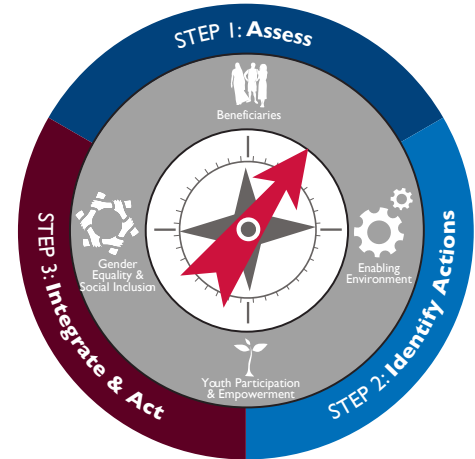# YOUTH COMPASS: A STRATEGIC GUIDE TO STRENGTHEN YOUTH ACTIVITIES

WHAT IS IT?

The Youth Compass is a first of its kind guide to strengthen the design and implementation of youth activities. Developed under USAID's Youth Power Action, it increases implementers' abilities to achieve intended results of a youth activity, bring those results to scale and sustain them.

The Youth Compass presents a strategic process for analyzing a youth activity's weaknesses, opportunities and gaps in knowledge; identifying and prioritizing actions to strengthen the activity; and incorporating those actions into the activity. Such actions can include refining target beneficiary youth, further pinpointing an activity's geographic scope, adding a complementary positive youth development approach, enhancing work across sectors, or adjusting interventions so that young women and men benefit equally.

Informed by the key development approaches of positive youth development, cross-sectoral coordination, and gender equality, the Youth Compass' conceptual framework consists of four areas: Beneficiaries, Enabling Environment, Youth Participation and Empowerment, and Gender Equality & Social Inclusion. These serve as standards that a youth activity is both measured against and strives to attain.

Click Youth Compass to download the guide or go to:
http://www.youthpower.org/resources/youth-compass-strategic-guide-strengthen-youth-activities

HOW DOES IT WORK?

The Youth Compass involves a three-step, seven-task strategic process, as follows:

STEP 1: Assess	STEP 2: Identify Actions	STEP 3: Integrate & Act
TASK 1: Frame Activity	TASK 4: Identify & Validate Strengthening Actions	TASK 6: Develop Integration Plan
TASK 2: Analyze Activity		TASK 7: Share & Act
TASK 3: Conduct Further Research	TASK 5: Prioritize Strengthening Actions	

It begins by framing the youth activity's key results (Task 1); moves to assessing weaknesses, opportunities and filling knowledge gaps (Tasks 2 and 3); facilitates evidence-based identification and prioritization of strengthening actions (Tasks 4 and 5); and ends with integrating the actions into the activity (Tasks 6 and 7).

WHO CAN USE IT AND WHEN?

The Youth Compass aims to help USAID implementing partners design or execute youth activities more effectively and efficiently. Missions can also use it to inform management or resource actions or as programming guidance. The tool can also be of strategic value to other donors or youth-led or -serving implementers. The ideal time to use the Youth Compass is during the start-up phase (typically within first 90-days) of a youth activity to inform deliverables such as the first-year annual work plan or the monitoring and evaluation plan. However, as seen in the table, implementing partners can benefit from it during other stages.

Implementing Partners Can Use Youth Compass During A Youth Activity's	Strategic Contributions
1. Solicitation stage	Proposal design
2. First 90 days	First annual work plan; M&E plan
3. First year	First annual work plan M&E plan (amended); second annual work plan
4. Middle years	Internal mid-term evaluation; Third or fourth annual work plans
5. Final year	Final Work Plan

WHERE HAS IT BEEN USED THUS FAR?

The Youth Compass has been proven effective via two pilot-tests in USAID Indonesia and Jordan. Both pilots helped implementers (RTI in Indonesia and Global Communities in Jordan) to identify early, value-added actions, which were integrated into first year annual plans and elements of monitoring and evaluation plans.

WHAT SETS IT A PART FROM OTHER USAID TOOLS?

- ► **FLEXIBLE:** Can be used at any time during an activity.
- ► **A STRATEGIC PROCESS:** More than an assessment tool, it's a process that facilitates collaboration, learning and adaptation.
- ► **RESULTS-DRIVEN:** Begins with and driven by activity results.
- ► **ENGAGES YOUTH:** Opportunity to engage youth and key local stakeholders.
- ► **FILLS GAPS:** Can be used to verify the validity of an activity's initial design and strengthen as called for.
- ► **COMPLEMENTARY:** Generates valuable information that can inform the activity's annual work plan and monitoring and evaluation plan.