaluation Clinic despite a warning from the Youth Employment Network’s (YEN) Manager, Markus Pilgrim, that when a German hosts a conference it will be no fun. The Clinic was held from November 22-24, 2010 in Nairobi, Kenya.

The Evaluation Clinics provide an opportunity for evaluation specialists and academics to collaborate with field practitioners to design impact evaluations of youth entrepreneurship programs. The goal is to find out what works in programming. The Clinics combine presentations on evaluation methods from experts with breakout groups where participants apply evaluation principles to live case studies.

“One of the ideas is that you, as the managers of programs, familiarize yourselves with the most frequently used methods of impact evaluations,” said Mr. Pilgrim in his opening to the Evaluation Clinic.

The Evaluation Clinics promote using impact evaluations to improve current evaluation practices. Impact evaluations aim to show causality to determine the effect that a particular intervention has on the outcomes of its beneficiaries.