
formalization of market systems—the creation of state rules and regulations ostensibly to prevent abuses.

These market systems, including waged farm work or market trading, have increased economic insecurity for the majority of young people in the face of inflation, devaluation, market volatility, climate change, land privatization and shifting local conflicts. Young women and men emphasize that common entrepreneurship focused livelihoods interventions fuel competition within these markets and do not take into account these fundamental realities.

Young people commonly say that that continued livelihoods investment models, including formal employment and higher education in towns, and basic agro-pastoral skills, tools and micro-loans support in rural areas, will likely perpetuate and exacerbate growing class divides and tensions among young people and between urbanized and remote rural communities.

Recommendations

Livelihoods-based approaches that target young people in South Sudan urgently need to be reviewed. In doing so, new programmes could do the following:

1. Address the disparity between urban and rural educational opportunities for young people. Education interventions must both acknowledge and challenge the concentration of educational and employment opportunities in towns. This includes investing in rural education and teacher training, and potentially funding rural scholarships to university or higher education colleges.
2. Provide and support opportunities for more young people to participate in local government. Young people want to openly discuss the economic crisis and confront leaders directly about the structural inequalities and conflicts the crisis is causing. The successful Akobo Model of local government should be revisited, bringing young men and women from urban and rural areas into county government infrastructure reconstruction.
3. Support cooperative economic models that draw on previously successful approaches. Collective economic action may help strengthen mutual solidarity and support young people to work together to confront forms of exploitation as a group, rather than fighting for survival and opportunity by themselves. Interventions could revisit cooperative models and learn from past failures and successes: for example, brick making, agricultural collectives or fish and shea butter farms. This approach might also help challenge the individualist entrepreneurship language that alienates many young people and (among other factors) encourages ethno-local hostility and competition.
4. Review microfinance initiatives and look at collective financing opportunities. Individual microfinance often leaves people more dependent on fluctuating markets and uncertain returns to service personal debt, contributing to deep economic precarity. Collective investments and funding might support cooperative models designed locally to suit specific climatic and economic situations.
5. Provide legal support for employment rights through local and customary court systems. Casual and low-paid workers are poorly supported by the centralized state system of law courts. Instead, they are more likely to seek redress for employment-related issues through the network of local and customary courts, which are less likely to be able to implement state employment legislation. However, to their advantage, they already have an established caselaw developed from previous litigation over unpaid wages, unsafe conditions or injury at work. Collaborative and locally organized consultations with courts and litigants could help to establish worker protection standards based on local legal practice and community-specific needs and would help identify local employment abuses.
6. Collaboratively review and revise initiatives and funding mechanisms for livelihoods projects. This process should include youth leadership and national NGOs, which are often led by young people with extensive knowledge of local economic dynamics. A participatory and accountable process

of reviewing and revising livelihoods programming in partnership with national NGOs would better address questions of cost-effectiveness and accountability, and better align livelihood support with international commitments in the Grand Bargain towards localization.



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