



# FEED THE FUTURE

The U.S. Government's Global Hunger & Food Security Initiative



## FEED THE FUTURE PROJECT DESIGN GUIDE FOR YOUTH-INCLUSIVE AGRICULTURE AND FOOD SYSTEMS:

### VOLUME II - IMPLEMENTATION



**USAID**  
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**YOUTH**  **POWER**  
LEARNING





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# ACRONYMS

ALP	Accelerated Learning Program
ADS	Automated Directive Systems
BYEP	Bangladesh Youth Employment Pilot
CBT	Cognitive Behavioral Therapy
CRS	Catholic Relief Services
EVI	EcoVentures International
GIF	Gender Integration Framework
GFSS	Global Food Security Strategy
ICT	Information and Communication Technology
KENDAT	Kenya Network for the Development of Agricultural Technologies
LRFRP	Land Reform and Farm Restructuring Project
M4P	Making Markets Work for the Poor
MSD	Market Systems Development
PAD	Project Appraisal Document
PAS	Prepara Ami ba Servisu Project
PYD	Positive Youth Development
SILC	Savings and Internal Lending Communities
STI	Sexually Transmitted Infection
TVET	Technical and Vocational Education and Training
USAID	United States Agency for International Development





# TABLE OF CONTENTS



## INTRODUCTION TO VOLUME II

01



## 1. INTEGRATE YOUTH INTO AGRICULTURE VALUE CHAINS

04

### 1.1 Value Chain Entry Points

04

### 1.2 Criteria for Selecting Youth-Inclusive Value Chains

10

### 1.3 Youth-Inclusive Value Chain Analysis

11



## 2. PREPARE YOUTH FOR ECONOMIC OPPORTUNITIES

15

### 2.1 Develop Transferable Skills

15

### 2.2 Provide Ongoing or Follow-On Support

20



## 3. CREATE A SUPPORTIVE ENVIRONMENT FOR YOUTH IN THE AGRICULTURE/FOOD SYSTEM

22

### 3.1 Family Environment

24

### 3.2 Community and Peer Environment

27

### 3.3 System Rules and Supporting Functions

29

### 3.4 Youth and Gender Considerations in the Agri-Food System

35



## 4. APPLY A CONFLICT-SENSITIVE YOUTH LENS IN CONFLICT ENVIRONMENTS

38



## ANNEXES

41

### Annex I: Adolescent Development and the Youth Cohort

41

### Annex II: Adolescent Development Characteristics

42

### Annex III: The Basics about Adolescent Brain Development

44

### Annex IV: Positive Youth Development

46

### Annex V: List of Resources

47





# LIST OF TABLES AND FIGURES

<a href="#"><u>Table 1. Assessing Value Chain Relevance and Accessibility to Youth</u></a>	05
<a href="#"><u>Table 2. Entry Points for Youth in the Kenyan Livestock By-Products Value Chain</u></a>	08
<a href="#"><u>Table 3. Youth-Sensitive Questions for the Value Chain Analysis</u></a>	12
<a href="#"><u>Table 4. Technical Skills Requirements in the Fruit and Vegetables Global Value Chain</u></a>	16
<a href="#"><u>Table 5. Required Competencies in the Kenyan Livestock and By-Products Value Chains</u></a>	17
<a href="#"><u>Table 6. Illustrative Activities that Bridge Education to Employment</u></a>	20
<a href="#"><u>Table 7. Family Environment Considerations and Approaches</u></a>	26
<a href="#"><u>Table 8. Community and Peer Environment Considerations and Approaches</u></a>	28
<a href="#"><u>Table 9. System Rules and Supporting Functions – Considerations and Approaches</u></a>	33
<a href="#"><u>Table 10. Conflict-Affected Environments – Considerations and Approaches</u></a>	39
<a href="#"><u>Figure 1. Youth Entry Points in Agricultural Value Chain</u></a>	05
<a href="#"><u>Figure 2. Entry Points for Youth in the Honduran Coffee Value Chain</u></a>	07
<a href="#"><u>Figure 3. Skills Pyramid: Range of Skills Necessary for Youth Success in the Agri-Food System</u></a>	15
<a href="#"><u>Figure 4. Adaptation of Bronfenbrenner’s Ecological Model</u></a>	22
<a href="#"><u>Figure 5. Viewing Youth-Inclusive Agri-Food Systems from a Market Systems Development Perspective</u></a>	23



# INTRODUCTION TO VOLUME II

To achieve the objectives of the U.S. Government's Feed the Future initiative—as articulated in the U.S. Government [Global Food Security Strategy](#) (GFSS) and A [Food-Secure 2030 vision](#)—we need to harness the creativity and energy of youth. There is a strategic imperative for investing in youth: young people are critical to global stability, economic growth, and development today and into the future.

The purpose of this guide is to enable USAID staff and implementing partners to intentionally consider the distinct aspirations, assets, opportunities, and barriers of youth populations when designing projects and activities in support of Feed the Future, guided by the U.S. Government Global Food Security Strategy. The guide is structured as two volumes:

**Volume I** focuses primarily on USAID project design, based loosely on the USAID project design guidance provided in [Automated Directive Systems \(ADS\) 201](#), Program Cycle Operational Policy. The intended audience for this guide is USAID Mission and Washington DC staff.

**Volume II** offers implementation guidance for activity-level interventions, intended for USAID staff and implementers who may ultimately be managing Feed the Future activities and/or who wish to know more about youth-inclusive approaches to implementation.

Volume II supports USAID and implementers to contribute to Feed the Future goals including:

- Better performing agriculture and food systems, and upgraded value chains within them;
- Increased progress toward Feed the Future initiative goals, particularly through higher incomes (livelihoods), increased employment and entrepreneurship, and improved knowledge and skills (empowerment) among young people engaged in agriculture and food systems;
- More youth contributing to the wide range of agriculture and food system activities; and
- Enhanced resilience at the individual, household, and systems level with cross-cutting positive impacts on nutrition and health.

As noted in Volume I, while the guide suggests approaches to designing youth-inclusive agriculture projects, to date there is little rigorous evidence on this topic.<sup>1</sup> More rigorous impact evaluations are needed to identify which types of youth-inclusive agriculture interventions improve the different Feed the Future outcomes—i.e., increased incomes, job creation, agriculture productivity, and resilience (refer to the different Feed the Future youth project typologies in Volume I, Annex 1). USAID Missions and implementing partners are encouraged to adopt youth-inclusive learning agendas and rigorous evaluation of youth-specific Feed the Future activities.





## Top Takeaways from Volume II

Among the many tools, tips, and practical guidance offered in this volume, the top takeaways for youth-inclusive Feed the Future activity implementation are:








1. Identify value chain entry points that are both relevant to and accessible for young people ([Section 1.1](#))
2. Ensure that workforce training aligns youth with the demands of the value chain entry points, but also develops transferable skills that enable youth to upgrade and tap into new opportunities as they emerge over time ([Section 2.1](#))
3. Offer youth follow-on support through mentoring, internships, job intermediation, and market facilitation services ([Section 2.2](#))
4. Consider the entire supportive environment that influences youth decisions and behaviors, including family, community, institutions, and policies/norms ([Section 3.0](#))
5. Apply a conflict-sensitive youth lens when integrating youth into agriculture and food systems affected by conflict ([Section 4.0](#))
6. Apply a youth lens to intentionally integrate young people into the agriculture/food system throughout the program cycle and use a positive youth development (PYD) approach to ensure quality implementation based on evidence-based approaches (throughout)





Icons are used throughout the guide to highlight specific concepts, resources, or items of particular note.

The following table provides description for each icon used in this guide.

ICON	NAME	DESCRIPTION
	TIP	Evidence-based, good practices to keep in mind while designing activities
	GENDER CONSIDERATIONS	Highlights areas where young women or men face unique challenges or opportunities
	PYD DOMAINS	Identifies where positive youth development concepts are being applied
	TOOLS AND RESOURCES	Denotes tools for designers and links to additional helpful tools and resources that have been developed under the auspices of USAID
	LINKS TO RESILIENCY	Identifies a link to Feed the Future activities under GFSS' Objective 2
	LINKS TO NUTRITION	Identifies a link to Feed the Future activities under GFSS' Objective 3
	EXAMPLE	Indicates a relevant example for consideration

Click the buttons to navigate to the desired section of the document





# INTEGRATE YOUTH INTO AGRICULTURE VALUE CHAINS

The following section details the four salient options for including youth in Feed the Future activities: (1) integrate youth into agriculture value chains; (2) prepare youth for opportunities; (3) create a supportive environment for youth in the agriculture/food system; and (4) apply a conflict-sensitive youth lens in conflict environments.<sup>2</sup>

## I.1 Value Chain Entry Points

Industry best practices suggests that the best long-term economic opportunities for youth are determined by value chain performance, suggesting a strong argument for selecting the most competitive value chains irrespective of the opportunities they offer youth. Indeed, USAID Missions often select value chains based on considerations unrelated to the potential for youth inclusion. For these reasons, the focus of this section will be on the identification of entry points based on a set of pre-selected value chains or value chains that have been identified independent of youth-related considerations. In certain cases, particularly for youth-focused activities, USAID may choose to select value chains with youth-specific considerations in mind. The following section provides information on selecting value chains based on their potential for youth integration.

“Entry points” in the context of youth inclusion are defined as functions within a value chain that are both relevant and accessible to young people. Table 1 illustrates characteristics of both the “relevance” and “accessibility” of value chains to youth.

**Relevance** refers to youth’s level of interest in the activity

**Accessability** refers to the ability of young people to act on the opportunity, given their collection of skills and other assets.

Entry points can be found in product-specific value chains or in cross-market functions (typically services provided to multiple value chains, such as integrated pest management or input supply). It is important to note that value chain entry points are not end points. As youth and economies mature, their activities and corresponding opportunities will evolve, and they may move throughout the chain and/or into new value chains (see [Figure 1](#)).

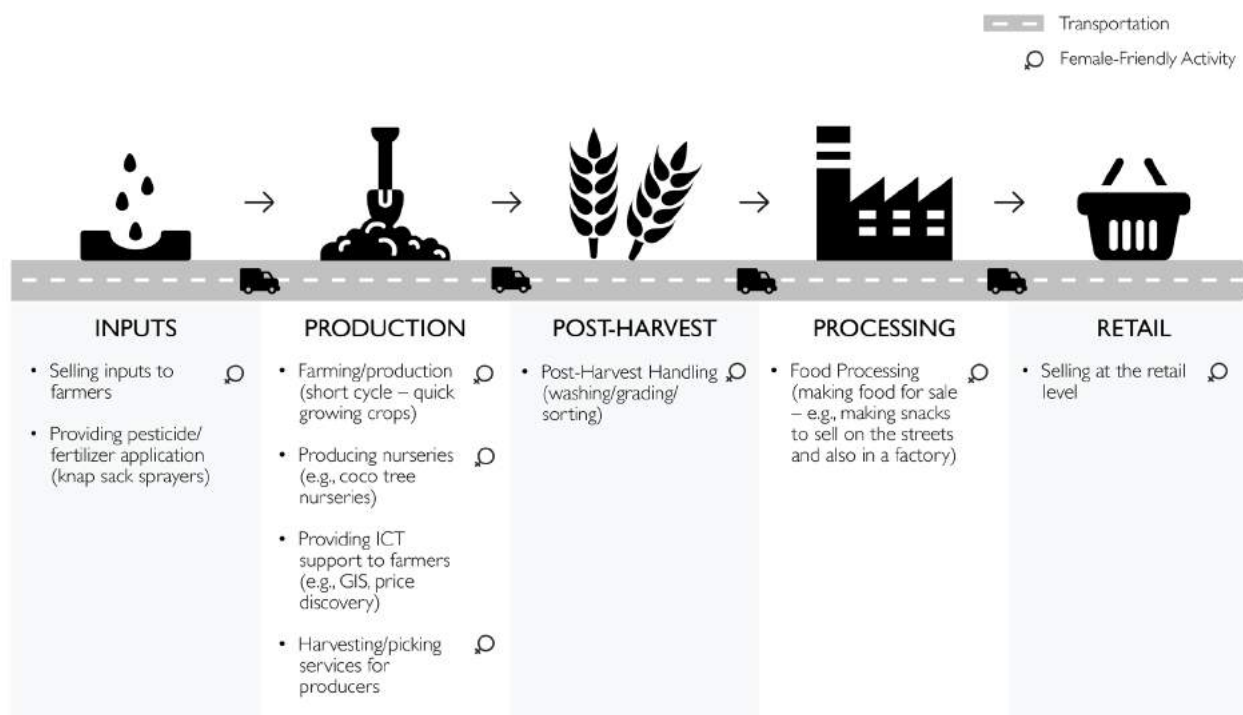




Table 1. Assessing Value Chain Relevance and Accessibility to Youth<sup>3</sup>

Relevant to Youth	Accessible to Youth (Low Barriers to Entry)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Profitable</li> <li>✓ Timely returns (short production cycles)</li> <li>✓ Appropriate labor levels</li> <li>✓ Youth already engaged in the function/activity</li> <li>✓ Aligns with current and future aspirations</li> <li>✓ Offers opportunity to develop, adopt, or scale a new technology</li> <li>✓ Work requirements align with expectations and interests of young men and women</li> <li>✓ Acceptable by family and peers</li> <li>✓ Acceptable for personal safety and health</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Lower levels of family control/influence</li> <li>✓ Lower up-front cash requirements</li> <li>✓ Low land/resource needs</li> <li>✓ Required skills can be attained by youth cohort within a reasonable timeframe</li> <li>✓ Other value chain actors not opposed to the engagement of young men and women</li> <li>✓ Young men and/or women are able to access the right networks and information to succeed within that function of the chain</li> <li>✓ Presence of a willing large-scale buyer to motivate youth group formation</li> </ul>

Figure 1. Youth Entry Points in Agricultural Value Chain



### Finding Youth-Appropriate Value Chain Entry Points

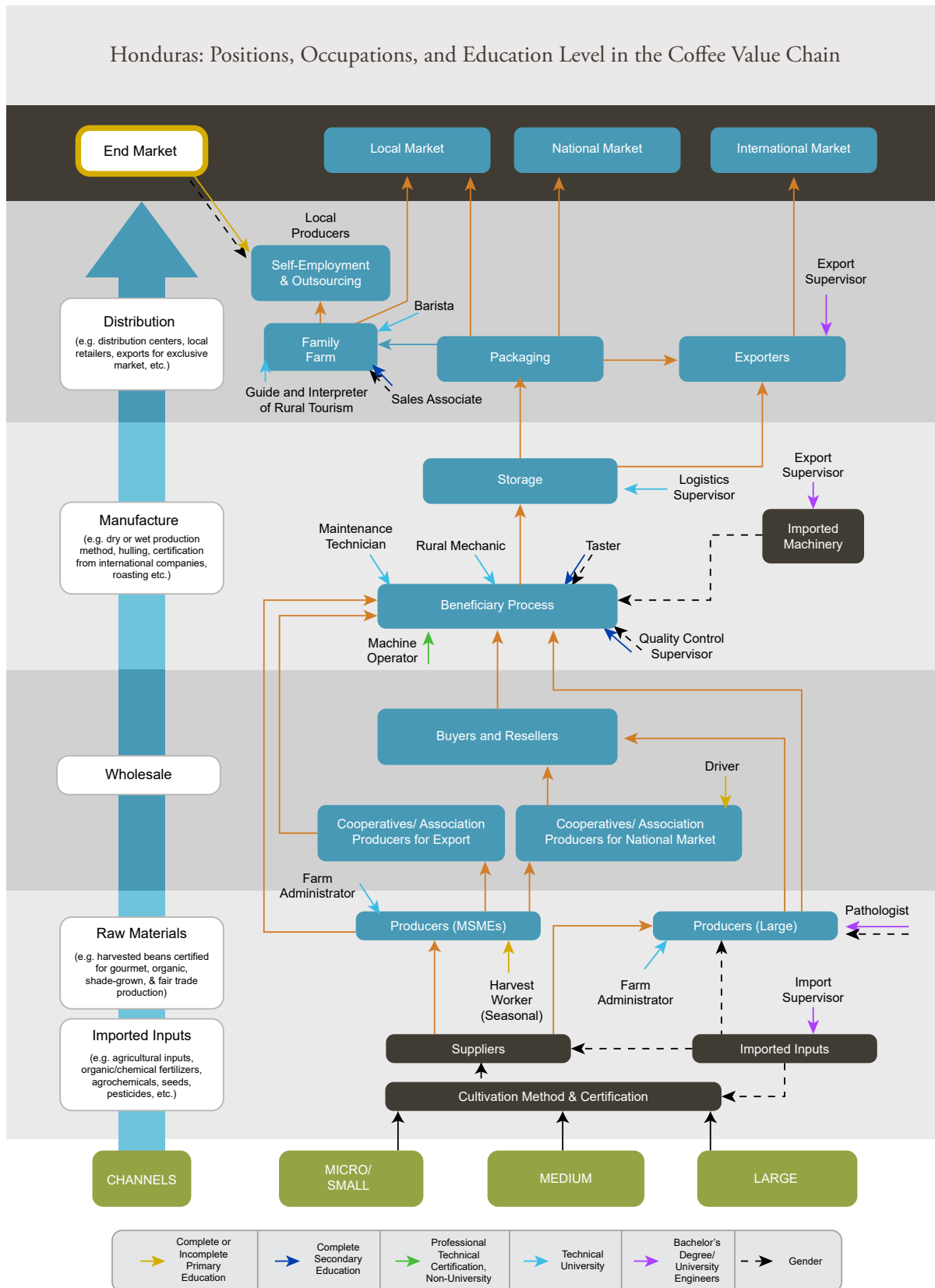
Under the USAID-funded Kenya Horticulture Competitiveness Project, a youth-inclusive value chain analysis was conducted to find areas of opportunity for youth in high-value agriculture consistent with value chain upgrading. Among the identified entry points were post-harvest opportunities such as sorting and grading (especially relevant and accessible for women), drying, packaging and loading, on-farm service provision in areas such as integrated pest management, and transport opportunities using bikes that many young people already own and ride recreationally. These post-harvest opportunities offered real potential for youth to address post-harvest loss, which is estimated at 40% in most value chains.

As an example, Figure 2 on the next page illustrates a youth-sensitive mapping of the coffee value chain in Honduras. This figure was initially developed in partnership with coffee value chain actors and intended to show: (a) where youth were found in the value chain, (b) which youth skills (e.g., education levels) were required to serve those value chain functions, and (c) where women were located in the chain. Thinking beyond the perspective of skills, a similar approach could be taken to analyze youth entry points from the perspective of the various “relevance” and “accessibility” factors described above in Table 1. Moreover, this tool could be adapted to reflect not simply the “What Is” scenario, but also the “What Could Be” scenario, imagining new functions that may be conducive to youth participation as the value chain upgrades.





Figure 2. Entry Points for Youth in the Honduran Coffee Value Chain



Source: Value chain based on interviews with key coffee sector actors in the cities of Tegucigalpa, San Pedro Sula, and Santa Rosa de Copan, Honduras; July-August 2016

Source: FHI 360/USAID Workforce Connections Project. [Labor Market Assessment Tools: Value Chain Mapping](#)



As a comparison, the following case study example and Table 2 illustrate how one organization identified future possibilities for youth in the Kenyan livestock by-products Value Chain.

#### EXAMPLE

### Youth-Inclusive Value Chain Assessment: Identifying Value Chain Entry Points

“Rather than focusing on developing and implementing a competitiveness strategy for an entire value chain, EcoVentures International (EVI) instead identifies where youth can best enter promising value chains.... EVI applies a labor market assessment to identify employment opportunities, while surveying value chain actors to identify what value chain functions are bottlenecks in the sector that present options for self-employment. By focusing on functions, EVI is then able to build detailed skill profiles that identify the elements required for youth to be successful in the selected sectors, and build linkages with service providers offering needed support services (e.g., finance, training) and lead firms interested in employing youth. When relevant, EVI identifies where youth could provide complementary goods and services that support overall growth of the value chain or create value from unused waste streams.”<sup>4</sup> (Refer to Table 2, EVI’s mapping of youth entry points in the Kenyan livestock by-products value chain.)

Table 2. Entry Points for Youth in the Kenyan Livestock By-Products Value Chain

Livestock By-Products	
Immediate Opportunities	Immediate Linkages
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Collect hooves, bones, hides, and skins from livestock market and butcheries for local and national sale</li> <li>Produce value-added products from livestock by-products and sell to local retailers</li> <li>Collect milk for bulking and sale to local outlets</li> <li>Establish local milk processing operation and cold storage</li> <li>Clean and process hides and skins</li> <li>Sale of processed milk, hides, and skins to local buyers</li> <li>Open and operate local milk bar</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>DLPO</li> <li>ALRMP</li> <li>Garissa Butchers Association</li> <li>Garissa Hides and Skins Cooperative</li> <li>Garissa Mini Camel Dairy</li> <li>Nyirenyire Women’s Group</li> <li>Biashara Trading Company (Mwingi buyer)</li> </ul>
Growth Opportunities	Growth Linkages
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Open retail shop to sell livestock value-added products</li> <li>Establish central collection point for by-product wholesale and retail</li> <li>Sell hides and skins directly to Nairobi buyers</li> <li>Export processed by-products to regional outlets</li> <li>Refrigerate and transport processed milk</li> <li>Create market niche by offering refrigerated milk and by-products</li> <li>Expand operation to partner location in Eastleigh</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>DLPO</li> <li>ALRMP</li> <li>Garissa Butchers Association</li> <li>Garissa Mini Camel Dairy</li> <li>KEBS</li> <li>Biashara Trading Company (Mwingi buyer)</li> <li>Leathertek (Nairobi buyer)</li> <li>Faza Exporters (Nairobi buyer)</li> <li>Leather Industries of Kenya (Nairobi buyer)</li> <li>Alfa Tannery (Nairobi buyer)</li> </ul>







## Strategies for Involving Young Women and Girls in Agriculture Value Chains

The benefits of agricultural employment are not likely to be distributed equitably. Rural women (especially young rural women) are more likely to be unemployed than men, more likely to be working in the informal sector, and less likely to be in leadership positions. In the agriculture sector, females are traditionally clustered in production and some processing functions. Research suggests that certain non-production roles, such as retail sales and marketing, offer potential entry points for female youth.<sup>5</sup> For example, a growing number of jobs created in food systems are in food production, processing, and food services, which are often an entry point for female employment and women-led enterprises.<sup>6</sup> Pyburn and Laven (2012) highlight several strategies to facilitate young female participation in agricultural value chains:<sup>7</sup>

- ✓ **Mitigate resistance by building on tradition:** Identify the roles that young women and girls are already playing in value chains and/or activities, and build on them. This type of do-no-harm approach is useful in more conservative contexts where women and girls may face increased opposition to taking on non-traditional roles and responsibilities.
- ✓ **Creating space for young women:** Facilitate young women's entry into traditionally male-dominated value chains, or support female entrepreneurship. This approach works in contexts where there will be less resistance to the shifting of gender roles.
- ✓ **Organize for change:** Address the structural constraints that create barriers to young women's participation in agricultural value chains. This includes participating in collective action, sensitizing men and women in order to challenge prevailing norms and expectations around women's work, and facilitating access to finance for young women.
- ✓ **Market young women's participation through labels and seals:** Highlight young women and girls' position in the agricultural value chain as a marketing tool for socially conscious buyers.





**TIP:** Although off-farm employment is increasing at a faster rate in Africa, research shows that the bulk of food systems job creation globally is skewed heavily toward on-farm activities because they are growing from a much larger initial base. The same report indicates that, in most countries, off-farm job creation will not surpass on-farm job creation until at least 2025 or even later in many countries.<sup>8</sup> As a result, off-farm job creation will likely be insufficient to accommodate job demand in the near future.<sup>9</sup> In fact, research from Michigan State University shows that higher on-farm productivity is closely correlated with the growth of off-farm opportunities.<sup>10 11</sup> Activities therefore should consider creative ways to engage young people in on-farm activities. For example, mechanization and the use of new technologies (ICT or other farming technologies) can positively influence young people's attitudes toward production by reducing physical hardship, increasing productivity and profits, and offering youth a value-added role in the system.



## 1.2 Criteria for Selecting Youth-Inclusive Value Chains

**Criteria for Value Chain Selection:** In some cases value chains may have been pre-identified by USAID at the project design stage based on the quantity and quality of opportunities for young people. More often, however, pre-selected value chains are likely to have been identified based on other considerations (such as productivity or competitiveness). In the latter case, USAID may sometimes allow the implementer to choose additional value chains; in some cases, USAID may leave the entire value chain selection to the implementing partner. In such cases, youth-inclusive criteria for value chain selection could include, but not be limited to:

- Relevance and accessibility of each industry for specific youth cohorts (see Volume 1, Section 4).
- Identification of specific value chain entry points for youth. Notably, “longer” value chains—those with multiple functions from input supply to end markets—generally offer greater opportunity for the non-production roles that youth gravitate toward.<sup>12</sup>
- Impact potential of each entry point (in terms of projected income or employment generation).
- Likely impact on overall value chain performance associated with incorporating youth-inclusive interventions at each point.
- Associated requirements for specific sub-groups of youth (discussed in Volume 1, Section 4.1).
- Overall growth and competitiveness potential of the value chain as a whole.







**TIP:** High-value horticulture is a more efficient job creator than staple crops, generating 10 to 100 times more employment than staple crops per hectare.<sup>13</sup> **Generally speaking, staple crops are less profitable than high-value crops (particularly on small plots of land). Staple crops are land intensive and offer little in the way of non-production opportunities.**<sup>14</sup> **Staple crop production tends to be highly centralized and commercialized which creates barriers for youth participation.** Conversely, common examples of youth-friendly value chains include high-value horticulture, tree crops, and livestock due to their low land and high labor intensity. Each of these examples also offers post-harvest opportunities that make them appealing to youth.<sup>15</sup>



**Supporting Diversified Livelihoods:** Developing a range of income streams (those that are not similarly vulnerable to the same set of risks) can be an important buffer for youth during times of economic or other shocks and allow them added stability as markets change. When selecting value chains, look for opportunities to support youth in creating a diversified livelihoods portfolio by encouraging participation in multiple value chain activities and income sources.

## 1.3 Youth-Inclusive Value Chain Analysis

Youth-inclusive value chain assessments are necessary for determining the extent to which value chains under consideration offer entry points for male and female youth cohorts. USAID Missions may prefer to conduct value chain analyses during the Project Appraisal Document (PAD) process, or they may require the implementing partner to conduct the analyses post-award. Youth and value chain analyses may be done independently, or they may be done in parallel so that the findings can reinforce one another in real time.

Volume 1, Section 3.4 of this guide offers a set of youth analysis framing questions that are also applicable to the value chain analysis. Additional key questions are:



Table 3. Youth-Sensitive Questions for the Value Chain Analysis

Key Information to Obtain	Key Related Questions to Answer
<b>Youth's role and activities in the value chain</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Are youth currently active participants in this value chain? In what activities do young men vs. women participate?</li> <li>• In which activities are young men vs. women most prominent? Least? Why?</li> <li>• Are youth consumers of the value chain's final product(s)?</li> <li>• Are there "invisible" youth actors (e.g., females) whose work is not remunerated or who are not in control of production?</li> </ul>
<b>Available value chain opportunities to youth</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Are there opportunities for young people to build on existing value chain activities in which they are already participants?</li> <li>• To what extent does the value chain feature missing value chain links that represent opportunities for youth entrepreneurship?</li> <li>• What are young people's attitudes toward risk?</li> <li>• To what extent could lead firms currently or potentially support opportunities for youth?</li> </ul>
<b>Relevance of the value chain to youth</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What is the relative profitability of this value chain?</li> <li>• Does this value chain offer the opportunity for rapid cash returns?</li> <li>• What is the relative risk (financial, social, other) of participation in this value chain?</li> </ul>
<b>Accessibility of the value chain to youth</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• To what extent do young males and females in this value chain control equipment, sales income, or the enterprise more broadly?</li> <li>• Is this a cash crop or a staple crop? If a staple crop, to what extent does production take place on small plots of land vs. larger plots?</li> <li>• Do youth possess the necessary financial and physical assets (land, energy, water, equipment, etc.) to succeed in the select activities of the value chain? What up-front investments are required?</li> <li>• What are the current gaps between the skills and knowledge that young people have, and what is required to take advantage of these opportunities? (refer to <a href="#">Section 2.1</a>)</li> <li>• To what extent does family tend to be involved in activities in this value chain?</li> </ul>
<b>Value chain's potential contribution to young women and girls' equality and empowerment</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What roles do female youth play in this value chain—both paid and unpaid?</li> <li>• Are potential opportunities in this value chain close to female participant households?</li> <li>• What is the legal working age, and where does child labor exist in the economy/ value chain?</li> <li>• What are potential barriers for female youth to take part in this value chain (e.g., time, mobility, cultural expectations, high start-up costs, access to networks, information and technology)?<sup>16</sup></li> </ul>



### The Female-Centered Value Chain Analysis and Situation Assessment

Certain contexts may call for a female-centered approach that expands the role of young women and girls into value chains. A do-no-harm approach recognizes the gender norms that exist in society, observes local labor laws on working age, and also acknowledges the reality that women and girls are often performing unpaid tasks in the value chain and in the household, among other considerations. For example, “Cardno has developed an analytical approach to working with [adolescent] girls that combines a modified value chain analysis with a broader situational assessment. ... Cardno placed girls as the center of the assessment by studying the applicability of the selected value chain to their situations; why girls and young women have not taken up core market functions; what barriers to or opportunities for entry exist; and what are the relative competitive advantages for integrating adolescent girls and young women into the targeted value chains. The situational assessment looked at the broader context for adolescent girls and young women in order to identify what social, physical and educational challenges they face, what specific interventions could address those challenges, and what barriers and opportunities exist for their involvement in the targeted value chains relative to other income opportunities in the region.”<sup>17</sup>









## 2. PREPARE YOUTH FOR ECONOMIC OPPORTUNITIES

Though youth might be linked to viable economic opportunities, they may not always be prepared to succeed. Volume 1, Section 4.1 of this guide discusses the importance of aligning youth assets with the demands of the agri-food system. This section suggests how to prepare youth to maximize the opportunities within the agri-food system over the long term, as well as in other aspects of their life.

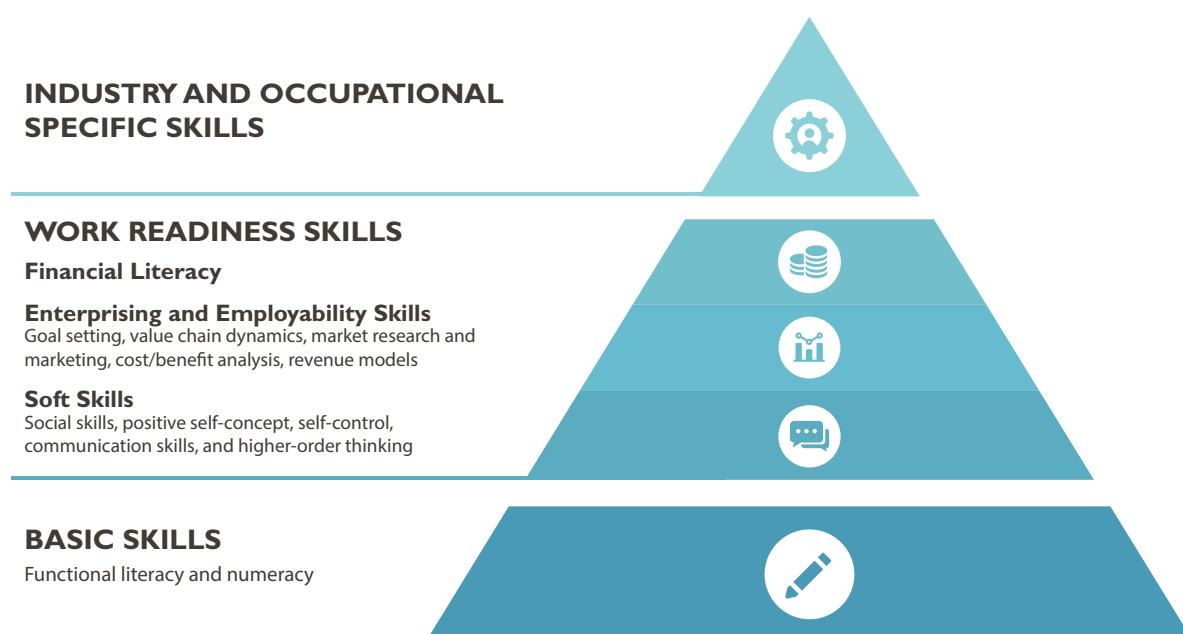
### 2.1 Develop Transferable Skills

When youth possess the right skills, competencies, and attitudes, they are able to succeed as market actors in agri-food systems. However, not all youth possess the necessary skills and competencies to perform in agriculture markets; as youth cohorts differ in education level, age, etc., their skill levels also vary. Feed the Future activities are likely to achieve greater results with youth when accompanied by strategies that help youth build foundational skills and positive attitudes.



**TIP:** While it is critical to identify the set of industry-specific skills required by value chain entry points, it is equally important that skill-building efforts enable young people to navigate within and between value chains as new opportunities arise. These foundational skills also help young people develop the resilience needed to overcome barriers and respond to economic or other shocks as they arise. Figure 3 illustrates the range of skills that enable youth success—most of which are consistent with value chain requirements.

Figure 3. Skills Pyramid: Range of Skills Necessary for Youth Success in the Agri-Food System



When assessing skills requirements, a very basic approach examines the technical or educational requirements for performing different job functions. Table 4 illustrates such a “skills mapping” exercise, identifying value chain functions and the corresponding levels of education and experience needed to complete them.

*Table 4. Technical Skills Requirements in the Fruit and Vegetables Global Value Chain\**

Position	Job Description	Education Requirements	Training/ Experience
<b>Production for Export</b>			
Harvest Worker	Responsible for bin placement for pickers and removal of bins ready to be stacked in trucks. Must be able to operate machinery safely, and without damaging the harvested product.	No education required	Experience/training
Tractor/Truck Operator	Manually plant, cultivate, and harvest fresh fruits and vegetables. Duties may include tilling soil and applying fertilizers; transplanting, weeding, thinning, or pruning crops; cleaning, packaging and loading harvested products.	License/certification	Technical training
Pesticide Handler	Prepare and apply pesticides, herbicides, fungicides, or insecticides. Pesticides handlers must be thoroughly knowledgeable of the chemicals as well as proper application and disposal procedures.	Technical education	Experience/technical training/certification
Irrigation Technician	Install, maintain, alter, repair, and service irrigation system.	Technical education	Experience
Quality Control	Work in the field and are responsible for the quality of the harvested crop. Random samples are taken from each bin and checked for quality, size, color, and maturity.	Technical education	Experience
<b>Packing and Cold Storage</b>			
Packing Worker	Fills trays, wraps fruit, and packs boxes. Looks for defects in the fresh fruit and vegetables and makes sure the packed fresh fruit and vegetables are well presented.	No education required	Training
Labelers	Labels packed fresh fruit and vegetables for shipment. Using computer-controlled equipment ensures traceability of produce.	Literacy and numeracy skills	Training
Transport Driver	Transport fresh fruit and vegetables between fields and packhouses and shippers. Delivers product safely and in good condition. Manage logistical delivery and dispatch paperwork. May need heavy truck license.	Literacy and numeracy skills	Technical training/ experience
Managers (Line/Shift)	Ensures quality of the fresh fruit and vegetables complies with industry standards. Shift managers are responsible for workflow. They solve workflow problems by people management, and liaise with the line manager.	Technical education	Management skills/ experience

\*Adapted from: Fernandez-Stark, K. et al. (2001). The Fruit and Vegetables Global Value Chain. Economic Upgrading and Workforce Development. Center on Globalization, Governance & Competitiveness, Duke University, p. 18.





A growing body of research is finding, however, that soft skills (such as positive self-concept, communications, social skills, self-control, and critical thinking) are equally, if not more, important predictors to long-term economic success.<sup>18</sup> Other important work readiness skills, such as entrepreneurial skills and financial literacy, enable youth to navigate the changing economy over time. As an example, Table 5 illustrates how the range of technical competencies, soft skills, and work readiness skills are relevant in the context of the Kenyan livestock sector.

Table 5. Required Competencies in the Kenyan Livestock and By-Products Value Chains\*

Cross-Sector Skills Profile: Livestock and By-Products		
Soft Skills	Enterprising and Employability Skills	Industry Specific Skills
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Following Instructions</li> <li>Giving Clear Explanations</li> <li>Communication</li> <li>Negotiation</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Business Relationship Management</li> <li>Logistics</li> <li>Entrepreneurial Skills</li> <li>Costing</li> <li>Marketing and Sales</li> <li>Buyer Network Management</li> <li>Financial Record-Keeping</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Quality Control</li> <li>Packaging</li> <li>Inventory Management</li> <li>Health and Safety</li> </ul>

\*Adapted from: EcoVentures International. (2010). Youth Labor Market Assessment, North Eastern Province, Kenya: A study of market opportunities and workforce needs for youth. Chart adapted to highlight the different types of skills developed.



Even though a skill might be developed in an agriculture or workforce setting, evidence shows that youth apply many of these skills (e.g., problem solving, planning ahead, and negotiations) in other aspects of their life, including conflict mitigation, health, and nutrition.<sup>19</sup> As such, developing soft skills mutually reinforces cross-sectoral programming. (Volume 1, Section 3.3 of this guide discusses ways to identify opportunities for cross-sectoral collaboration.)



## EXAMPLE

### Developing Basic Skills among School Drop-Outs

The USAID Akazi Kanoze project in Rwanda developed an accelerated learning program (ALP) for youth ages 14-24 who had dropped out of school between the Primary 4 and Primary 6 grades. The program provided one year of non-formal basic education (literacy and numeracy) and workforce readiness training along with six months of coaching, mentoring, and internships. A study of the impact of the ALP pilot showed that participants improved their reading fluency and comprehension to surpass national standards for primary school students. Moreover, even though the school dropouts (especially females) initially had lower levels of work experience as compared to other youth participants, ALP students caught up and experienced similar employment gains as other participants.<sup>20</sup>



## EXAMPLE

### Building Young Women and Girls' Skills and Confidence

From 2007-2011, [USAID's Prepara Ami ba Servisu \(PAS\) Project in East Timor](#) facilitated workforce readiness and development training for 1,600 rural youth (50% female). The program offered gender-sensitive training in mixed-sex classes that included units on goal setting, sexual harassment, and reproductive health. It also provided the opportunity for young women to gain exposure to mixed-sex work settings, often including male supervisors. After participating in the training, approximately 60% of young women either gained employment or started their own business.<sup>21</sup>

**Applied Learning Methods:** Applied learning integrates classroom learning with real-world situations, and encourages an individual's learning through experience (also known as "experiential learning"). Research shows that applied learning methods are often more effective than traditional academic learning for youth to acquire the competencies and tacit knowledge that make job-seekers and entrepreneurs successful in the labor market.<sup>22</sup>

Examples of applied learning include:

- Competency-based training, where participants are evaluated based on which functions they are able to perform, not just what they know
- Work-based learning opportunities, including internships and apprenticeships
- Volunteerism (service learning) and other community-based leadership opportunities
- Work exposure, such as employer site visits, career days, or career/business mentors
- Interactive classroom-based learning, such as the use of simulations, role-plays, or games
- Hands-on use of machines, technology, and agriculture practices



## EXAMPLE

### Applied Learning Approaches for Youth in Agri-business

The Liberia LAUNCH program, which supported the U.S. Government's Feed the Future initiative, led youth through an iterative learning process including a mix of traditional workshop-based trainings and innovative experiential teaching methods such as running "learning businesses." Based on local market demands, program participants gained agricultural, enterprise development, and workplace skills specific to agribusiness. The program culminated with 435 participants receiving in-kind agribusiness enterprise grants and continued mentorship, creating approximately 310 youth-led agri-businesses.<sup>23</sup>

**Tailor Relevance and Accessibility for Youth's Needs:** As experience and research have shown, by the time they are 18 years old, most youth in rural Feed the Future settings are already economically active.<sup>24</sup> Young women in particular are balancing family responsibilities with economic activities. Therefore, youth's available time for training is constrained, and any skills building must be tailored to their needs and schedules in order to ensure their participation. While youth are attracted to entrepreneurship training content that directly relates to their economic activities, they also recognize the value of foundational literacy and numeracy skills for other family, community and political engagements.<sup>25</sup> One effective strategy in youth and livelihoods programming has been integrating literacy skills and work readiness or entrepreneurship training into one curriculum and offering it at a flexible time period when youth have less obligations but the training is most applicable. Additionally, the engagement of young mothers should be taken into consideration as they have additional demands on their time and can find it difficult or impossible to gain access to these greatly needed services. Programs that allow flexibility for young mothers and youth with other needs to continue participation even when their schedules conflict can help support greater outcomes.

## EXAMPLE

### Creative Ways to Reach Youth:

Think outside the box when reaching out to youth. Social media, text services, TV programs, radio dramas, faith-based networks, and community-based organizations are all ways to reach youth. It is important to identify creative and effective ways to engage youth through mediums that are scalable, relevant, and accessible. Several examples include:

1. [Radio Based Messaging in Sierra Leone](#)
2. [Agriculture Radio Drama from Tanzania](#)
3. [Youth in Agribusiness with Reality TV Competition](#)
4. [Mediae - an East African organization using media to reach rural populations](#)





## 2.2 Provide Ongoing or Follow-On Support

Youth have greater success in transferring newly gained knowledge and skills to their everyday life when they have access to follow-on support. This support helps youth work through challenges, maintain a positive attitude, and serves as a source of accountability. This bridge from training to long-term application can be particularly important for young women and girls who may excel in the classroom, but have trouble applying the knowledge and skills gained to the “outside world” where social and structural factors pose substantial barriers to their success. Activities that include the following components are more likely to result in higher levels of long-term success:

Table 6. Illustrative Activities that Bridge Education to Employment

Bridging Activities	Intervention Examples	Key Design Elements
<b>Coaching and Mentoring of Youth</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Are youth currently active participants in this value chain? In what activities do young men vs. women participate?</li> <li>In which activities are young men vs. women most prominent? Least? Why?</li> <li>Are youth consumers of the value chain's final product(s)?</li> <li>Are there “invisible” youth actors (e.g., females) whose work is not remunerated or who are not in control of production?</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Train the trainer models for peer youth mentors and/or development of youth-adult partnerships</li> <li>Linkages to other support services</li> </ul>
<b>On-the-Job Training</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Agribusiness internship program</li> <li>Agri-financing apprenticeship with financial institutions</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Youth and employer matching</li> <li>Provision of training of employers and youth to set expectations prior to internship or apprenticeship</li> </ul>
<b>Job Placement Support (e.g., for off-farm opportunities in lead firms)</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Job matching services</li> <li>Job Fairs</li> <li>Apprenticeship placements</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Matching of youth skill sets with agribusiness and extension work needs</li> </ul>
<b>Access to Resources</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Facilitating formal and/or informal youth-inclusive financial services (savings and credit options)</li> <li>Grant subsidies (financial and tools)</li> <li>Scholarships for continuing education</li> <li>Access to rented or purchased land</li> <li>Income smoothing/diversification for seasonal workers</li> <li>Other: crowd funding, cooperatives, alumni networks, trade fairs, etc.</li> <li>Risk management resources (e.g., insurance)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Facilitation and/or provision of financial resources</li> <li>Ongoing business support and market facilitation</li> <li>Networking opportunities</li> </ul>







### 3. CREATE A SUPPORTIVE ENVIRONMENT FOR YOUTH IN THE AGRICULTURE/FOOD SYSTEM

Youth engagement and success in food systems exist within the larger context of youth's interaction with their family, community, and peer units and within the larger agriculture, institutional, and policy structures.<sup>26</sup> The supporting environment is defined as the set of external factors that have an impact, either on **facilitating the successful integration of young people into the agricultural sector**, or conversely, **serving as barriers**. For activities to be successful, youth must be seen within the context of their environment, making a systems approach most effective as illustrated in Figure 4 below.

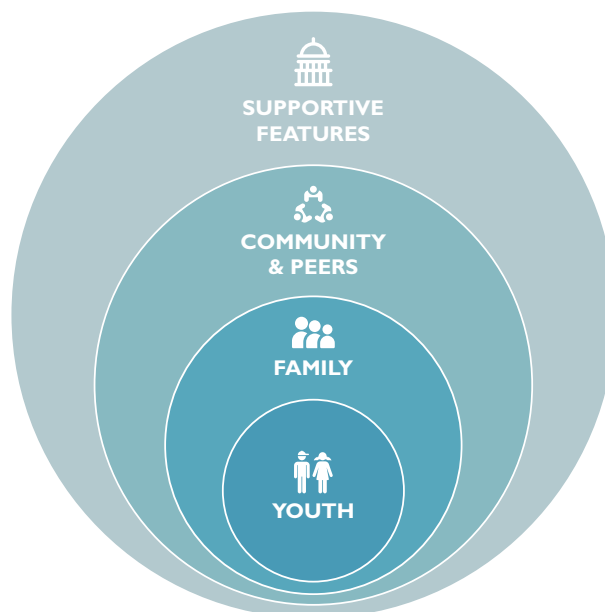


The PYD approach considers the key features of a supportive environment as:

- Healthy relationships and bonding
- Belonging and membership
- Positive norms, expectations, and perceptions
- Safe spaces
- Access to age appropriate and youth-friendly services
- Integration among services

See [ANNEX IV](#) for a framework for further information on PYD and Volume I, Section 4.2 for further examples of youth engagement

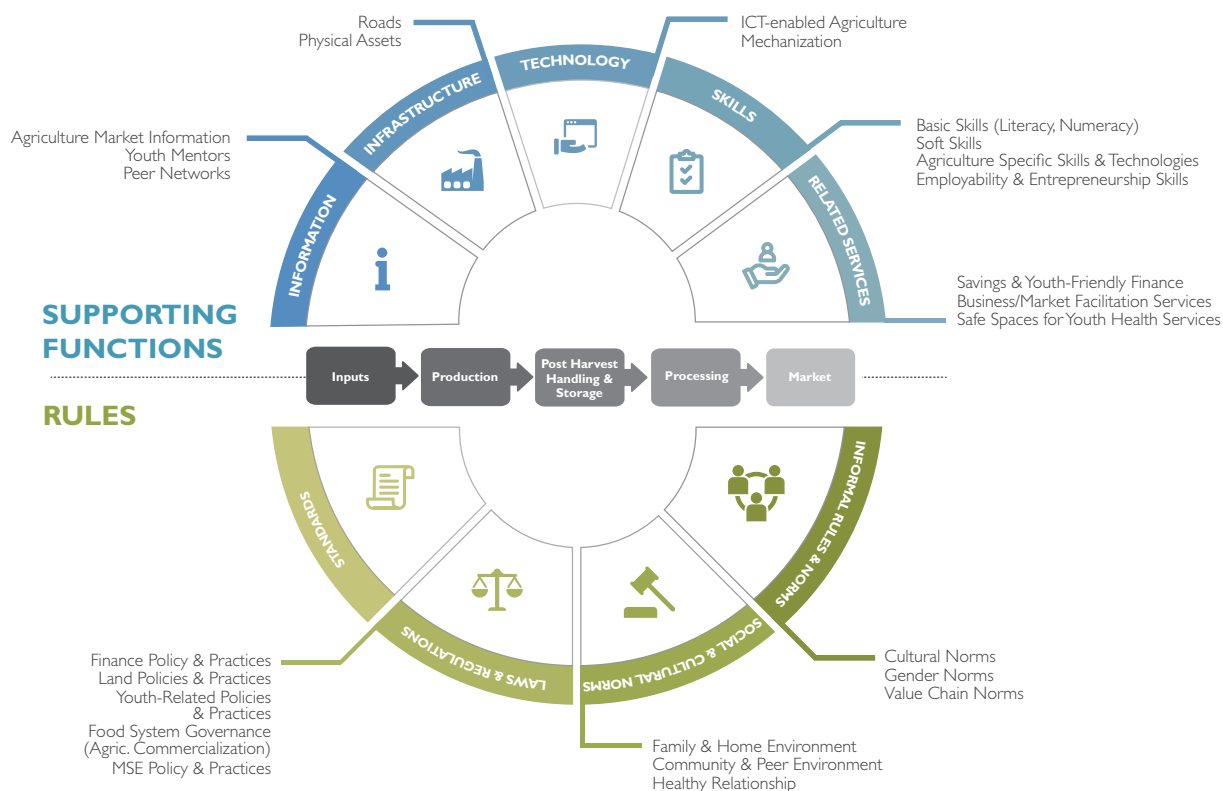
Figure 4. Adaptation of Bronfenbrenner's Ecological Model





We compare this PYD framework to a market systems development (MSD) framework to highlight how youth development concepts apply within an agri-food system. As illustrated in Figure 5, a MSD approach begins with the functions within the value chain, located at the center of the system indicating where youth participate along the value chain—from inputs to markets. These core functions of the value chain, however, are influenced by a number of supportive features and formal and informal rules, denoted by the surrounding half circles. These supportive features include laws and regulations, social and cultural norms, access to technology, infrastructure, skills, and services. Similarly, youth as actors in the agriculture value chain are also influenced by these rules and supportive features, but they are influenced differently than other actors in the chain.

Figure 5. Viewing Youth-Inclusive Agri-Food Systems from a Market Systems Development Perspective\*



\*Adapted from: The Springfield Center (2015). The Operational Guide for the Making Markets Work for The Poor (M4P) Approach, Second Edition. (<https://www.enterprise-development.org/wp-content/uploads/m4pguide2015.pdf>) See also: The Springfield Centre (2017). An Introduction to Market Systems Development. (<https://www.springfieldcentre.com/introduction-market-systems-development/>)





When one uses this MSD lens to understand youth in the agri-food system, several salient factors come to light. First is the overwhelming importance of social and cultural norms as well as other informal rules and norms in shaping youth's participation in the agri-food system. An emerging body of research is finding that youth's attitudes, decisions, and behaviors in agriculture are heavily influenced by their families, their peers, and their surrounding communities.<sup>27</sup> Gender norms are also particularly important, and can constrain young women's and girls' participation in the agriculture sector. Another finding is that youth's skills and assets, as discussed in the previous section, are fundamental to their success in the system in the short-term, as their ability to navigate the system and withstand shocks over the long term. Finally, certain other rules and supportive features—especially access to land and finance—present barriers and opportunities that are specific to youth.

The following sub-sections highlight these salient factors: the family environment, the community and peer environment, gender and youth considerations, and other rules and supportive features.

## 3.1 Family Environment

Families are an important sphere of influence in the lives of young people because they provide them with the support elements that are critical to development, including connections and relationships, models of financial management, and encouragement and support to engage in food systems.<sup>28</sup> The specifics of family relationships are culturally determined and vary depending on life stages, gender roles and expectations, personal situations, and family configuration. When designing youth-focused activities family influence should be considered, as families can act as one of the greatest sources of support or as one of the most significant binding constraints for youth participants.



**TIP:** It is not uncommon for youth ages 15-24 who are living with their parents or spouse's family to be contributing to household agricultural activities, frequently as unpaid labor. This situation can cause household tension and further the negative image of agriculture as little more than an unrewarding obligation. Activities must work with families to ensure youth's engagement in agriculture is meaningful and rewarding, thus supporting a positive image of agriculture.





## Gender and Household Decision-Making

Within households, gender norms often influence who has the power to make decisions, how resources are allocated, who has access to education, and how and when family members work and use their time.<sup>29</sup> These dynamics can both directly and indirectly influence youth participation in agricultural programs. A father might decide that enrolling his son in an agricultural program is a better investment than enrolling his daughter, as the son may be more likely to continue with formal employment after marriage. Social and cultural norms around what constitutes “men’s work” and “women’s work” can shape what families and communities consider to be acceptable economic sectors for youth participation. Families’ expectations around youth’s mobility, including concerns around females’ safety and interactions with males, may limit young women and girls’ access to training programs or markets. Additionally, males’ disproportionate access to education as children and their comfort speaking up in the classroom, may mean that they are better prepared than females to engage in trainings or components of the agricultural value chain with higher earning potential. Those forced into early marriage, in particular, are at elevated risk for violence perpetrated by spouses, which may include restrictions over their access to income-generating opportunities.



## Youth as a Gateway to Nutrition-Sensitive Approaches in the Home

The workload of young mothers in the home can affect the nutritional status of their families. In order to maintain healthy babies, young mothers need to: (1) increase caloric consumption and reduce calories expended during pregnancy; (2) breastfeed children for at least six months, at which point they introduce healthy foods; and (3) keep the home environmentally sanitary. Projects should look for opportunities to reduce mothers’ workloads so that they can have the time and resources to adopt these practices. Water collection is one particular area that increases workload and time, so activities that reduce water collection time can have significant nutritional impacts.



Table 7. Family Environment Considerations and Approaches

Elements	Family as a Support	Family as a Barrier	Illustrative Activity Design Options to Build Barriers
<b>Access to and control of financial assets</b>	Families can offer support with managing finances, supporting financial literacy, and modeling positive financial management behavior. Some families are able to lend youth small amounts of money and/or act as a guarantor for loans.	Senior members of the family (e.g., parents, in-laws, spouse/partner, older siblings) often demand access to or control over financial or physical assets earned by youth from livelihoods activities. This loss of financial control can discourage youth from participating in the economic activity. In some instances, youth conduct income generating activities in secret from their families in order to maintain control.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Build youth's skills to interact with family, negotiate access and control of resources and finances</li> <li>• Engage with families to shift norms and practices related to control over financial and physical assets</li> <li>• Develop family's ability to be a support mechanism</li> <li>• Support enabling environment to strengthen youth's ability to own and control financial assets</li> </ul>
<b>Access to income generating activities</b>	Supportive family members sometimes play an advisory and encouraging role in a young person's entrepreneurial and employment ventures. This can be helpful, particularly to younger youth, as family members offer technical support and mentorship and guard against risk or loss.	Family members may withhold permission to enter economic activities in part or altogether. Without the family's approval, young people, particularly younger youth and females, lack the ability to take the first steps towards income generation. Doing so without approval risks repercussions.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Support parental engagement activities that target youth</li> <li>• Involve youth in value chain activities that consider (and/or work to transform) family/kinship structure as well as prevailing gender norms</li> <li>• Where possible, work with community elders and families to raise awareness of the benefit of young women's participation in income generation activities and specific value chains</li> </ul>
<b>Models of Agriculture</b>	Families model food systems activity, including agriculture, as a business. As a young person's first perception of agriculture, hopefully the experience models a positive image.	Families may model less attractive food systems activities such as subsistence farming, discouraging youth from engaging in food systems as they equate it with "drudgery".	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Engage family members in development/delivery of activity interventions</li> <li>• Support families to model positive agriculture practices</li> </ul>
<b>Access to Resources</b>	While most young people do not own land or other resources, many of their families do. Family members with plots of land are sometimes willing to allocate a portion to youth for their own use or allow youth to utilize resources (automobile, etc.)	Families' inability or unwillingness to share land and resources with youth can result in household-based conflict or tension and/or limit youth's involvement in agriculture production.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Build youth's skills to interact with family and negotiate access to resources and land</li> <li>• Support equitable land use and inheritance policies</li> <li>• Support access to finance for land and resource purchases/rentals</li> </ul>





## 3.2 Community and Peer Environment

The community environment is where youth begin engaging with actors outside of their household, including peers, youth groups, schools, and organizations. These stakeholders can have a significant influence on youth perceptions, values, and behaviors. Consideration should be given to how these influences act as barriers or support to youth engagement.

**Explicitly engaging the community (including parents, spouses, and community leaders) in program design and implementation can reduce potential resistance, ensure program sustainability, and increase youth participation rates.** Methods for engaging the community include focus group discussions, formal meetings, home visits, and community events.

### Building Resilience through Groups

Group-based activities are often beneficial to marginalized or at-risk youth population. They can also contribute to resilience by reinforcing or strengthening social capital. Building networks is particularly important for young women and girls whose social networks, which are often less formal and confined to family and close neighbors, are less likely to provide economic benefits. Increasing their business-related contacts through organized groups and associations can provide them with resources to help them to grow enterprises and access markets and information.<sup>31</sup> Additionally, WEAI results often show social networks, group membership, and leadership are some of the areas of most disempowerment for youth, particularly women.<sup>32</sup>

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*“While this insistence on group membership can be restrictive, it has overall positive results. Youth gain support systems and broader networks through role models and peers. They have more power as a group and can advocate for themselves. They work together to accomplish goals, like saving to buy a tractor or ox, and learn how to resolve conflict and lead. These all contribute to greater resilience (see the Liberia Case Study: Building Youth Resilience in Weak Market Systems). Groups also facilitate gains due to economies of scale. They can aggregate harvests, sell in bulk, command better prices, and buy inputs at lower cost.”*  
*(Engaging Youth in Agriculture Value Chains Across Feed the Future Report)*

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Table 8. Community and Peer Environment Considerations and Approaches

Elements	Family as a Support	Family as a Barrier	Illustrative Activity Design Options to Build Barriers
<b>Peer Network and Youth Groups</b>	Peers provide validation and help youth learn and apply social skills. These relationships usually exist within formal or informal groups. Peer groups provide social benefits for youth and create a learning environment, build a culture of taking positive risks, create a sense of belonging and allow for peer learning/mentoring/role models.	Youth can become associated with groups and peers with negative influence (i.e. gangs, extremist groups, etc.). Though these groups provide youth with a sense of belonging, they model negative behavior and can further disenfranchise youth from their mainstream community.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Engage youth through group-based activities (savings and lending groups, youth centered ag associations, learning groups, after school groups, faith-based organizations, etc.)</li> <li>Promote youth leadership opportunities that challenge socio-cultural norms about the role of men and women in agriculture</li> </ul>
<b>Community and Value Chain Members</b>	Community and value chain leaders may champion youth engagement in food systems. They may advocate for youth's role and social capital, increasing access to land, markets, and resources. They can also be supportive as role models and mentors.	Community and value chain member's negative perception of youth, expectations around youth's roles and capabilities, and lack of willingness to engage can hinder their ability to acquire land, finance, and access to markets.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Support community based organizations (banks, business, etc.) to engage with youth</li> <li>Support value chain actors to build skills/ knowledge to effectively engage with youth</li> <li>Support youth's development of social capital with other value chain actors</li> <li>Media campaigns that promote positive aspects of youth involvement</li> </ul>
<b>School/Formal Education/Accelerated Education Programs<sup>33</sup></b>	Attending school provides youth with foundational skills along with degrees/certificate/etc. Though many youth are early school leavers, many seek and participate in Accelerated Education Programs and some return back to school.	Not all education systems prepare youth with the skills to succeed in food systems (see <a href="#">Section 2.1</a> ). Some schools do not provide safe learning environments.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Improve the quality of technical and vocational education and training (TVET) so that it is market relevant and offers job intermediation supports and services</li> <li>Support public and private accelerated education programs that build functional literacy/numeracy, market-relevant skills, and soft skills for out-of-school youth</li> <li>Integrate soft skills development, agriculture education, work readiness, and/or safe schools approaches into the formal secondary education system</li> </ul>



## 3.3 System Rules and Supporting Functions

Other system rules and supporting functions, such as the institutions, policies, regulations, standards, customs, and norms that youth face in the agri-food system, contribute to the ability (or inability) of youth to integrate effectively into that system. Evidence suggests that two factors in particular—access to land and access to finance—are especially influential for youth participation in agriculture,<sup>37</sup> and are therefore discussed at greater length below. Broader economic policies can also impact the overall growth of a sector in which youth are participating:

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*“The enabling environment is very important [to engage youth in food systems]. The most fundamental aspects are government policies and public investments that affect the incentives of millions of people to invest their own labor and resources in farming and value chains. If the incentives are there, people will invest and jobs will grow. If the incentives are not there, because of either a lack of public goods investments or restrictive policy environment, then jobs will not grow.”*

– Dr. Thomas Jayne, Michigan State University

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### 3.3.1 Land

Access to land is commonly cited as one of the chief constraints to young people’s ability to be productive food systems participants. Youth’s access to land is governed by both law and custom. Legal statutes often do not protect land rights for youth and provide for a system of inheritance that makes it difficult for some youth, especially young women, to obtain land (for example, by guaranteeing that the oldest boy will inherit land). This is often accompanied by laws that dictate that land cannot be further sub-divided into smaller plots, thereby denying ownership not only to females but also to younger males. Custom, which is the predominant determinant of land rights in rural areas, also represents an important barrier to accessing land for youth, who lack political power in such a system. Thus, an understanding of youth cohort (discussed at greater length in Volume 1 Section 4.1) becomes an important determinant of which youth succeed and which do not under land tenure rules and norms.



### Access to Land

Research shows that farm size and land ownership are correlated with youth participation in agriculture.<sup>38</sup> Usually there are two ways for youth to access larger landholdings: in countries where the government owns all the land, individuals are able to get a title or certificate to get a land use right, while in developed land markets youth have the option to purchase larger landholdings. Cairo, Egypt provides a case in point: it is one of the largest urban cities in the world with a third of the population between 10 and 24 years old. Traditionally, college graduates in Egypt have relied on the government to provide job opportunities, but with the rapid population growth, the government has been unable to meet demand in recent years. Instead, they created a program with the International Fund for Agricultural Development that has provided nearly 40,000 landless college graduates with a million acres of reclaimed desert. The program was successful in pulling youth from the urban center back into rural areas and into careers of agricultural production. Mexico provides another example of a government addressing youth's need for land. The country facilitated youth participation in the land market by giving youth credits to purchase underutilized, potentially productive land.<sup>39</sup> The USAID-funded Tajikistan Land Reform and Farm Restructuring Project (LRFRP) improved awareness of land use rights among youth by integrating land rights education into high school curricula in 12 schools. The local government expanded this curricula to the whole province, reaching 629 schools and 31,570 high school students. Bringing this knowledge back to their communities, they helped clarify land rights in their communities leading to improved farm and water management.



### 3.3.2 Finance

Finance is a challenge for small players throughout the agricultural value chain, but even more so for youth. Due to the difficulties young people face in obtaining land tenure (see above) and overall lack of physical assets, few youth can offer the collateral that banks seek. Loans from financial institutions often have interest rates ranging from 25-30%, making capital prohibitively expensive. Many qualification requirements are prohibitive for youth and can be driven by a skeptical opinion of youth's ability to make repayments. This skepticism of youth is also true of lead firms, who might otherwise be a useful source of value chain finance. This situation is compounded by the fact that financial products are not typically structured to meet the needs of youth. Young people are often forced to resort to low levels of informal financing to fund their activities in the agricultural sector, forcing them into primarily low capital-intensive activities. Therefore, measures that can ease access to finance for youth serve an important function in allowing them to invest in tools, equipment, and technologies that can be employed for business purposes, as well as to fund up-front capital requirements for items like seeds and fertilizer for those youth fortunate enough to have productive land for high-value crops.





**Youth Saving Groups:** Youth-focused savings groups are not only a common tool to address financial inclusion and support entrepreneurship and employment, but also serve as a vehicle for changing behavior and teaching the benefits of financial planning and discipline. Savings groups are typically comprised of 20-30 members who meet regularly. Members contribute savings through a shared mechanism and jointly decide who may borrow from the collective savings, and for how long. A savings group cycle is typically 9-12 months; at the end of the cycle, individuals' shares and the profits that accrued from lending activities are paid out to members. The savings group then reconstitutes itself and the cycle begins again.

Savings groups are seen as a 'springboard' towards formal financial inclusion, fostering good savings behavior and asset accumulation. It is argued that, through savings groups, livelihoods of households and entire communities have been transformed by the power of members' knowledge that they can call on savings, credit, and insurance benefits at any time in a manner that is flexible, appropriate to their situation, and set in an administrative and social culture where they feel understood and valued.

Programs promoting savings and savings groups have increasingly targeted young people. Savings groups are particularly useful in supporting young people in the acquisition of domestic and business assets, which may, in turn: 1) improve general living conditions; 2) serve as collateral for formal financial services; 3) increase business investments; 4) mitigate the risk of asset-stripping in response to emergencies and short-term cash-flow needs; and 5) have positive behavioral effects. These authors also suggest that savings groups are 'ideal "starter system[s]" that provide young people with a critical first rung on the ladder of financial inclusion.

This material was adapted from: Youth Savings Groups in Africa: They're a Family Affair. (2017) Retrieved from: <https://www.developmentbookshelf.com/doi/pdf/10.3362/1755-1986.16-00005>. See original text for all citations.

#### EXAMPLE

##### Youth Access to Finance

Research is increasingly showing the relationship between savings and resilience. Savings not only help youth cope with shocks, they also enable youth to make investments in economic and social activities. As one example, "Catholic Relief Services (CRS) in Rwanda has used its Savings and Internal Lending Communities (SILC) savings methodology to facilitate asset accumulation among vocational training graduates. CRS found that inexperience, lack of physical assets and collateral, and limited social connections all limited the capacity of trained youth to access microfinance loans.... Since introducing the SILC methodology, there have been notable changes among participating youth. Social capital has been strengthened, and 90% have been able to improve their safety net through the purchase of national health insurance. In some cases, SILCs comprised entirely of youth have even launched joint businesses."<sup>40</sup>



EXAMPLE

### Mechanization

The Feed the Future Kenya Innovation Engine activity, through USAID, is partnering with the Kenya Network for the Development of Agricultural Technologies (KENDAT) to conduct a proof of concept for a one-stop mechanization hub. This hub allows producers to source agricultural technologies with the explicit focus of reducing the physical hardship associated with farm work, and thereby alters the young people's perception of agriculture. A revolving fund is modelled under a microfinance scheme to finance purchases.



EXAMPLE

### Agricultural Associations

There are at least three different types of agricultural associations, each of which have different benefits and drawbacks for youth. Existing agricultural associations are a low-risk platform for learning; however, young people may find themselves excluded from such groups if they lack the support or respect of their elders. An alternative model is a youth-specific agricultural association, which is typically composed of older adolescent "career farmers" who transfer knowledge to younger youth. A second type of youth-specific association is composed of school-age youth, functioning as an important social network in order to cultivate the interest of participants. However, they tend to be less useful from an economic perspective due to high turnover.



Table 9. Other System Rules and Supporting Functions – Considerations and Approaches

Elements	Systems as a Support	Systems as a Barrier	Illustrative Activity Design Options to Build Barriers
<b>Value Chain Norms</b>	Lead firms and other value chain actors can play an important catalytic role in expanding youth economic opportunity.	Influential value chain actors may perceive young men and/or women as unreliable or unskilled.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Facilitate linkages between lead firms and youth entrepreneurs/job-seekers, offering support to youth as needed</li> <li>Engage lead firms and support their role as agents of change</li> </ul>
<b>Land Policies, Customs, and Practices</b>	Customs and statutes that support land inheritance and youth's access to land that makes agriculture production viable.	Lack of ability for youth (especially females) to access land creates barriers for youth engagement in production and value chain growth.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Assess how land policies impact young men and women's participation in agriculture</li> <li>Strengthen youth organizations and participation in land policy making process and local land dispute resolution</li> <li>Support education and awareness raising activities for youth to know their land rights</li> <li>Strengthen youth access to legal services to recognize and defend their land rights</li> </ul>
<b>Finance Policies and Practices</b>	Accessible, affordable finance tailored to agriculture cycles facilitates youth investment in productive and profitable activities. Access to finance can help youth overcome many constraints to agricultural productivity, such as ability to buy inputs and technologies, hire labor or mechanization services, etc.	Lack of access to finance (either cost or accessibility) can be a critical barrier limiting young people's, and particularly young women's, involvement in activities requiring any up-front investment or collateral (e.g., land), however small.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Finance market studies, technical assistance, guarantees, influence policy reform and other activities that increase financial sector's ability to serve youth</li> <li>Engage service providers embedded in the value chain as possible sources of finance</li> <li>Establish youth savings/lending groups</li> <li>Focus engagement in low capital-intensive value chain activities</li> </ul>
<b>Legal Structure</b>	A legal system that empowers young men and women to sign contracts, access a full range of legal services, and operate enterprises allows them to engage within the economy.	Age of Majority policies (age when youth can enter into contracts) barring youth from accessing services (opening up savings accounts, taking loans, signing contracts, etc) and identification regimes (prevalence/requirements to get a legal identification card) that inhibit youth from accessing finance, registering mobile phones, acquiring certificates (e.g. driver's license) and accessing land; burdensome requirements for formalizing enterprises.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Possible reform of Age of Majority policies</li> <li>Possible reform of identification policies and requirements</li> <li>Possible reform of legal micro enterprise requirements to encourage economic engagement</li> </ul>



Elements	Systems as a Support	Systems as a Barrier	Illustrative Activity Design Options to Build Barriers
<b>Infrastructure</b>	Functional infrastructure enables market access, opening the door to downstream activities from which young people in particular benefit.	Infrastructure limiting commercial access and profitability of food systems activities degrades value chain opportunities for youth.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Support diversified livelihoods activities</li> <li>• Support policies encouraging infrastructure investment</li> <li>• Support local market upgrades that are safe and both youth and women-friendly</li> </ul>
<b>Institutions: Agriculture Associations</b>	Youth-inclusive agriculture associations allow young people to contribute skills, such as finding new markets and creative application of technology, that enhance associations while providing a platform for learning and engagement.	Agriculture association may be non-existent, dysfunctional, or not youth-friendly.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Support youth-friendly management practices in agriculture associations</li> <li>• Support youth networking with associations</li> <li>• Support initiatives to attract young women</li> </ul>
<b>Technology (ICT, Mechanization)</b>	Mechanization can positively influence young people's attitudes toward food systems by reducing physical hardship and increasing diversified employment opportunities. Information and communication technology (ICT) enables young people to seek useful and value-added roles.	Limited mechanization maintains the drudgery of on- and off-farm activities, decreasing youth interest. Limited ICT engagement misses the opportunity to solve challenges and engage youth. Mechanization may result in job loss for youth engaged in the activities being mechanized.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Capitalize on youth as early adapters of ICT</li> <li>• Use of low entry barrier ICT (e.g., radio)</li> <li>• Establish points of contact in the community to help share mobile connectivity</li> <li>• Partner with ICT sector to find solutions</li> <li>• Invest in mechanization (on- and off-farm)</li> <li>• Consider changes or shifts in labor dynamics as a result of mechanization. Re-employ youth who have lost employment to mechanization.</li> </ul>
<b>Structure &amp; Governance of Food Systems</b>	Food systems with high and rising productivity at the farm level, generally due to the adoption of labor-saving technologies, drives the development of off-farm (higher value-added) opportunities. This growth in food systems creates opportunities and market-led demand for youth engagement.	<p>Stagnant productivity resulting from subsistence farming on small plots of land using basic technologies locks youth and families into poverty and limits the opportunities available to young people.</p> <p>Highly commercialized and/or centralized crops (those with captive or hierarchical governance) may be difficult for youth integration because of the power of a few lead firms.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Promote productivity increases with crops that have market demand through investment and policy reform</li> <li>• Seek viable entry points for youth to engage, upgrade, and/or pursue alternative value chains with less hierarchical governance</li> </ul>





## 3.4 Youth and Gender Considerations in the Agri-Food System



Among the discussion about gender roles and barriers in agriculture located in the [Feed the Future Gender Integration Framework \(GIF\)](#), common gender-related constraints for young women and girls' participation in agriculture include:<sup>34</sup>

- **Unpaid Work Burden:** Young women and girls are disproportionately responsible for domestic labor, including household chores (e.g., fuel and water collection, food preparation) and caring for children and the elderly. Often, they work on family farms or small business enterprises with no remuneration. These unpaid responsibilities limit the amount of time young women and girls have available to engage in paid work, attend trainings, and participate in workers' cooperatives. It also limits their ability to travel longer distances and results in less energy to participate in activities that could further their earning potential.<sup>35</sup>
- **Access to Education:** In many contexts, young women and girls have less access to education than their male counterparts. Education increases young women and girls' ability to enter the formal rural labor market, secure stable employment, and access agricultural technologies.
- **Access to Land and Financial Services:** Young women and girls are less likely to own, rent, and use land than their male counterparts; when they do own land, it tends to be less than what young men and boys typically own. This difference is usually the result of land tenure laws, customary laws and practices, and social norms that favor male inheritance and ownership of land. Additionally, young women often have less access to financial services due to collateral constraints. This means young women and girls often have little decision-making power over how land is used and limited access to credit, water rights, and grazing rights.
- **Access to Markets:** Young women and girls' access to markets is often restricted by prevailing gender norms and inequitable access to resources (e.g., capital, information and communication technology, information, personal networks, land). In many cultures, there are gender-based restrictions around the distances and modes by which young women and girls can travel. They have difficulty joining male-dominated rural organizations/cooperatives or interacting with agri-businesses. Gender-based violence often occurs in the work environment. Constrained access to markets limits the ability of self-employed young women to sell and secure fair prices for their products. See Volume I, Section 3.2 for additional information on segmentation and excluded groups.



## Addressing Barriers to Young Women and Girls' Participation in Agriculture

[USAID's Bangladesh Youth Employment Pilot \(BYEP\)](#) (2008-2010) trained 400 youth in the shrimp farming industry. Although the industry is traditionally male-dominated, 40% of the program's graduates were female. Beyond developing these young women's skills, the program sought to create an enabling environment for their work. It conducted awareness-raising activities among parents that stressed the importance of livelihoods skills for young women and girls. The program also sought to shift the belief among hatchery operators that shrimp farming was men's work by inviting them to witness female trainees using their new skills and physical strength to work in shrimp hatcheries. After participating in the program, approximately 30% of participants gained formal employment and another 30% started their own businesses. Young female graduates also reported improved self-confidence, communication skills, and self-discipline.<sup>36</sup>











## 4. APPLY A CONFLICT-SENSITIVE YOUTH LENS IN CONFLICT ENVIRONMENTS

This section summarizes the literature on best practices in youth inclusion that are relevant to Feed the Future activities in conflict-affected environments. The guidance here pertains to environments affected by conflict, violence, and/or violent extremism, but where there is a sufficient level of stability to assume that youth are able to contribute to the (re-)building of the agriculture sector.

**Integrate youth-specific information into the project's conflict analysis.** Because youth can play an important role in the peacebuilding process, to the extent possible, project design and implementation should consider the role youth have in the conflict and peacebuilding efforts. Engage youth at all stages of the conflict analysis process (refer to the guidance on youth assessment in Volume I Section 3.4).

**Leverage the agriculture sector as a conduit for stabilization.** In cases of youth violence and extremism, engagement in the agriculture sector may provide an opportunity to address the “pull factors” that attract young people to joining a violent group. The research indicates that youth are most often attracted to violence and violent groups because of the respect, status, identity, or sense of purpose they cannot find elsewhere.<sup>41</sup> Furthermore, providing economic opportunities to youth may help address underlying drivers of conflict related to experiences of injustice (e.g., marginalization, disenfranchisement, discrimination) and increase social cohesion.<sup>42 43</sup> Feed the Future projects can:

- Create a sense of belonging by encouraging youth to be part of an agricultural cooperative or organization committed to youth empowerment, such as 4H.
- Support positive self-identity by emphasizing youth's role as an important actor in the household and/or in the larger food system.
- Develop a sense of purpose by engaging youth in meaningful work based in practical experience, such as an apprenticeship, internship, service learning, or volunteerism.
- Strengthen bonds between youth and their community by promoting youth leadership in activities related to environmental protection, climate-smart agriculture practices, or advocacy for agriculture sector reform.

**Emphasize ongoing monitoring and adaptive management.** A major theme emerging out of youth and conflict programming is the importance of flexible program design that allows for operations and management decisions to adapt to the changing environment. As one leading report on youth and conflict programming states: “Longer-term programs with adaptive management allow development actors to respond to the complex and dynamic systems in which youth programs operate. Adaptive approaches are iterative. They require donors to build flexibility into program design and budgets, empowering implementers to evolve quickly.”<sup>44</sup> Such approaches rely on continuous project monitoring, including rapid feedback, qualitative mini-evaluation, participatory methods, and other innovative approaches to assessing performance. Best practice recommends at least 10% of youth and conflict activity funds be used for internal monitoring. Qualitative information gleaned from project activities should take precedence over the achievement of countable indicator targets.





Table 10 illustrates a list of considerations and options when addressing youth livelihoods and agriculture programming in conflict-affected areas.

*Table 10. Conflict-Affected Environments – Considerations and Approaches*

Elements	Considerations	Illustrative Activity Design Options
Youth	<p>Many youths have been traumatized as a result of being a witness to, victim of, and/or participant in violence and conflict.</p> <p>School-age youth have likely experienced disruptions to education.</p> <p>Youth may be engaging in risky sexual behavior and be at greater risk of sexually transmitted infections (STI) including HIV. Sexual and gender-based violence, particularly for girls and young women, may be prominent in conflict settings.</p>	<p>Most youth programs in conflict environments consist of five or more cross-sector components in education, employment, health, mental health, and civic engagement. Interventions should be accompanied with or linked to literacy and numeracy training and/or accelerated education programs that provide learners with equivalent certified competencies in a relatively short timeframe.</p> <p>Psychosocial services, typically those using a community-based rehabilitation model, help youth address the trauma that they have experienced as a result of conflict. Programs targeting high-risk youth often use a cognitive behavioral therapy (CBT) approach to help them increase self-control, improve interpersonal relationships, and avoid resorting to violence.</p>
	<p>Youth who have experienced conflict are often focused on short-term livelihood opportunities and less likely to invest in and plan for the long-term.</p>	<p>A household-based livelihood approach—one that promotes a diversity of income streams, savings, and the restoration of economic assets—is likely to be appropriate for addressing poverty and food security in a conflict-affected environment.</p> <p>Consider short-cycle crop value chains and/or other short-term income generating activities for youth as an entry point into longer-term approaches. Include goal setting and planning as part of a skills development package.</p>
Family and Community	<p>Death and displacement may have disrupted traditional family structures, with youth often serving as heads of household.</p> <p>Community trust has often been damaged.</p>	<p>Interventions that build youth-to-community connections—such as those that build mentoring relationships, offer positive role modeling, and enhance youth's social networks—help strengthen the personal relationships that shape young people's values and identities.</p> <p>Repeat interactions between conflicting groups of youth help reduce stereotypes and increase empathy.</p>
Institutions, Policy, Standards, and Norms	<p>The functioning of value chains has been disrupted, usually with severe market distortions and “spoilers” who take advantage of the disruptions.</p> <p>Armed groups may be seizing (or have seized) harvests or land. A maldistribution of agricultural assets (access to land, inputs, water, credit, infrastructure, technical assistance) may benefit certain groups over others.</p>	<p>Youth can take advantage of new market opportunities that open new access to food supplies through increased production and trade.</p> <p>Secure tenure on communal pastoral lands.</p>



	<p>Illicit crop production (e.g., coca, poppy), exploitative labor, and/or environmentally damaging practices may be pervasive.</p> <p>Consider the safety, security, and well-being of youth participants, as market actors may have a stake in perpetuating conflict/violence.</p>	<p>Conflict analysis should consider the effects of young male/female participation in markets.</p> <p>It is important for youth to have a “safe space,” such as a school, local youth-serving organization, club, or community center, to access opportunities and connect with other.</p>
	<p>Youth can play an important role in the peacebuilding process and in the re-building of agricultural markets following conflict.</p>	<p>Consider complementary interventions that increase youth political participation, such as national youth advocacy efforts that promote youth-friendly agriculture policy, land rights reform, access to finance, or a more favorable business-enabling environment for youth agri-business startups.</p> <p>Promote positive leadership roles for youth in the agriculture sector.</p>





# ANNEXES

## Annex I: Adolescent Development and the Youth Cohort

Successfully engaging with youth requires understanding the many shifts and nuances that occur during this stage of life and the variations within the youth cohort. While the stage of adolescence has varying definitions, this guide uses the USAID Youth in Development policy which distinguishes youth cohorts by the following age bandings and stages of development: Early Adolescence (10-14 years), Adolescence (15-19 years), Emerging Adulthood (20-24 years), and Transition into Adulthood (25-29 years).<sup>45 46</sup> While some aspects of youth development are biological, others are social in nature. Understanding cultural norms, institutions, and rituals can provide important insights into both how a society defines youth and the expectations placed on young people.

Gender plays a key role in each of the developmental areas, noted in the text box below. A young person's gender can influence relationships formed with peers, the experience of becoming a parent, access to inheritance, perceived roles and responsibilities, and decision-making processes.<sup>47</sup> These are critical time periods in which biological and psychosocial forces converge to influence gender identity formation.<sup>48</sup>

### Youth to Adulthood Transitions:

Youth is a time of transition and young people experience radical shifts across many spheres, including physical, cognitive and psychosocial changes. These include:<sup>49</sup>

- **Physical:** rapid and uneven periods of growth; transition through puberty to sexual maturation
- **Cognitive:** shift from concrete to abstract thought, critical thinking; development of different parts of the brain which impacts behavior, decision-making and risk assessment
- **Social/Familial:** importance of peers, development of identity, understanding of diversity, transitions from parents' home to spouse's home; becomes a parent and/or head of household
- **Cultural:** transition from childhood to adulthood; possibly goes through initiation rituals; takes on adult responsibilities within the community
- **Financial:** transition from financially dependent to self-reliant or reliant on spouse; inherits land and other assets
- **Ethical/Moral:** development of sense of fairness, idealism, personal value system, moral reasoning, concern for personal dignity
- **Emotional:** high emotional intensity, erratic behavior, self-regulation



## Annex II: Adolescent Development Characteristics<sup>50</sup>

Early Adolescence (10-14)	Mid and Late Adolescence (15-19)
<b>Physical Development Characteristics</b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Irregular and varying growth spurts</li> <li>• Sexual maturation occurs</li> <li>• Girls often mature earlier than boys</li> <li>• Uneven bone-muscle growth and disproportionate changes in weight and muscle development</li> <li>• High levels of energy alternates with fatigue</li> <li>• Chemical and hormonal imbalances/swings</li> <li>• Ravenous appetites and thirst (needs water)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Girls reach full physical development</li> <li>• Boys are close to full physical development</li> <li>• Eating habits can become sporadic and unhealthy</li> <li>• Physical appearance becomes very important</li> <li>• Lack of exercise and poor diet may lead to weight gain and becoming overweight</li> </ul>
<b>Intellectual / Cognitive Development</b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Capacity for abstract thinking begins</li> <li>• Wide range of ability and intellectual interests become more important</li> <li>• Highly curious</li> <li>• Focus on now, not later</li> <li>• Vivid imagination</li> <li>• Likes hands-on and social learning</li> <li>• Needs strong examples and models of expected performance</li> <li>• Relates to real-life problems and situations</li> <li>• Argues to clarify their own thinking and convince others</li> <li>• Forgets easily or are easily distracted</li> <li>• Seeks to make connections</li> <li>• Risk taking behaviors may emerge</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Capacity for abstract, critical, and meta-cognitive thinking</li> <li>• May be critical and argumentative</li> <li>• More importance is placed on life goals and ambitions</li> <li>• Can set goals and follow through</li> <li>• More disciplined work habits and study skills</li> <li>• Improved ability for planning and organization</li> <li>• Can understand multiple perspectives</li> <li>• Beginning to self-regulate and take responsibility</li> <li>• Risk taking behaviors may emerge (experimenting with tobacco, alcohol, drugs, unprotected sex, reckless driving, etc.)</li> </ul>
<b>Emotional Development Characteristics</b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Self-esteem and self-concept linked to physical development</li> <li>• May feel awkward or strange about themselves and their bodies</li> <li>• Time of emotional peaks and valleys</li> <li>• Seeks out attention, sometimes without regard for how it is achieved</li> <li>• Moody and easily offended (highly sensitive)</li> <li>• May be rebellious or rude to parents/adults</li> <li>• Believe they are alone in their personal problems and situations</li> <li>• Erratic and inconsistent in behavior; may revert to childish behavior in times of stress</li> <li>• Searching for acceptance from peers</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A stronger, more developed sense of identity</li> <li>• Functions more independently</li> <li>• Become more interested in their own inner experience and may use a diary or social media to document their experiences</li> <li>• Better able to delay gratification and compromise</li> <li>• Emotions become more even</li> <li>• Can think through ideas to explore different perspectives</li> <li>• Parent engagement declines</li> <li>• Peer relationships remain important</li> <li>• Increased concern for the well-being of others</li> </ul>





## Social Development Characteristics

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|---|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A sense of self is connected to identification with a particular group</li> <li>• Tests limits of acceptable behavior</li> <li>• Are rebellious toward parents and authority figures</li> <li>• Can be aggressive and argumentative</li> <li>• Fiercely loyal to peer group values</li> <li>• Need frequent affirmation of love from adults</li> <li>• Are confused or frightened by new school/social settings</li> <li>• Needs moderate times alone to regroup and reflect on daily experiences</li> <li>• Vacillates between desire for regulation and direction and desire for independence</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Positive peer relations add to feelings of self-worth</li> <li>• Gravitate towards groups with which they feel an affinity</li> <li>• The more a teen wants to belong, the more susceptible he/she is to peer pressure</li> <li>• Beginning to tolerate individual differences and may begin to replace affiliation with peer groups with more intimate relationships</li> <li>• Needs to know they are loved by parents &amp; other adults</li> <li>• Needs reassurance that they are capable of giving and receiving affection in intimate friendships and sexual relationships</li> </ul> |
|---|---|

## Moral/ Ethical Development Characteristics

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|---|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• May test rules and limits</li> <li>• Able to make principled choices</li> <li>• Tend to be idealistic</li> <li>• Strong sense of fairness</li> <li>• Transition from ego-centric to having consideration for others</li> <li>• Evidence that they have conscience</li> <li>• Develop their own personal value system</li> <li>• Begin to view moral issues in shades of gray, vs. black &amp; white</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Engages in moral reasoning and prosocial behaviors</li> <li>• Interest in social, cultural, and family traditions expands</li> <li>• Emphasis on personal dignity and human rights</li> <li>• Poses deep, broad philosophical questions about life</li> <li>• More comfortable with complex, ambiguous issues of morality and fairness</li> </ul> |
|---|--|



## Annex III: The Basics about Adolescent Brain Development

### Key Concepts:

- **Pruning:** At age 9 or 10, there is a proliferation in the development of neurons (specialized cells that transmit nerve impulses) and synapses (the connections between neurons that allow for the communication of messages) followed by a pruning of the brain in which unused connections die off, resulting in belief that there is a “use it or lose it” period of brain development. This makes the type of experiences and learning opportunities youth have access to during this period particularly important to cognitive development.
- **Neuroplasticity:** Neuroplasticity refers to the ability of the brain to alter its structure in response to experience. Emerging science indicates that the brain continues to change throughout adolescence and adulthood; that is, the brain is constantly forming new neural pathways, removing old ones, and altering the strength of existing connections. Recent neuroscience research shows that the effects of trauma are not necessarily permanent, and can be counteracted by positive experiences and healthy personal connections.<sup>52</sup>
- **Pre-frontal Cortex:** The brain develops from the bottom up, like a stack of building blocks. The final portion of the brain to develop is the prefrontal cortex. Often called the CEO of the brain, the prefrontal cortex is one of the last areas of the brain to mature. A mature prefrontal cortex is necessary for good judgment, controlling impulses, solving problems, setting goals, organizing and planning, and other skills that are essential to adults.
- **Reacting Emotionally:** Teens process information differently than adults. While adults usually rely on the pre-frontal cortex (the center of reasoning and language) to respond to situations, adolescents rely more on the amygdala, which is part of the limbic system that controls a wide range of emotions. This means that teens are more likely than adults to respond emotionally, react quickly, and act without consideration of the consequences of their actions.
- **Risk Taking:** Adolescents’ attraction to risks is no coincidence. Chemical changes occurring in the adolescent brain contribute to risk-seeking behaviors. The levels of serotonin and dopamine fluctuate in the adolescent brain. Dopamine levels increase dramatically during adolescence as part of the brain’s ‘feel good circuitry’ that gives a sense of well-being. Taking risks can elevate dopamine levels. Teens may go out of their way to seek pleasurable feelings, including engaging in risky behaviors.



### Strategies to Address Adolescent Development within Programs:

Young people’s experiences during adolescence and early adulthood shape the trajectory for their adult lives. Access (or lack of access) to services, education, and opportunities during this time period sets the foundation for an individual’s future health, income, and well-being.<sup>53</sup>

- **Brain Development:** Provide exposure to a variety of learning opportunities and experiences (academic, sports, arts, music, debate, community service, etc.) to stimulate brain connections and new pathways through early-to mid- 20s.



- **Pre-Frontal Cortex:** Provide opportunities for young people to develop these planning and other “executive function” skills. Engage youth in decision making with greater complexity and independence over time. Support youth to set goals, prioritize tasks, and engage in time management. Use active learning and interactive exercises, such as role plays and project-based learning to help youth plan, set goals, prioritize, and make decisions.
- **Cognitive Development and Adolescent Learning:** Learning should be relevant to young people’s lives and linked to real-world situations. Provide opportunities to apply learning with real audiences with real outcomes. Introduce more abstract thinking for older youth.
- **Emotional Development:** Use emotional sensitivity to benefit learning. Classwork should engage the senses and emotions to heighten memory. When learning is personally relevant and connected to their emotions (e.g., role play and simulations), students are more engaged. Avoid emotionally stressful environments that can inhibit learning (such as a highly punitive or authoritarian classroom). Provide opportunities for youth to develop competencies such as self-awareness, self-management, social awareness, and relationship skills.
- **Positive Risk Taking:** Enable youth to take healthy risks in safe settings by engaging youth in decision making, community activities, and doing novel and challenging activities. Young people’s openness to risk provides an opportunity to learn new things and think outside the box.
- **Negative Risk Taking:** Help youth understand how their brain works and how to identify potential risky situations. Include content relating to negative behaviors (drugs and alcohol, tobacco, unprotected sex) and positive healthy and protective behaviors. Educate youth on their rights, particularly relating to hazardous work, gender based violence, sexual harassment.
- **Moral Development:** Provide opportunities for youth to define values and ethics. Promote debate and opportunities to discuss opinions. Provide opportunities for advocacy, community service, and youth participation.
- **Social Development:** Embrace adolescents’ natural social interests. Use group work (in addition to paired and independent learning). Alternate grouping for different activities. Youth groups, clubs, student government build on young people’s natural interest in their peers.
- **Sexual Maturity:** Allow for open discussions of development, puberty, and sexuality, and encourage teens to talk about feelings relating to these changes. Include life skills programs that educate youth about reproductive health beginning in early adolescence.
- **Physical Development:** Allow for physical activity as well as periods of rest. Use a range of tactile and physical activities and allow for physical activities within learning environments. Hands-on and active learning are particularly effective learning strategies. Provide opportunities for sports, dance or other forms of physical movement.
- **Addressing Youth Who Have Experienced Trauma:** Provide opportunities for youth to build positive relationships with supportive adults.



## Annex IV: Positive Youth Development



USAID has adopted the PYD approach for working with young people.

PYD is both a philosophy and an approach to supporting youth to reach their full potential.<sup>54</sup> [YouthPower Learning](#), USAID's primary source of youth related research, states:

“Positive youth development engages youth along with their families, communities and/or governments so that youth are empowered to reach their full potential. PYD approaches build skills, assets and competencies; foster healthy relationships; strengthen the environment; and transform systems.”

The [PYD Measurement Framework](#) articulates four distinct but interconnected domains in which youth must have skills, competencies, or supports in order to live healthy, productive lives and thrive. The framework helps visualize the concept that the domains are not isolated and that the relationship between them unlocks collective impact. The presence of these qualities, skills and support make young people resilient to threats, shocks, and stresses, and allows them to take advantage of opportunities.

The domains are defined as follows:

- **Assets:** Youth have the necessary resources, skills, and competencies to achieve desired outcomes
- **Agency:** Youth perceive and have the ability to employ their assets and aspirations to make or influence their own decisions about their lives and set their own goals, as well as to act upon those decisions in order to achieve desired outcomes
- **Contributions:** Youth are engaged as a source of change for their own and for their communities' positive development
- **Enabling Environment:** Youth are surrounded by an environment that develops and supports their assets, agency, and access to services and opportunities, and that strengthens their ability to avoid risks and stay safe and secure, be protected, and live without fear of violence or retribution<sup>55</sup>

Adopting a PYD lens during activity design provides USAID Missions with a unique vantage point for analyzing the youth experience and target interventions in order to build resilience and empower young people to be change makers and leaders in their own communities.<sup>56</sup> By engaging youth more effectively, youth are empowered to better contribute to the food systems sector, increase their resilience (through increasing economic stability and skill building), and generally 'activate' them to become positive actors working towards stronger and more stable communities.

**Assessing Interventions by Positive Youth Development Features:** Research shows that intentional inclusion of as many of the seven PYD features as possible results in improved outcomes for both the youth and the technical outcomes. The PYD Measure Framework can be used by staff to: a) assess whether project activities/interventions cover as many of the seven key PYD features as possible; or b) analyze access by youth, families, and communities to these key features.





## Annex V: List of Resources



### Tools for Conducting Youth & Agriculture Assessments:

FHI 360/USAID Workforce Connections activity. (2016). Labor Market Assessment Tools: Value Chain Mapping. Retrieved from: [http://www.wfconnections.org/labor\\_market\\_assessment\\_tools\\_value\\_chain\\_mapping](http://www.wfconnections.org/labor_market_assessment_tools_value_chain_mapping)

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