MEETING REPORT

2006

Make a Connection
Annual Meeting

Glasgow, Scotland

20-22 June 2006

NOKIA
Connecting People

International Youth Foundation®

:: PROVE AND IMPROVE ::

Make a Connection Annual Meeting
Crowne Plaza Hotel, Glasgow, Scotland
20 – 22 June 2006

MEETING REPORT

Welcome and Introduction

Alan Williams, Vice President, International Youth Foundation (IYF), and Kimmo Lipponen, Director, Nokia Community Involvement, opened the meeting, welcoming all participants. Alan emphasized that, over the past year, the IYF team in Baltimore has taken concrete steps to better support the local programs, including: providing partners with tailored support in areas of program design, monitoring and evaluation; developing the Field Notes series to create another outlet for partners to share knowledge and experience; and, nurturing the local collaboration between Nokia and local partners. Alan highlighted IYF's long-standing partnership with Nokia as described in the new What Works publication.

Presentation of Outcomes Measurement Study Findings

This session began with a review of the Outcomes Measurement Study (OMS) preliminary findings by Dr. Andy Hahn, Professor, Brandeis University. Andy reminded everyone that this was an outcomes documentation project developed with the partners as a pilot and was not a comprehensive evaluation of any particular project. More than 2,800 participants from thirteen projects and five continents completed at least one prospective or retrospective survey.

Preliminary findings from the study revealed that the programs do c*onnect* young people to life changing opportunities. In addition, there is evidence of life skills improvement among participants in all programs based on at least one of the pilot measurement approaches (index or attribution method). It was noted that the more conservative technique – the index method – produced more mixed results than the attribution method. An initial review of the findings indicates that at least two factors may affect an increase in participant life skills: (1) a high baseline, rendering measurable growth more difficult; and (2) the number of contact hours, or dosage. Finally, youth assessments of the program were very positive with respect to overall quality, the opportunity to learn new skills, and partner staff.

Andy pointed out that the retrospective results are even more positive than those of the prospective. This suggests that good ratings persist or improve as participants spend more time in a project or become "alumni."

In conclusion, Andy commented that the findings should stimulate additional discussion on who programs should serve, what level of skills to look for in participants, the degree of formality in the programs, and the use of curricula. Finally, it was noted that the diversity of populations, program models, and country contexts make it challenging to develop a standardized measurement system.

Following, Susan Pezzullo, Director of Learning at IYF, asked Partners to think about how they could use their outcome data. Examples included:

- **Gigi Antoni,** Executive Director, Big Thought, and **Gina Biasini,** Executive Director, Fundación para la Infancia y la Juventud (Opportúnitas), explained that their organizations would share the Brandeis results with stakeholders, such as their board of directors, teachers and school administrators to demonstrate the value of their program models.

- **Sandra Faria**, Executive Director, Fundação Abrinq, emphasized the importance of sharing the information with local Nokia offices, so they were aware of what the program had accomplished.
- **Carlos Zarco,** Executive Director, Fundación Rostros y Voces, commented that the information should all be shared with participating young people.

Many partners agreed that, with the findings from the OMS, their organizations would be able to verify that their program is having a positive effect on young people and that they would benefit from sharing these findings with other institutions in their countries through a publication. Meeting participants were then asked to share some ideas they had on how to use the information to change the design of their programs.

Measuring Youth Outcomes

In this session, participants met in small groups and discussed their information needs related to measuring youth outcomes.

Question 1- Tracking Youth Beneficiaries

Groups first discussed how they defined and tracked direct youth beneficiaries. Partners explained that beneficiary status was determined based upon the services provided to and the number of contact hours received by youth and adults through their intervention. In some cases, programs serve multiple levels of youth beneficiaries. For programs with a team volunteering component, there was also a discussion about the importance of differentiating the experience of group leaders versus members.

Next, partners shared information about different systems they use to track youth beneficiaries. For example, many programs collect personal and demographic information about youth beneficiaries through applications. Partners agreed that using a survey tool to collect baseline information was an efficient option. However, they reported that it was very challenging to keep up-to-date and accurate information on young people because organizations lose contact with beneficiaries over time. This affects their ability to survey and follow up with youth beneficiaries.

Methods for counting and validating youth beneficiary figures differ across the network. Attempts to keep precise records require the vigilance of those youth workers coming into most frequent contact with youth beneficiaries. Partners explained that comparisons of applications and reports help them pinpoint attrition and drop-outs. Examples of incentives used to encourage attendance included accreditation and certificates. Several programs shared that information collected on youth beneficiaries is input into Access or other database software. However, not all programs have electronic tracking systems in operation.

Question 2 - What other Outcome Data are important to you?

Groups discussed other youth outcomes that are important for their organizations to measure. Partners shared that one priority is to identify and measure the benefit of partnerships established at the local and national levels. Separately, some programs not expressly working to improve youth's employability would like to track their indirect impact on employability outcomes. Other ideas included: citizenship, changing adult perceptions of youth, and the existence of new platforms for youth participation, to name a few.

Groups stressed the importance of finding ways to corroborate youth reported data with other community stakeholders. Partners shared how they access other reports on youth participation and risk taking behaviors (e.g., drugs, crime) to complement their data collection efforts. Partners also expressed interest in learning more about alternative ways to measure the quality of youth outcomes over quantity.

Question 3 - Shifting Evaluation Roles of Partners
Several partners have existing relationships with external evaluators who can support them with developing and implementing evaluation plans. It was noted that in cases where new contacts with evaluators must be made, it will take a good amount of time to orient the evaluators to the program to ensure a good understanding of the program. Partners also explained that they have differing levels of institutional capacity and access to resources for evaluation so follow up discussions about how to pay for evaluation would be necessary.

Other partners would require support from IYF to design and plan for implementing evaluation because getting local support is not an option. These partners shared that support priorities for them include building their capacity to administer and analyze data and sharing examples of how best to motivate young people to complete evaluations.

Most partners supported the idea of decentralizing evaluation. They asked that IYF facilitate the development of a general framework and consider supporting learning exchanges between partners to strategically build their capacity to implement and use evaluations.

Nokia's Community Involvement Strategy: Expanding Synergies

Kimmo presented an overview of the company's Community Involvement (CI) strategy. He began by reporting that while there are currently 2.4 billion mobile phone users worldwide, by 2008 that figure is expected to climb to 3 billion, and by 2012, to 4 billion. Nokia's goal is to be a good community member wherever it operates. Given that cell phones will soon be used by half of the world's population, Nokia's CI efforts are directed around the globe. Nokia relies on NGO partners, such as those in the IYF network, to help identify solid youth programs and carry out activities at the local level.

In a world where everyone can be connected, Nokia takes a very human approach to technology. However, Nokia does not support projects for purely philanthropic reasons. "Rather our belief is that if we produce good societal benefits, in the long run it will also create more business benefits," Kimmo emphasized. In the short run, Nokia is interested in supporting programs that have societal benefit. In the long run, Nokia understands there needs to be a balance between societal and business benefits and that investing in the social and economic development will lead to more prosperous and productive countries and economies. This will ultimately be in Nokia's interest.

A guiding principle of Nokia's CI program is the recognition that each country has a unique context and a unique set of needs. In this light, Nokia has three key CI strategies:

- **Diversify** – Nokia supports different program models in mature versus emerging markets. In mature markets, Nokia will tend to support value-based programs, programs that are aligned with Nokia's core values and ethics. Recognizing the contribution mobile communications can make to improve the prospects and livelihoods of people in the developing world, in emerging markets, Nokia will try to contribute its core competence and integrate business into its programs.
- **Prove** – Nokia believes strongly in proving the results of its social programs. Working with Brandeis is a first step in the process, and the findings will be very important in looking at ways to improve the programs' effectiveness and contribute to knowledge development.

- **Leverage** – Although this is not an area that Nokia has emphasized in the past, there is now an interest and a desire to increase the visibility of Nokia's CI initiatives, both internally and externally to stakeholders and consumers. However, Nokia is clear that partners should not turn their programs into marketing machineries. Further, marketing and communications should not stress how good Nokia is, but rather tell the story of the programs. Nokia recognizes the gap between its global vision and local operations. To bridge that gap, the global team has been working closely with Country Management Teams (CMTs) to get local buy-in for the programs, and to have the programs integrated into local plans. Riccarda Zezza, Nokia Area Manager for Europe, Middle East and Africa, commented in practical terms that she has translated "leverage" in Europe to mean three things: (1) working with Nokia local CMTs to gain buy-in; (2) positioning programs as part of Nokia's citizenship in a country; and (3) promoting the concept of One Nokia, which shares a common identity and pride.

Underlying these strategies is an emphasis on values as reflected in the company's Code of Conduct, which articulates its position on a range of human rights and environmental issues. Said Kimmo, "We expect our suppliers and everyone we do business with to comply with it."

Nokia Helping Hands

There is also a desire to have programs work more closely with Nokia's employee volunteer program, known as Nokia Helping Hands. In that regard, Hanna Nihti, Program Manager, Nokia Helping Hands, provided an overview of the company's global employee volunteering program. Last year, Nokia volunteers engaged in more than 18,000 hours of service in 30 countries. Ten percent of the company's 60,000 employees are volunteering.

Nokia volunteers can help Make a Connection programs through: lending an extra hand, contributing technical skills, promoting a better understanding of the challenges facing young people, and increasing awareness of local programs.

Examples of employee engagement in Make a Connection include staff who serve on the grant evaluation committee in the Czech Republic, and Nokia volunteers in Brazil who have been trained as reading mediators. Employee engagement efforts are most successful when partners provide detailed information about the program and the types of support that are needed so that Nokia managers can communicate the details to employees. Nokia is looking for tasks that can be carried out by individuals and teams. Activities can be one-off or involve long-term volunteering.

Obstacles to employee engagement in Make a Connection programs include:

- Lack of time available for substantive engagement (for example, in Turkey and Mexico, where local programs would benefit from a greater level of involvement)
- The need to educate employees about the various ways they can get involved and how the experience might be of benefit to them. Here, the importance of enhanced communications was emphasized as well as the need to capture the stories of current employee engagement efforts.

It was noted that in those Latin American countries focusing on youth employment, it may be possible to engage Nokia suppliers/clients to help train/hire youth.

Regional Discussions

These sessions provided an opportunity for Nokia, IYF, and Partner staff to get to know each other better, while exploring topics of mutual interest on a regional basis. Discussions were tailored to specific regions. Topics ranged from how Nokia's CI strategy is operationalized at the country level to building a stronger four-way partnership, from promoting program sustainability to increasing opportunities for information-sharing and networking among regional partners.

Branding and Communicating Your Projects

This session began with Kimmo noting that when this initiative first began, it had two major foci: (1) building programs which were locally relevant; and (2) developing a network of programs that were communicated in a systematic manner (with a global program name and colors). He explained that local relevance remains extremely important, as does the notion of building a network in which learnings are shared. However, Kimmo explained that there is no longer a need to use the Make a Connection name and colors, as requested in the past. To this end, it is up to the partners to decide with Nokia Local whether or not they wish to change the local program name. Further, from now on, the Make a Connection name will only be used when highlighting global elements. At the same time, he recognized that the major challenge with this change will be the image identity. In response to a question, Kimmo indicated that partners, as owners of the logo, are best placed to decide whether or not to register their project logo/trademark.

Sheila Kinkade, Communications Consultant, IYF, then walked the participants through the main points of the new Branding and Communications Guidelines. In doing so, she emphasized that any new program logo/design should be developed between the partner and the local Nokia office. She also provided guidance on the use of the IYF logo, 3rd party logo, local messages and life skills messages.

Angela Billings, Communications, Nokia Community Involvement, displayed the new Nokia logo and explained to the partners when to use the "Nokia Connecting People" brandmark and the Nokia logotype. She noted that all co-owned program material should use the former, and any questions on the use of the logos should be directed to the local Nokia representatives. Angela also shared boilerplate language on the global program, which Nokia and IYF have developed for the partners to use when referring to the global program.

Following four partners presented brief case studies of their work in the area of communications:

- **Carola Sirvas,** *Fieldwork Supervisor, Centro de Información y Educación para la Prevención del Abuso de Drogas (CEDRO), Peru* – Carola explained the process CEDRO put in place to develop a logo for their project with the full involvement of the young people they serve. From CEDRO's experience, she highlighted the importance of (1) having clear criteria that made this a participatory process, and (2) deciding that the young people would choose the logo.
- **Maggie Pinar,** *International Programme Director, Education Volunteers Foundation of Turkey (TEGV), Turkey* – Maggie highlighted TEGV's art projects, its successful art exhibit in the metro entitled "Children's dream for 2020," and the communications plan the organization developed. An important aspect of this plan is having artists serve as patrons. One key learning Maggie shared was the importance of ensuring that the artists are involved in the project prior to being involved in the media events.
- **Ngozi Obi,** *Manager, Youth Programs, Leadership Effectiveness Accountability Professionalism Africa (LEAP), Nigeria* – Ngozi focused her discussion on LEAP's youth leadership program. She highlighted the importance of securing buy-in from the media on this program, which led to free media support. This was critical for their communications plan.
- **Agnes Zsok,** *Project Manager, Foundation for Democratic Youth (DIA), Hungary* – Agnes mentioned that one major challenge to DIA's communications plan is the fact that in several eastern European countries, including Hungary, giving media coverage to an international

corporate program is perceived as advertising for the company. DIA has been working hard to address this issue.

Growing the Partnership Part I: When and How to Involve New Partners?

"As a company, we're very open to partnerships and diversifying program resources," said Kimmo in opening the session. He went on to say that, "partnership building is important to reaching scale and sustainability beyond Nokia's funding." Further, Kimmo emphasized the importance of achieving "value fit" with potential partners, whether they are other companies, NGOs, or government agencies.

The following suggestions for growing partnerships emerged out of small group discussions:

- **Form a coalition of funders from diverse sectors to support various aspects of your program.** For example, in Turkey, TEGV is working with the national volunteers center, government ministries, and NGOs to create broad-based support for its activities.
- **Raise funds to scale-up your program.** Build your case based on successful results.
- **Expand your target population.** In Poland, for example, the Polish Children and Youth Foundation operates a life skills program for out-of-school youth supported by General Electric.
- **Approach Nokia retail outlets/suppliers as appropriate, and in close coordination with Nokia local offices.** In Turkey, for example, Nokia local helped to open doors with various vendors it does business with.
- **Raise funds for projects carried out specifically by youth.** In Russia, for example, the New Perspectives Foundation receives funding from local businesses and governments to support its youth-led volunteer projects. Local businesses are far more apt to support small projects operating close to home.
- **Seek funding for specific tools/resources and/or events.** In the UK, for example, Life Routes received support from O2 to support the publication of its curriculum and funding from an additional donor to underwrite a special event at the National Gallery. Likewise, TEGV receives funding from the United Way to support its evaluation activities.
- **Embed your Make a Connection activities within your broader programmatic work.** In Hungary, for example, DIA presents its programs as one, making it easier to attract funders to support a range of activities.
- **Approach funders for support of alumni association activities.**

One group discussed how working with the public sector affords youth serving organizations opportunities to influence national youth policy. For some countries, it is difficult to gain entry into ministries or other public sector circles. Some partners shared that learning about good practices for convening government and other civil society stakeholders would be valuable input for their own outreach strategies. Others shared examples of their ongoing efforts to leverage existing policy. For example, PCYF learned that local government funds were being ear-marked for youth development and began approaching local government representatives to share information about existing youth leaders in communities who could support local government with designing strategies to use the funds.

Partners cited the following obstacles to partnership building: attracting companies who may prefer to create their own separately branded programs and not share the spotlight with Nokia; giving appropriate credit to multiple funders and making each feel "special;" the difficulty of "selling" life skills to potential donors; the need to work more closely with Nokia local offices in identifying potential partners; governments that prefer not to collaborate with corporations; and a growing trend among banks and multinationals to create their own foundations, thus eliminating the need to partner.

Growing the Partnership Part II: Working with Governments to Achieve Systemic and Sustainable Impact

The session began with the presentation of three case studies from the UK, Brazil, and Colombia.

- **Sophie Wood**, *Senior Development Officer, National Children's Bureau (NCB), United Kingdom* – Sophie described how NCB works in the UK to both influence government policy and help the government achieve greater scale and impact. Life Routes occupies an influential position in that it provides the government with valuable research based on its experience in designing and implementing life skills curricula. In developing Life Routes, NCB built on newly emerging government policies. "Policy has informed practice; but practice has also informed policy," said Sophie, adding that it's important to involve government officials in the design and planning of programs. Emphasis also needs to be placed on relationship building as government officials are continually changing jobs. "It's important to listen to their needs and identify concrete ways in which you can actively support them," she said.
- **Sandra Faria,** *Executive Director, Fundação Abrinq, Brazil* – Sandra explained how Abrinq's efforts to influence government policy have focused on northern Brazil, where the organization has worked with the Secretary of Manaus to implement the Mudando a Historía program in public schools. A major learning for Abrinq has been the importance of maintaining positive relations with government officials in the face of continuing turnover. "One of the most important things is to stay tuned with what's going on in government," added Sandra Faria, "and understand changes before they happen." In the case of the Manaus cooperation, it's not so much about the money provided but the human resources and the structure the government offers.
- **Liliana Gonzalez,** *Executive Director of Fundacion Empresarios por la Educación (ExE), Colombia* – "We work to establish a bridge among those that are interested in cooperating with the public sector on education," said Liliana. "We're trying to improve the quality, quantity, and accessibility of education." In terms of Make a Connection, ExE's goal is not to merely train 475 youth, but to establish a model that can be replicated in different regions throughout the country. In doing so, ExE pursues two strategies. Its board is advised by the national Ministry of Education and it has established business committees at the local level. ExE encourages business to finance employment-related projects through focusing on shared values. "Some companies think they're giving you a lot and can change the face of education," she said. "This just isn't true."

Other strategies proposed for influencing public policies include: identifying champions within specific agencies that you can work with; building your reputation and expertise within the area you seek to influence; working with other NGOs to create an advocacy campaign; developing support among end users (e.g., in the UK, NCB tested its resources among the authorities and teachers who would be using it); and being able to present a thorough cost/benefit analysis to government officials.

Partners also underscored the inherent challenges in comparing methods of achieving systemic change across countries, given political and cultural variances.

Developing Life Skills Indicators

In light of the movement towards a more decentralized system of measurement, this abbreviated session provided interested partners with the opportunity to brainstorm on potential indicators for the current list of life skills. IYF will use these ideas to develop a list of possible indicators that partners may want to choose from when designing their programs. Because the life skills are multi-faceted and each program has a different focus, partners will not be limited by the list.

Meeting Closure

The meeting closed with a reflection on the discussion over the two days and with the recognition that in many ways this is a time of change and transition for the global initiative. Although change can be difficult, it was affirmed that the primary responsibility of partners is to continue what they are already doing – implementing sound programs. In closing, Kimmo announced that Sophie Wood was the winner of this year's annual award. To officially end the meeting, participants were serenaded by a professional bagpiper.

APPENDIX 1

Summary of Partner Feedback Forms

- A major benefit to partners of the meeting was the opportunity to get to know one another, share experiences, and learn from colleagues. Partners think that in the future, this can be promoted more effectively by:
    - Providing more unstructured time in the agenda – perhaps adding an open space technology component.
    - Providing an opportunity for partners to share information about their projects. This can be done either through formal (brief) presentations, more intense project summaries in the briefing books, and/or a 'marketplace' where partners can make a display about their projects.
- It is important to vary the agenda to appeal to different people's learning styles. Partners expressed an interest in more experiential learning – particularly as it relates to their experience in implementing life skills programs.
- Participants prefer a 50-50 balance between plenary and break-out sessions/small group discussions. More small group discussion/break-out discussions might have been incorporated into the agenda.
- It is important to build flexibility into the agenda so that adjustments can be made when a session needs more/less time than originally planned. When such adjustments are made, participants should be informed of how the overall agenda will be affected. (Also important is staying within the overall working hours established by the original agenda.)
- For future meetings, it may be good to focus on fewer topics, but to discuss them in more depth and give people adequate time to absorb the information presented. Two topics that are of particular interest to partners are Partnership and Measurement.
- Partners have a great interest in a site visit in connection with the annual meeting.
- Partners really appreciated the opportunity to hear from Nokia about its CI strategy.
- The regional sessions seem to vary by region in terms of their effectiveness. The Latin American region seems to be the most interested in these discussions.
- In terms of the development of the agenda, people were generally pleased. In the future, it would be helpful to explain the entire agenda development process and timeline to all partners at the outset, so it is understood. We should think about how to bring Nokia employees into this formal process as well.
- Partners clearly appreciated having a relaxed, informal environment for the meeting. In the future, we should think of ways to make the meeting more "fun" and promote more relationship development among partners. Also, the room for this meeting was not ideal, as it was dark and lacked natural light.
- Partners appreciated having the meeting connected to the IYF partner meeting, although the connection to the CIVICUS meeting was not valued as highly.
- Participants would like to receive documents in both electronic and hard copy format.
- Participants highly value these meetings and most would like to see them continue on an annual basis. The meetings seem to be more valued for the connections they build, the lessons learned they bring out, and building a sense of community within the global initiative than they do for actually enhancing program effectiveness, although all aspects are appreciated.