



CID Talk, Nancy Yuan

Oxfam New Zealand

It is time to support young people in humanitarian settings and as partners in humanitarian action

15 August, 2018

Nancy Yuan, who is currently interning at Oxfam New Zealand, spoke to us about youth engagement in the Humanitarian sector.

Nancy left high school inspired to learn about the humanitarian sector. She spent time in Iran and Jordan working with refugees and was inspired by the young people she worked with and their passion to help others.

She is a part of the United Nations Major Group for Children which is the UN General Assembly-mandated official space for young people to contribute to and engage in the United Nations.

It is clear that the Sustainable Development goals cannot be met without engaging young people. 85% of young people are living in emerging economies and fragile states.

The Doha Youth Declaration on Reshaping Humanitarian Aid laid out the priorities and recommendations of young people, who had conducted over 100 youth-led consultations in the process leading up to the World Humanitarian Summit. At the summit, the Special Session on Youth was themed “Transforming Humanitarian Action with and for Young People”. During that session, various NGOs, UN agencies and governments came together to launch the Compact for Young People in Humanitarian Action.

The five actions that signatories pledge to take are:

1. Services: supporting age- and gender- responsive programmes to protect the health and well-being of all young people in humanitarian settings
2. Participation: unleashing the power of young people to help and to lead.
3. Capacity: building skills for humanitarian action and beyond.
- 4: Resources: increasing attention to and resources for young people in humanitarian settings.
- 5: Data: using accurate information to understand the needs of young people in humanitarian settings.

There are so many avenues for engaging young people. Young people should be involved in making decisions and used throughout the whole cycle.

The “Igniting hope” report documents the work actors are doing and what is working. A great example is when during the Ebola crisis the compact member were able to deploy volunteers (1700) to 8000 communities to work with community health workers to break the infection chain. Because the young people were known in the community it worked well and was credible.



What is the relevance in the Pacific?

The Pacific experience rapid onset and slow onset disasters – climate change is increasing the frequency of disasters. The Pacific represents a host of challenges. 50% of Pacific are under 25 which means it is crucial to meaningfully engage with Pacific youth. It is important to do this through localisation as an understanding of the culture is needed.

There is an appetite in the New Zealand government for a Pacific reset and Fletcher specifically mentioned youth as one of the important aspects of the reset in his speech at the latest NZADD's conference.

Where do we go from here?

It is important that MFAT include youth in their agenda and talk about funding for innovative projects that target youth. If youth are not funded to be engaged then how can their voices be heard?

It is important that our organisations reflect on how we are engaging youth in humanitarian action. Reflect on the programmes we currently have in our sector and how they can be improved. Your organisation can still join the Youth compact and share knowledge and support for youth engagement. NZ NGO's should engage youth in the Pacific in humanitarian responses. Start training now and these people will help with responses for decades to come!

It is a matter of starting the conversation and developing a youth engagement strategy. Meaningful and collaborative participation by youth can make all the difference and Kiwi and Pacific youth can be a huge part of the future of disaster response.

So let's get the conversation started!