



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 I - PROJECT DESIGN



USAID
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YOUTH  **POWER**
LEARNING



This publication is made possible by the support of the American people through the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) and Feed the Future Initiative. The contents are the responsibility of Making Cents International through YouthPower: Evidence and Evaluation IDIQ, Task Order 1 (YouthPower Learning), Contract #AID-OAA-I-15-00034/AID-OAA-TO-15-00011. This publication does not necessarily reflect the views of USAID or the United States Government.



ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

This guide is the result of a collaborative effort by the YouthPower Learning team. It was prepared by Making Cents International under the authorship of Ms. Rachel Blum, Mr. David Feige, and Ms. Hillary Proctor.

The authors acknowledge and give thanks to the many contributors to this guide. We would like to thank the technical contributors from USAID—Ms. Jessica Bagdonis, Ms. Clara Cohen, Dr. Louise Fox, Ms. Krista Jacobs, Ms. Upassna Kaul, Mr. Michael McCabe, Ms. Olga Merchan, Ms. Kristin O’Planick, Ms. Meredith Soule, Ms. Nancy Taggart, and Ms. Carey Utz. We would also like to thank Dr. Christy Olenik, Ms. Eliza Chard, and Mr. David Soroko from Making Cents International; Ms. Cassandra Jessee and Ms. Pamela Lilleston from the International Center for Research on Women; Dr. Lisa Lauxman from USDA; Dr. Thomas Jayne from Michigan State University; and Ms. Cherrie Atilano from AGREA for their helpful comments and guidance. We also thank our reviewers Mr. John Holtzman, Mr. John Lindsay, Ms. Fiona Macaulay, Mr. Emet Mohr, Ms. Julie Sellers, Ms. Leia Smithner, and Mr. Gary Walker.

Lastly, the authors greatly appreciate the valuable feedback and support from Ms. Meredith McCormack from the USAID Bureau for Food Security and Ms. Elizabeth Berard from the USAID Bureau for Global Health.



ACRONYMS

ADS	Automated Directive System
AK	Akazi Kanoze Project
APS	Annual Program Statement
CCIR	Cross-Cutting Indicators
CDCS	Country Development Cooperation Strategy
CLA	Collaboration, Learning, and Adaptation
CSA	Climate-Smart Agriculture
EHELD	Excellence in Higher Education for Liberian Development
EIG	Education for Income Generation
FTE	Full-Time Equivalent
GFSS	Global Food Security Strategy
GIF	Gender Integration Framework
KHCP	Kenya Horticulture Competitiveness Project
MEL	Monitoring, Evaluation, and Learning
MERL	Monitoring, Evaluation, Research, and Learning
OVC	Orphan and Vulnerable Children
PAD	Project Appraisal Document
PYD	Positive Youth Development
RDCS	Regional Development Cooperative Strategy
SRH	Sexual Reproductive Health
STRYDE	Scale the Strengthening Rural Youth Development through Enterprise Project
TEC	Technical Evaluation Committee
TOR	Terms of Reference
USG	United States Government
USAID	United States Agency for International Development
WEAI	Women's Empowerment in Agriculture Index





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INTRODUCTION TO VOLUME I

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. Young people are entering the labor market in large numbers in areas like Sub-Saharan Africa, where an estimated 11 million young people reach working-age each year.¹ Over the next few decades, agriculture will remain a significant source of employment for youth in low- and middle-income countries. Meanwhile, demographic data reveals that the farming population around the world is aging, with a significant proportion of farmers above the age of sixty.² Policymakers today must think creatively about how to bridge the economic opportunities in agri-food systems with the range of economic, demographic, and socio-political factors that youth face.

Research paints a dynamic picture of youth in agri-food systems. Overall, rural youth earn “mixed livelihoods” from a diverse stream of sources—on-farm, off-farm, and non-farm—with self-employment³ playing a particularly important role. Moreover, rural youth appear to increasingly rely on “distress migration”⁴ to urban areas as an important livelihood option. While some evidence suggests that youth are not attracted to traditional agriculture and are leaving the sector, many older adolescents in rural areas are already engaging in agriculture in some form. Youth aspire to engage in agriculture activities that incorporate modern practices and technology, as well as those that generate “quick money” with relatively higher returns, rather than staple crop production. Decisions by youth to engage in agriculture work are also shaped by the environment in which they live: the economic and political context, social norms and customs, the nature of the agri-food system, institutions, laws and regulations, parental and peer influence, media, previous experiences, and gender relations.⁵

Country by country, youth need to be understood and mainstreamed into U.S. Government programming. To create better opportunities within agri-food systems, the GFSS prioritizes “Increased youth empowerment and livelihoods” across all objectives in cross-cutting Intermediate Result (IR) 4. This technical guidance bridges the GFSS objectives and builds on USAID’s youth inclusion policy embodied in USAID’s Youth in Development Policy.

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.





Top Takeaways from Volume I








Among the many tools, tips, and practical guidance offered in this Volume, the top takeaways for youth-inclusive Feed the Future project design are:

1. Actively seek youth participation throughout the entire USAID program cycle ([Section 4.2](#))
2. Enlist the expertise of a youth specialist in project design, especially for projects or activities that focus on youth as the primary participant/beneficiary ([Section 3.1](#))
3. Acknowledge the heterogeneity of young men and women and identify the specific age-appropriate youth cohorts to be included in or targeted by the project/activity ([Section 3.2](#))
4. Conduct a youth analysis to inform the different stages of project design. If a stand-alone youth analysis is not an option, integrate youth analysis as part of the mandatory gender analysis and/or Mission-led value chain analysis. ([Section 3.4](#))
5. Apply a positive youth development (PYD) lens and approach to intentionally integrate young people into the agri-food system, based on evidence-based approaches ([Section 4.1](#))



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





WHY ENGAGE YOUTH IN AGRICULTURE?

1.1 Terminology

Understanding the following terms is critical to achieving effective design and implementation of food security activities that empower youth:

Youth: A life stage when one transitions from the dependence of childhood to adulthood independence. The meaning of “youth” varies in different societies. For the purposes of this technical guide, we will use the 10-29 age range while keeping in mind the concept of “life stages” can be further divided into 10–14, 15–19, 20–24 and 25-29 years, as put forward in the [USAID Youth in Development Policy](#).⁶ Feed the Future activities will primarily cover working age youth ages 15-29. In addition, partners may have different age range definitions for youth based on their specific country contexts.

Youth Livelihood: A livelihood comprises the assets (natural, physical, human, financial and social capital), activities, and access (mediated by policies, institutions, and social relations) that together determine the earnings gained by an individual or household.

Youth Engagement: [Meaningful youth engagement](#) is the active, empowered, and intentional partnership with youth as stakeholders, problem solvers, and agents of change in their communities.⁷ It contributes to more sustainable investments that end cycles of poverty, build resilient and democratic societies, improve health and nutrition outcomes, and strengthen economies.

Positive Youth Development (PYD): The U.S. Government and many others use this approach to understand adolescents and engage 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. Policy and programs that incorporate the seven features of positive youth development result in better outcomes for youth: skill building (technical, cognitive, and non-cognitive “soft skills”), youth engagement and contribution, healthy relationships and bonding to positive adult role models, belonging and membership, positive norms, expectations, and perceptions, safe space, and access to age-appropriate, [integrated] youth-friendly services.

Youth-Inclusive Programs (also referred to as **youth mainstreaming**): Youth-inclusive programs are designed to reach youth as part of a broader target group by removing and/or accounting for barriers that may prevent or diminish the participation of young people, and are the focus preference for Feed the Future efforts. While it incorporates youth into a wider range of interventions, an inclusive approach is often unable to deal with the full range of youth requirements to fully participate in food systems (e.g., lack of skills and experience, educational attainment, lack of financial stability, policy constraints, and few networks/connections).

Youth-Specific Programming (also referred to as **youth-focused programming**): This practice intentionally targets youth exclusively, for reasons that include demographics, political imperative (e.g., concern for increasing rates of youth unemployment), and/or the presence of disproportionate barriers to youth in the agri-food system. By dedicating resources to youth-specific activities, Feed the Future projects are able to align youth needs with market demand and livelihood opportunities. Moreover, a youth-specific approach allows Feed the Future to achieve complementary objectives with other sectors including education, health, democracy and governance, and conflict mitigation (refer to [Section 3.3](#)).



1.2 Relation to the Global Food Security Strategy

Youth inclusion magnifies Feed the Future outcomes by tapping into young men and women as actors in inclusive and sustainable agriculture-led economic growth (GFSS Objective 1). Young men and women represent a large proportion of the population in both Feed the Future countries and rural areas generally. In fact, youth populations are expanding in the developing world and are entering the labor market in large numbers; worldwide, an estimated over 11 million new jobs are needed every year in order to meet the growing workforce.⁸

Youth are already contributors on family farms, in livestock husbandry, in processing and transport, and as part of household livelihoods strategies. Young men and boys are often responsible for herding livestock, using tools, operating machines, spraying chemicals, transporting goods to market, and preparing land. Young women and girls may be in charge of collecting water, raising small animals (e.g. poultry), tending household gardens, petty trading, and selling and processing fish,⁹ as well as selling and processing horticulture at local markets. However, many of these are subsistence level activities and are unpaid; therefore, there is an opportunity to upgrade and expand the contributions of young women and men within households as well as across agriculture and food systems. Young people make important contributions to Feed the Future objectives and goals, including:

- Contributing their entrepreneurial talents to value chain upgrading
- Engaging in mixed livelihoods strategies that contribute to household resilience
- Acting as early adopters of new technologies that contribute to food systems resilience



As adolescents experience rapid cognitive development through their early to mid-twenties, young people are often more likely to adopt “positive risk-taking” behaviors than older adults (see Volume II Annex 1 of this guide). Additionally, youth today have more exposure to technology than previous generations and, in many cases, higher levels of education. Youth are often early adopters of new technologies and are more likely to challenge traditional norms and practices. As a result, youth are well situated to embrace new behaviors, including the use of new types of agriculture inputs such as new seed varieties, the development of climate-smart agriculture (CSA) products and CSA services, or the production of nutrition-sensitive crops. Youth are also often ready to serve as new actors in a value chain, forming a cadre of agents who can provide inputs to farming communities who have no prior access to such products and services.

Youth can be key drivers of rural economic transformation. Rural economic transformation, an important part of economic development, involves the rural labor force moving into higher productivity activities through the application of technology and capital, as well as through migration to towns and cities.



Youth with more education and more interest in new technology can be instrumental to this change. Little research exists, however, on how best to involve youth in and prepare them for adaptation to the rural economic transformation process (see below).

Working-age youth are important contributors to household livelihoods and resilience (GFSS Objective 2). Livelihoods approaches that focus only on heads of households often overlook the earning potential of the youth family members who also contribute to household earnings and savings. Research suggests that among the sources of resilience, youth economic empowerment—including human capital development (training and education), financial literacy and money management, building business skills and professional networks, and livelihood risk diversification into non-farm and off-farm labor activities—helps protect households from shocks.¹⁰

Youth employment can contribute to a well-nourished population, especially of young women and children (GFSS Objective 3). Optimal maternal and child nutrition is critical for physical and cognitive development, especially during the 1,000-day window of opportunity from pregnancy to a child's second birthday. Given sufficient opportunity, including access to education, work, and empowerment, adolescent girls can contribute to improved nutrition and food security in their households and communities and become key contributors to the social and economic advancement of their countries. More broadly, good nutrition continues to play an important role in helping to keep youth—both boys and girls—healthy.



Guidance and Tools for Global Food Security Programs: <https://feedthefuture.gov/lp/guidance-and-tools-global-food-security-programs>

Global Food Security Strategy Guidance on Market Systems and Value Chains: <https://feedthefuture.gov/resource/global-food-security-strategy-guidance-market-systems-and-value-chains>

I.3 A Need for Evidence

It is important to note that while this volume suggests approaches to designing youth-inclusive agriculture projects, to date, there is little rigorous evidence on this topic.¹¹ A number of studies examine youth's role and aspirations in the agriculture sector, the constraints to their participation in the sector, and the political and economic imperative of engaging youth in agriculture.¹² However, a large majority of the evaluations related to youth economic opportunity have been limited to youth operating in urban, non-agricultural economies. 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 creation¹³, agriculture productivity, and resilience (refer to the different Feed the Future youth project typologies in Annex 1). Missions are encouraged to adopt youth-inclusive learning agendas and rigorous evaluation of youth-specific Feed the Future activities.







2. INTEGRATING YOUTH INTO THE CDCS AND RDCS PROCESS

2.1 Options for Engaging Young Local Actors in the CDCS and RDCS Process

Decision Point: Missions should consider conducting a youth analysis and integrating youth into their Country Development Cooperation Strategy (CDCS). CDCS, Regional Development Cooperation Strategy (RDCS) and Country Plans must be grounded in evidence and analysis. Missions may consider conducting a youth analysis to inform their priorities and identify barriers and risks that disproportionately affect young people's ability to enter into and profit from agricultural and production activities. A youth analysis should identify macro and sectoral level societal youth inequalities or obstacles and link them to the achievement of the goals, development objectives, IRs and Sub-IRs throughout the document. Youth should be incorporated into all sections of the CDCS and RDCS, as opposed to being discussed as a “cross-cutting issue” described in a single paragraph or section. Additional information on conducting a youth analysis for the activity level can be found in [Section 3.4](#).

Decision Point: Youth Stakeholders should be engaged in consultations. In addition to directly engaging youth, Missions should consider engaging other actors who affect the role of youth in agriculture systems through consultations and meetings.







3. PROJECT DESIGN FOR YOUTH & FEED THE FUTURE

“Project design is the process by which USAID defines how it will achieve a result or set of results in a CDCS or other strategic framework to ensure that efforts are complementary and aligned in support of the strategy. Each project design typically incorporates multiple activities organized around a common purpose.”¹⁴ The project design team will have to answer several questions as they undertake a youth-inclusive project design.

3.1 Youth-Inclusive vs. Youth-Specific Programming

Decision Point: As Missions develop their theory of change for the Project Appraisal Document (PAD), they will have to consider which approach to youth programming will best help them to achieve their intended outcome.

Youth-Inclusive Programs (also referred to as **youth mainstreaming**) are designed to reach youth as part of a broader target group by removing and/or accounting for barriers that may prevent or diminish the participation of young people, and are the focus for Feed the Future efforts. While it incorporates youth into a wider range of interventions, an inclusive approach is often unable to deal with the full range of youth requirements to fully participate in food systems (e.g., lack of skills and experience, educational attainment, financial instability, policy constraints, few networks/connections).

In order to avoid pitfalls and take advantage of youth contributions, Missions with intentional youth-inclusive approaches:

- Conduct thoughtful youth analysis in project design ([Section 3.4](#))
- Engage youth throughout the project cycle ([Section 4.2](#))
- Set explicit expectations for youth engagement in activity design ([Section 5](#))
- Use a positive youth development approach ([Section 4.1](#))

Youth-Specific Programming (also referred to as **youth-focused programming**) intentionally targets youth exclusively, for reasons that include demographics, political imperative (e.g., concern for increasing rates of youth unemployment), and/or the presence of disproportionate barriers to youth in the agri-food system. By dedicating resources to youth-specific activities, Feed the Future projects are able to align youth needs with market demand and livelihood opportunities. Moreover, a youth-specific approach allows Feed the Future to achieve complementary objectives with other sectors including education, health, democracy and governance, and conflict mitigation (refer to [Section 3.3](#)). In that regard, a youth-specific approach may be relevant for Feed the Future activities in areas affected by conflict or violence (refer to Volume II on “Applying a Conflict-Sensitive Youth Lens in Conflict Environments”).

Missions designing youth-specific activities should engage a youth expert as part of the design team. Youth expertise can come from a dedicated consultant, Mission staff focused on other youth-serving sectors (Education, Health, Gender), and/or USAID/Washington staff.



Instances in which a designer might want to prioritize a youth-specific activity include:

1. When the CDCS articulates an explicit priority on youth inclusion, or when youth populations (including young women) are perceived as necessary to achieving USAID outcomes related to food security, agricultural development, or economic growth.
2. When trying to alleviate household poverty in food insecure areas with high (and growing) youth populations.¹⁵
3. When Missions seek to address high rural youth unemployment or underemployment, and/or where youth are considered to be especially marginalized due to poor economic or educational indices.
4. In countries/ regions in which agricultural actors are aging out of the system and youth must be targeted as current or future actors in select agricultural value chains. In these cases, youth are often prioritized by country government agriculture or economic growth strategies.

3.2 Youth Segmentation Strategies

Youth inclusion is not a one-size-fits-all solution. Defining youth cohorts allows the Mission to assess the opportunities and constraints facing specific groups of youth, and to design interventions accordingly.

Segmentation also helps establish realistic targets and ensures that the profile of youth participants is aligned with the activity purpose.

Youth cohorts are most commonly categorized by age bandings, namely the stages of adolescence that mark major developmental stages: Early Adolescence (10-14 years), Adolescence (15-19 years), Emerging Adulthood (20-24 years), and Transition into Adulthood (25-29 years).¹⁶ **Generalizing “youth” according to overly broad age range banding (e.g., all people ages 15-30) leads to the unintended exclusion of certain groups over others.** In many cultures youth cohorts are differentiated by biological change (i.e., onset of puberty) or by cultural milestones (i.e., by rituals, responsibilities, and legal rights)(Volume II describes youth milestones in greater detail).¹⁷ Youth cohorts can also be defined by the young person’s identity, which can be shaped by a number of social, economic, and cultural factors, such as those listed in Table 1.¹⁸



TIP: The age-based definition of youth may be especially inappropriate in crisis- and conflict affected environments, where many young people have been “forced” into adulthood, for example by becoming heads of household, through participation in militias, or by being forced to earn money through licit or illicit means in order to survive.



Table 1. Factors Other than Age That Shape Youth Identity and Define Youth Segments

- | | |
|--|--|
| ✓ Gender | ✓ Participation in group affiliations such as churches, sports teams, clubs, cooperatives, or even gangs or militias |
| ✓ Socio-economic status | ✓ Status as HIV positive or People Living with HIV/AIDS |
| ✓ Ethnic, tribal, or religious affiliations | ✓ Orphan and Vulnerable Children (OVC) status |
| ✓ Geographic location (including rural, urban, peri-urban and community neighborhoods) | ✓ Conflict-affected |
| ✓ Nationality | ✓ Disability status |
| ✓ Race | ✓ Caretaker/head of household status |
| ✓ Education status/level | ✓ Status as refugee/displaced person |
| ✓ Employment status/type | |
| ✓ Marital status | |
| ✓ Sexual orientation | |

EXAMPLE

The USAID Akazi Kanoze activity in Rwanda customized its employment training and service package in eight different ways, according to the characteristics of different youth cohorts and the relative capacities of local service providers.¹⁹

3.3 Opportunity for Cross-Sectoral Collaboration

Youth-inclusive projects offer a tremendous opportunity for cross-sectoral collaboration and mutual benefits. To identify opportunities for Feed the Future to collaborate with other sectors, **ask the following questions:**

- ☑ Does the target youth cohort(s) include young mothers who could potentially benefit from or participate in nutrition-sensitive interventions? (Global Health)
- ☑ Do the rates of HIV infection among the target participants significantly impact or threaten their ability to work in the agriculture sector? (Global Health)
- ☑ Do young women in the target areas face early marriage or unintended pregnancies that impact their participation in the labor market? (Global Health)
- ☑ Is the project geographic scope located in conflict-affected areas, where a combined youth development and agriculture initiative may address the drivers of conflict and violence among youth populations? (Democracy & Governance)
- ☑ Does the project offer opportunity for—or can it benefit from—youth civic participation, e.g., through the organization of youth cooperatives, community radio interventions, agriculture volunteer corps, environmental advocacy, land policy reform? (Democracy & Governance)
- ☑ Do the Feed the Future interventions in conflict-affected areas intend to increase youth's access to education, e.g. through literacy, vocational training, or other alternative education programs? Can the project benefit from and link to existing education interventions in conflict-affected areas? (Education)
- ☑ Does the project intend to incorporate basic skills (literacy, numeracy) into training programs, in addition to the soft skills that are important for economic success? Would the project benefit from leveraging existing education interventions? (Education)
- ☑ Will interventions work with or strengthen the capacity of universities or other education and training institutes to offer more relevant, market-based curricula? Could other higher education activities extend benefits to agriculture or agribusiness sectors? (Education)



Note: Cross-sectoral funding of youth-specific projects/activities requires Mission leadership and coordination with respect to strategic priorities, funding requirements, alignment of indicators, geographic reach, selection of beneficiaries, management, and communications.

As Table 2 illustrates, several USAID Missions have co-created and co-funded youth activities with a combination of Feed the Future, economic growth, higher education, basic education, health, and democracy and governance funds.

Table 2. Examples of USAID Activities with Feed the Future and Cross-Sectoral Funding

Ethiopia: Building the Potential of Youth	\$11 M (2015-2019)	Improve employment opportunities for more than 34,500 unemployed and/or underemployed youth in 30 woredas (districts).
Guatemala: Rural Value Chains Project	\$19 M (2012-2017)	Improve household access to food by expanding and diversifying rural income, especially within the coffee sector.
Haiti: Local Enterprise and Value Chain Enhancement	\$33 M (2013-2018)	Increase employment in Haiti by facilitating more productive and inclusive value chains in the agriculture, construction, and apparel sectors.
Kenya: Feed the Future Livestock Market Systems Leader with Associates	Up to \$95 M (2017-2022)	Enable people, households and communities to strengthen their resilience and sustainably escape poverty and chronic vulnerability by leveraging opportunities in the livestock market system.
Mali: PAJE-Nieta	\$30 M (2010-2015)	Improve livelihoods opportunities to over 14,000 rural, out-of-school youth through basic education, work readiness and entrepreneurship training, social and leadership development, and follow-on support services.
Nepal: Education for Income Generation	\$14.7 M (2008-2013)	Provide livelihood opportunities for 75,000 disadvantaged and conflict-affected youth via agriculture productivity, vocational training, life skills and entrepreneurship, and education scholarships.
Rwanda: Huguku Dukore	\$20.5 M (2017-2020)	Provide employment and self-employment opportunities for 40,000 youth in rural, food-insecure areas.
Uganda: Youth Leadership for Agriculture	\$21.5 (2015-2020)	Increase economic opportunities for 350,000 Ugandan female and male youth in agriculture-related fields.



3.4 Plan for Conducting Analyses from Project Design to Activity Design

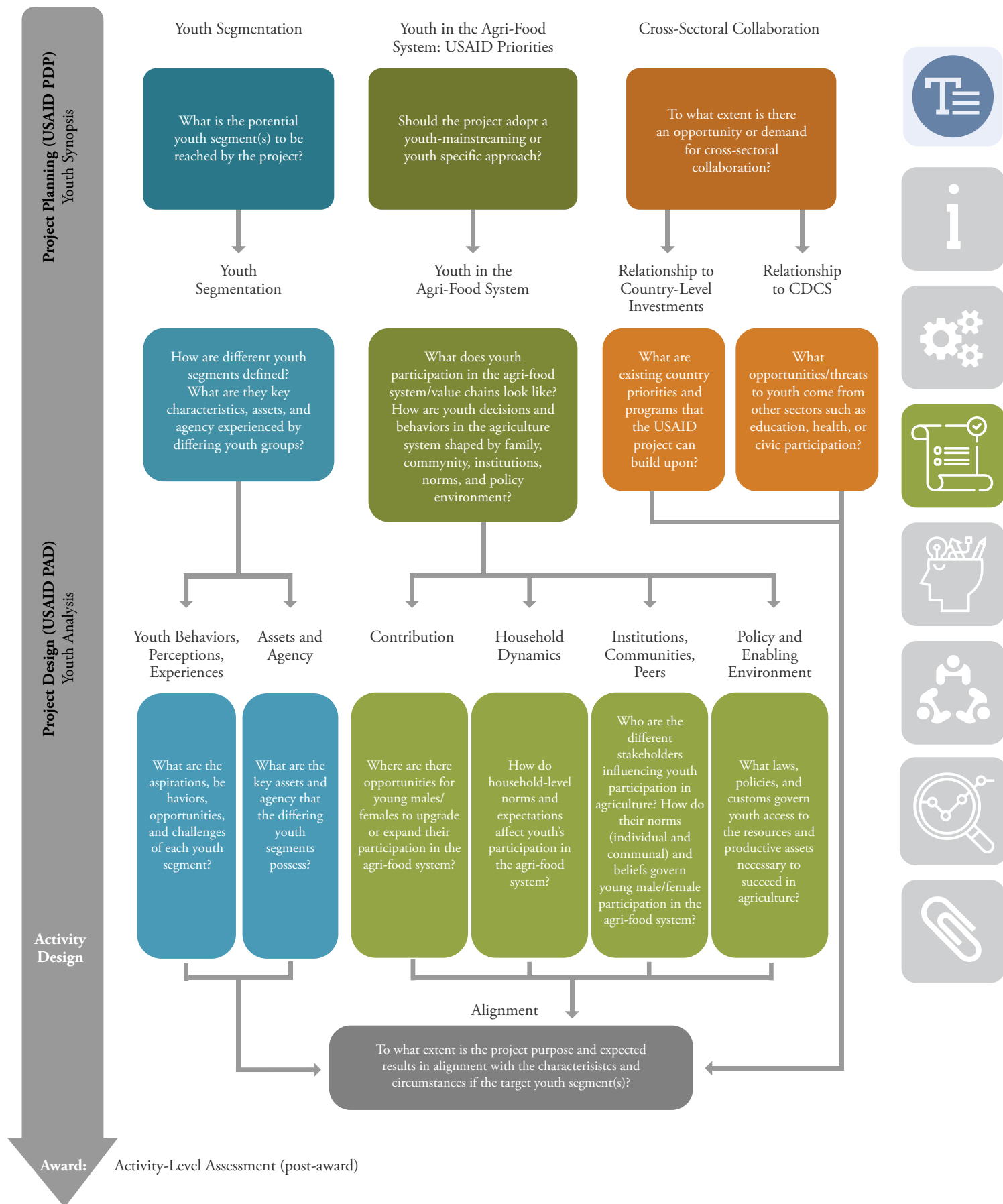
For any project considering youth inclusion, Missions are advised to conduct a youth analysis. The relative depth of information collection and analysis depends on whether the design team has decided to take a youth-inclusive and/or youth-specific approach. At a minimum, by the end of the project design process, the project design team should have at least basic answers in the following five categories:

1. **Youth Segmentation:** Which youth cohorts will the project aim to include or target, what are the characteristics of each youth cohorts, and in what ways does the project envision including them?
2. **Youth Participation in the Agri-Food System:** How different youth cohorts are engaged in agriculture and food systems at present, and
3. **Youth Barriers and Opportunities in the System:** What major barriers (household level, community level, institutional, and/or legal/regulatory) are preventing different youth cohorts from upgrading and/or participating in different functions of the agriculture and food systems? Where in the system are there opportunities for greater youth inclusion or upgrading?
4. **Cross-Sectoral Collaboration:** Are there opportunities to leverage or collaborate with other existing investments in other sectors (education, health, conflict mitigation, democracy and governance)?
5. **Alignment:** What considerations are critical to aligning youth skills, interests, and assets with the objectives of the project and the demands of the agriculture/food system?

Figure 1 illustrates this youth analysis process in greater detail.



Figure 1. Framing Youth Analysis Questions During USAID Feed the Future Project Design



Missions may use the mandatory gender analysis as an opportunity to conduct a more general inclusion analysis that incorporates both gender and youth considerations (Annex 4) or as an added component to any value chain analysis undertaken for project design (Volume II). In both cases, **enlisting the expertise of a youth specialist (Section 3.1) and engaging youth in the assessment is important to ensure that the project design analyses reflect youth considerations.**



The Gender Integration Framework (GIF) is a tool that can be used in project or activity design to examine key dimensions that contribute to women's empowerment in agriculture. The GIF helps discover programmatic needs and progress for women and men across seven areas: decision-making, access to and control over productive resources, income, social capital and leadership, time allocation and workload, human capital, and access to technology. The Women's Empowerment in Agriculture Index (WEAI) tracks women's empowerment and gender parity in the first five domains. These tools can help to assess the extent to which young women specifically benefit from USAID's youth and agriculture programming.²⁰ The project design team also may refer to the Global Food Security Strategy Technical Guidance on Advancing Gender Equality and Female Empowerment, as well as ADS Chapter 205.



Table 3. Tips for Conducting Youth Analysis During USAID Feed the Future Project Design

Stage	Purpose of Analysis and Analytical Outputs	Method of Data Collection	Who Conducts
Youth Synopsis (During Project Planning and early in Project Design)	<p>Purpose: Obtain a snapshot of youth in the agriculture sector and in the economy.</p> <p>Outputs:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Determine major USAID priorities vis-a-vis youth and Project Purpose in order to drive the decision regarding youth mainstreaming activities and/or youth-specific activities; Identify potential youth cohorts to be reached by the project. 	<p>Desk review of secondary sources, usually found in government reports and statistics, household surveys, project reports. Some data may have already been collected during the CDCS process. If available, scan youth assessments or youth project final reports.</p> <p>Consultation with relevant Mission staff (i.e., youth focal point and/or youth advisory group).</p> <p>Consultation with USAID/ Washington youth experts (e.g., Youth Corps members).</p>	<p>Designated Mission staff or project design team member, who also may be from USAID/ Washington.</p> <p>OR</p> <p>USAID Knowledge Services Center or USAID/ Washington youth experts (when online data is available).</p> <p>OR</p> <p>Contracted to local/ international consultant, firm, or organization with country expertise. Consider hiring youth researchers to collect and analyze data.</p> <p>1-2 person days (possibly more if data is not readily available)</p>
Youth Analysis (during Project Design and/or Activity Design)	<p>Purpose: Generate understanding of youth behaviors, aspirations, assets, skills, challenges, external influences, and opportunities for participation in the agriculture sector.</p> <p>Outputs:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Distinguish the youth cohorts that will participate in the activity implementation; Ensure that youth needs and agri-food system dynamics are aligned; Articulate the project/ activity approach to youth inclusion. 	<p>Data collection is as intensive as the design requires, depending also on youth-mainstreaming vs. youth-specific approach:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Secondary research: youth surveys; youth reports; reports from agriculture, economic growth, or employment projects focused on youth or that include a youth component; Key informant interviews: in-country youth practitioners, experts, youth project managers, lead firms, government, etc. Focus group discussions: homogeneous youth groups from different cohorts. <p>For analysis of data, consider the USAID 5Rs framework.</p>	<p>A youth expert with relevant technical expertise should lead or participate in this analysis and in project design (see Section 3.1).</p> <p>Participation by Mission project design team in the analysis is highly encouraged.</p> <p>It is important for the design team to hear from youth directly. Youth should participate to the extent possible.</p> <p>This analysis can be conducted as part of the mandatory gender analysis and/or value chain analyses.</p>
In-Depth Youth Assessment (post-award)	<p>Purpose: Define the specific youth-inclusive interventions under an activity.</p>	<p>Refer to existing youth assessment tools or frameworks such as the USAID “Youth Compass” tool or others (Annex 5).</p>	<p>Implementing partner.</p>



For examples of guiding questions to ask during a youth analysis, see Annex 2. For a list of resources for conducting youth and agriculture assessments, see Annex 5. Additional questions for a youth-inclusive value chain analysis can be found in Volume II Table 2.







4. YOUTH CONSIDERATIONS IN THE ACTIVITY DESIGN STAGE

As the project design process progresses to activity design, youth considerations will likely need to be examined in greater detail. See Figure 1 and Table 3 (above) on how to conduct a youth analysis for activity design.

4.1 Utilizing a Positive Youth Development Lens and Approach

Before digging into an activity design, think through how aspects of a PYD approach can be incorporated from a youth inclusion perspective. This subsection reviews some basic PYD concepts; additional information can be found in Volume II of this guide.

Effective youth programming draws upon the evidence-based PYD approach which intentionally increases youth capacity in four key domains: assets, agency, contribution, and enabling environment.

Youth are often characterized by the relative **“assets”** that they possess, defined as “the necessary resources, skills, and competencies to achieve desired outcomes.”²¹ External assets include the ownership of or access to natural resources (water, land, energy, etc.), physical assets (equipment, inputs, facilities, housing, technology), financing, education and skills training, information, personal support systems (family, community members, peers), and networks. Moreover, research shows that youth with relatively high developmental assets—soft skills such as positive self-concept, self-control, higher order thinking skills, communications, and social skills—are more likely to achieve positive outcomes in the workforce, in violence prevention, and in sexual and reproductive health.²² Many of these assets are interlinked; for example, when women have lower literacy rates, limited mobility, or limited membership in associations, they also have disproportionately lower access to agricultural inputs, technology, and information.

The relative assets of the target youth cohorts must be compared to those that are necessary to achieve intended activity results. For example, a young person likely to make a meaningful contribution to an agribusiness competitiveness activity must have the capacity to easily acquire entrepreneurial or technical skills (or both) and productive assets such as land, capital, vehicles, or machinery; he/she must also have the soft skills and personal agency necessary to take advantage of these resources. Such requirements are distinct from a poverty reduction activity where the youth may lack experience, soft skills, and/or access to external resources to succeed in a competitiveness activity. Youth sub-groups with relatively few assets need more support in order to succeed. It is also important to recognize the external factors that limit the attainment of assets, such as exposure to conflict and/or violence (personal or community-based) that threatens physical safety, disrupts education, causes health and psycho-social problems, or breaks down personal networks and supports. Poverty also creates similar limitations.



Importantly, youth must also have “**agency**” to exert and take advantage of these assets to achieve desired outcomes.²³ Sometimes simply being considered “youth” can inhibit participation because of cultural norms that limit the role of youth in society. Young people—particularly girls—are often excluded from household-level and/or economic decision-making. Exclusion due to gender, race, religion, or other social and cultural factors can also prohibit youth from attaining assets or exercising agency.

“**Contribution**” means that youth are engaged as a source of change for their positive development and that of their community. Efforts to increase youth contribution to the agri-food system often promote youth-led community service (such as 4H or environmental volunteerism), youth-led advocacy, or youth microenterprises. Meanwhile, a supportive “**enabling environment**” is one in which peers, families, communities, institutions, laws/regulations, and norms support youth success. Volume II of this guide provides greater detail on the salient factors promoting an enabling environment for youth in the agri-food system.

Building off of these four PYD domains, research shows that activities that intentionally include youth can magnify youth outcomes when they address seven key PYD features. Several features help to define which activities can be incorporated within each of the four domains. These features, organized by domains, are as follows:

- Assets and Agency
 - › Skill building
- Contribution
 - › Youth engagement and contribution
- Enabling Environment
 - › Healthy relationships and bonding
 - › Belonging and membership
 - › Positive norms, expectations, and perceptions
 - › Safe space
 - › Access and integration among services

Refer to Volume II for more detail.



In extremely gender-sensitive or imbalanced contexts, consider the appropriateness of sex-segregated interventions. A youth-sensitive gender analysis (Annex 4) will reveal differences in female and male youth’s needs, constraints, and opportunities with respect to agriculture, food systems, resilience capacities, and nutrition, and will show the influence of traditional social and gender roles and norms on youth engagement in food systems.





TIP: Youth who are considered “vulnerable”—those possessing relatively few external and developmental assets—require a higher level of wrap-around services that allow them to achieve activity results. During design, Missions are advised to:

- Undertake a youth analysis that examines youth cohorts disaggregated by gender
- Budget for and/or coordinate with activities that develop youths’ internal assets, such as soft skills training, accelerated education programs (literacy/numeracy), mentoring, experiential learning, community engagement, caregiver and peer supports, and cross-sectoral supports
- Budget for and/or coordinate with activities that give youth access to important agricultural assets such as finance, land, services, information, and value chain networks
- Incorporate goals that move youth along a continuum of asset attainment and ability to exercise agency, particularly through a gender lens. Design a monitoring, evaluation, research and learning (MERL) plan that measures progress in the attainment of developmental assets (refer to PYD Measurement Toolkit)
- Establish numerical indicator targets that are appropriate to the youth cohorts (see below)

4.2 Youth Engagement in the Activity Design Process

Youth Engagement: Whether an activity undertakes a youth mainstreaming or youth-specific approach, **youth should meaningfully participate in all stages of the design process.** Youth participation ensures that young men and women make meaningful contributions to the USAID objectives that are relevant to them. Because youth are a diverse group with a similarly diverse array of needs, it is critical that youth involved at the design stage are broadly representative of the youth cohorts targeted by the activity (refer to [Section 3.2](#) on defining youth cohorts). The following chart presents ideas for engaging youth at the design, award, implementation, and monitoring and evaluation stages.



Project Cycle Stage	Examples of Youth Engagement
Activity Design	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hire youth to help design assessment tools like surveys and focus group questions to ensure a youth-sensitive analysis • Hire youth as data collectors during assessments • Ask youth to assist in analyzing the findings of assessments and to contribute suggestions for the co-creation of activity design • Intentionally share the pre-solicitation with relevant groups of youth and facilitate youth-led workshops or listening sessions to garner their feedback • Issue an Annual Program Statement (APS) for youth to lead the design and implementation of activities
Solicitation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Design the solicitation to include sub-award arrangements (e.g. grants under contract) for grants and sub-grants that are led by youth
Implementation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Employ youth as part of the implementing team • Establish a USAID youth advisory group composed of heterogeneous youth voices (i.e., those representing the different segments illustrated in Section 3.2) • Engage older youth as peer leaders and/or mentors in any skills training components (may come from private sector, civil society, etc.)
Monitoring, Evaluation, and Learning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Leverage the youth advisory group for regular input and monitoring of the success of the activity • Employ youth researchers to help evaluate the activity • Encourage youth beneficiaries to develop their own learning agenda for the activity and provide grant funding that allows them to pursue the learning agenda



4.3 Stakeholder Consultations

Stakeholder consultations are a key component of the project cycle, but can be extremely important at the activity level to ensure buy-in from government, civil society, the private sector, and youth in particular. Youth are the best advocates for their own needs and are able to best identify the constraints to market access, support services, financing, etc. that they face. The example below provides insight into the youth voice and how they can express their constraints in engagement. Any time a stakeholder consultation is conducted, make sure that youth voices are incorporated, especially those of marginalized and disadvantaged youth. Annex 5 provides a set of resources that help project designers engage youth in assessment and design, including: community youth mapping, youth-led qualitative research, and sample protocols for youth focus group discussions within cross-sectoral youth assessments.



Consultations with youth are important to the project design process, as they can reveal a number of surprising social/cultural norms or other factors that influence youth success in the agri-food system. The following examples illustrate how youth experiences and opinions directly influence project design:²⁴

Gender Norms and Household Decision-Making: During the design of a women's economic empowerment activity in rural Egypt, young women expressed in interviews that they needed better access to finance, enhanced business skills such as business plan development, and access to resources. More intensive discussions, however, revealed an even more important necessity: their husbands' or fathers' blessing. As a result, the implementing partner collaborated with both men and women to increase female access to education, finance, and productive resources.

Control Over Assets: A young woman who raised chickens as an agribusiness activity shared her difficulty in handling her family's interference in her business. Whenever her father had friends visiting at home, he would take one of her chickens to eat for dinner. Consequently, the program incorporated skills training to give women the strategies and skills to set boundaries with family members when it came to managing business assets.

Youth Experiences with Wage Labor: In an agriculture productivity program in Togo, agri-businesses complained of the high turnover and lack of skills among youth wage laborers. In youth focus group discussions, several young men talked about their reluctance to engage in agricultural labor because employers often failed to follow through on their promise to pay at the end of a long day of work. The program worked with employers to ensure timely payment to wage laborers, while offering market-relevant skills training to youth that increased productivity for the business.

Starting Small and Growing: A program in Northern Nigeria working with smallholder farmers owning ≥ 1 acre of land was having difficulty reaching its target of 30% youth participants. To find out more, researchers interviewed one of the successful youth participants—a young man who owned 1.5 acres of land and leased an additional acre. The young man said that he got started in agriculture farming with only a $\frac{1}{4}$ of an acre of land. He worked in a nearby town to earn extra income, and saved his money in a youth savings group. As his money grew, so did his land. As a result, the program added a component to focus on youth with smaller landholdings, with income diversification and savings interventions designed to grow youth landholdings over time.

Personal Health vs. Making Money: In Uganda, one program was having difficulty attracting poor rural women to agri-preneurship activities. Focus group discussions with young females revealed that during times of menstruation, women who could not afford to purchase sanitary pads were confined to their homes and not able to participate in skills training and other money-making opportunities. The program coordinated with an existing health program to extend supplies of sanitary napkins to these women and consequently saw an increase in female participation in the program.



4.4 Setting Targets

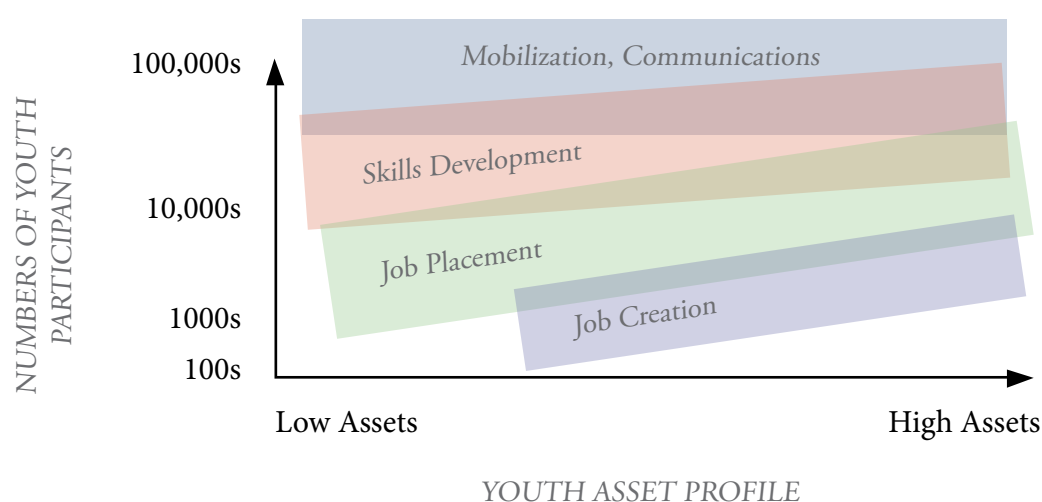
Setting activity targets requires three major considerations:

1. Desired **scale**, or reach (number of youth participants)
2. Type/depth of **impact** (which outcomes will be measured)
3. **Asset profile** of the target youth cohort(s) (the degree to which youth participants' assets already align with the demands of the agri-food system)

Generally speaking, reaching a large number of young people usually means lower-touch interventions with youth who already have assets that align with the agri-food system. Alternatively, employing a higher-touch strategy with vulnerable youth—those with fewer assets and less agency—means that the number of youth impacted by the program will be proportionally smaller, but the impact will be deeper and more meaningful to those cohorts.

Using “youth employment” as one example, Figure 2 provides a simplified illustration of how a youth-specific activity would experience trade-offs between desired impact, youth participant profiles, and scale. For instance, if the desired outcome is increasing the “number of new jobs created” in a select value chain, a relatively higher intensity of interventions is required to create jobs or self-employment for relatively fewer youth, but with deep and lasting impact if such job growth is to be sustained. This approach is compared to job placement activities, usually measured by “number of youth in new or better employment,” that prepare and place marginalized youth in existing employment or self-employment opportunities—assuming that a sufficient number of jobs are available (and presumably growing) for youth in the agri-food system.²⁵ In comparison, “skills development” programs can usually reach larger numbers of youth at scale; however, in order to achieve more intensive learning outcomes and/or to reach marginalized youth cohorts, higher-touch interventions will likely reach relatively fewer numbers of youth. Conversely, interventions focusing on mobilization and communications (e.g., through mass media campaigns) may reach very large numbers of youth, but may be more difficult to realize impact in terms of changes to youth skills, attitudes, behaviors, or socio-economic outcomes.

Figure 2. Trade-Offs When Setting Youth-Specific Targets (Youth Employment Example)



For youth-inclusive activities that are not necessarily specific to youth, one can assume that the numbers of youth participants reached will be smaller than the numbers presented in Figure 2. In these cases, youth-inclusive targets are more likely to be set as a percentage of the total number of participants or enterprises. Activities should establish youth-inclusive targets by considering the demographics and/or current rates of youth participation in the agri-food system. For example, if 40% of the working age population is under age 25, the target participation rate for youth may be 40%; however, if only 10% of agri-businesses are managed by youth, a reasonably ambitious target for youth-owned or -managed enterprises may be closer to 10-20%.



Table 4 provides concrete examples of youth employment outcomes from past activities. It is important to note that while outcomes are presented in terms of employment, many of the activities listed here achieved other notable results, such as increased productivity, sales, adoption of new technologies (for sectors), increased labor hours for individuals, increased earnings, increased consumption/assets/savings, or soft skills such as confidence (for youth participants). Employment creation may not have been the primary desired result. These examples are simply provided to illustrate real-life examples of numerical targets related to youth employment interventions.

Resource:

[Global Food Security Strategy Technical Guidance on Employment and Entrepreneurship](#)



Table 4. Considerations for Target-Setting: Examples from Youth Employment Activities

Activity Information	Description	Number of Youth Reached	Jobs Created through Sector Growth	Jobs through Self-Employment (Micro-enterprise)	Number of People with New or Better Employment (including self-employment)	Other
Guatemala: Rural Value Chains Project (\$13.6 M for coffee sector intervention, 2012-2017)	Coffee value chain activity focusing on increased productivity; youth employment was one of many desired results. A small accelerated learning component for youth was linked to agriculture entrepreneurship.	340	5,462†	n/a	n/a	Increased productivity, adoption of new technologies
Haiti: Local Enterprise and Value Chain Enhancement Project (\$33 M, 2013-2018):	Value chain competitiveness activity in agriculture, construction, and apparel. Job creation is one of several results.	n/a	2,226 * (not youth-specific)	n/a	n/a	Increased sales, productivity, adoption of new technologies
Uganda: Women's Income Generating Support Project (\$1.5 M, 2009-2012)	Cash grants and basic business skills training to poor, marginalized women in post-war northern Uganda.	1,800	n/a	1,800	n/a	Increased consumption, assets, savings, increased labor hours
Mali: Out of School Youth Project (Mali PAJE-Nieta)	Youth skills development and employment activity, targeting rural, out-of-school youth between the ages of 14 and 25	14,853	n/a	8,077	8,077	7400 (70%) demonstrated increased literacy skills, 3800 youth designed and implemented community service project
Rwanda: Akazi Kanoze (\$12 M, 2009-2016)	Youth skills development and employment activity, targeting multiple youth cohorts including economically disadvantaged youth.	21,039	n/a	2,500	7,929*	Increased skills, self-confidence, savings for 21,000 youth, capacity of service providers
Nepal: Education for Income Generation (\$14.7 M, 2008-2013)	Increase incomes and employment for disadvantaged Dalit youth (mostly female heads of households) in conflict-affected areas through educational scholarships, skills development, and agricultural productivity and enterprise training.	75,000 (of which 54,184 in agriculture)	n/a	≠ (see note)	8,312≠	Increased skills, incomes and food security, improved family and community relationships, self-confidence for 75,000 disadvantaged youth, return on investment (ROI) for agriculture interventions was 491%



† Data is not youth-specific. The most recent RVCP quarterly report suggests that 5,462 reflects the number of people employed as a result of seasonal work in the coffee sector. No data is available for youth agriculture enterprises. * Among the 21,000 reached by the program, nearly half (43%) elected to transition into formal education or pursue additional schooling and therefore did not take part in job placement interventions. ≠ 8,312 represents the total amount of “number of people gaining employment or more remunerative employment as a result of participation in a USG-funded workforce development program” reported by the activity. Based on a final evaluation survey sample, it is estimated that 61,736 were employed due to EIG. An additional 38,000 persons were employed by economic enterprises started by EIG trained persons. ˇ Reported as “number of full-time equivalent (FTE) jobs created with USG assistance.”







5. SOLICITATIONS FOR YOUTH-INCLUSIVE ACTIVITIES

5.1 Solicitation Guidance

Table 5 offers a checklist for ensuring that solicitations are intentionally youth inclusive and that they compel responses that best inform concrete approaches to youth inclusion.

Table 5. Checklist for Writing Youth-Inclusive Solicitations

Solicitation Section	Youth-Inclusion Checklist
BACKGROUND	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identifies and describes the characteristics of the specific youth cohort(s), including gender disaggregated segments, that are relevant to the activity Summarizes disparities and constraints faced by the different youth cohort(s) as it relates to participation in agriculture/food system Acknowledges influential stakeholders as they relate to youth engagement in the system
SCOPE OF WORK/ PROGRAM DESCRIPTION	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Activity goal and expected results articulate concrete, practical expectations for youth inclusion Scope of the activity allows for youth needs/assets/opportunities to be aligned with the food system's dynamics; this may include interventions related to youth skills development, capacity building of institutions and stakeholders in youth development, etc. Scope of the activity encourages youth to move along a continuum of acquiring assets, exercising agency and contribution, and/or improving their enabling environment Scope of the activity encourages youth engagement
MONITORING, EVALUATION, AND LEARNING	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Disaggregates data by age bandings: 10-14, 15-19, 20-24, and 25-29 years (Section 6) Incorporates quantitative and qualitative youth indicators, if appropriate (Section 6.1) Learning agenda considers youth, if appropriate (Section 6.2)
DELIVERABLES	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Requires submission of a gender-sensitive Youth Assessment Report, if appropriate Requires any gender analysis to be youth-sensitive
PERSONNEL	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Specifies youth-related expertise and skills for management and technical personnel Suggests positions be staffed by youth, if appropriate
INSTRUCTIONS TO OFFERORS/ PREPARATION AND SUBMISSION GUIDELINES	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Concrete specifications about how the proposal addresses youth inclusion vis-a-vis: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Targeting (identification of youth cohorts) Application of positive youth development principles and practices Youth engagement Monitoring, evaluation, and learning Key personnel and management plan Organizational capacity
EVALUATION CRITERIA	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Youth considerations are reflected in each category of evaluation criteria (i.e. technical approach, personnel, past performance) Consider specific youth-related criteria, with emphasis on positive youth development



5.2 Technical Evaluation Committee: Summary Guidance

The following insights are provided for members of the Technical Evaluation Committee (TEC) when reviewing proposals. Please note, evaluation criteria must mirror the technical approach outlined in the solicitation. It is recommended that at least one member of the TEC have a youth development background to provide insight during this evaluation process. The guidance below uses acquisition terminology, but is applicable for assistance as well.

Considerations for Proposal Evaluation:

- ☑ Does the proposal offer an approach to finding youth-appropriate opportunities, building the right assets and agency, and creating a support environment for youth integration into agriculture and food systems?
- ☑ TEC members should be cognizant of the value chain entry points (opportunities) for young people that the offeror has identified. How do these align with the relevance and accessibility of the (potential) entry points for the target youth population based on the information provided in the solicitation?
- ☑ Does the proposal articulate specific approaches to ensure engagement and impact for youth that align with the youth inclusion targets? This might involve specific youth supports for assets, agency, contribution, or enabling environment factors. For example, for assets, incorporating soft skills attainment, hands-on learning, and links to opportunities that give youth real-life experiences (employment and self-employment, internships, volunteerism, etc.).
- ☑ Does the offeror provide feasible tactics to address the barriers youth face when engaging in agriculture and food systems? The proposal should present strategies for creating supportive, safe environments with mentorship opportunities for youth. This should cover multiple levels - engaging with families and communities as well as with the larger systems environment, such as institutions and policies.
- ☑ Does the proposal seek youth involvement as stakeholders and offer concrete ways youth will be engaged?
- ☑ Does the proposal demonstrate an understanding of different youth cohorts?
- ☑ Does the MEL Plan show consideration for youth inclusion among indicators, disaggregation, or learning agenda questions?
- ☑ Is the proposed team capable of effectively working with the targeted youth population? Do key personnel demonstrate experience with youth inclusion? Do other personnel demonstrate youth expertise or include youth?
- ☑ Does the management plan show staff assigned with roles/responsibilities related to youth inclusion? Are sub-partners accountable for youth-inclusive practices?
- ☑ Do offerors demonstrate organizational capacity implementing successful youth-inclusive agriculture or positive youth development approaches?
- ☑ Do offerors have prior experience effectively working with youth populations, including youth in larger activities without an explicit youth focus, engaging with youth on multiple levels (as described above), applying PYD approaches in similar contexts, etc.?

Note: Implementing partners usually specialize in either youth development or agriculture/food systems work, but infrequently offer legitimate expertise in both. This can cause challenges in implementation; implementers with agriculture expertise may try to apply the same approaches with youth that have worked with adults, while implementers accustomed to applying a youth lens to their work may direct youth into food system activities that may not be economically viable in the medium or longer term. Proposals should be able to describe how they will leverage strengths and compensate for shortcomings for each and the TEC should assess their effectiveness in doing so.







6. DEVELOPING A MONITORING EVALUATION AND LEARNING PLAN

This section provides guidance for youth-inclusive approaches to developing the monitoring evaluation, and learning (MEL) plan for Feed the Future activities. Additional considerations for MEL are provided in Annex 3.

6.1 Framing MEL for Youth-inclusive Activities

When designing the MEL plan, consider the range of behavior changes, norms, skills, and perceptions as they relate to youth participation and success in agriculture that should be measured for each activity. The USAID Youth Compass tool²⁶, for example, establishes four areas that serve as standards for measuring a youth activity:

- **Beneficiaries:** Disaggregation of data according to age cohort, gender, and/or other important characteristics that define the different youth segments (discussed in [Section 4.1](#))
- **Enabling Environment:** Measuring changes to behaviors, attitudes, rules, and norms adopted by families, peers, and communities, as well as other systems factors (e.g. access to land, finance, infrastructure, technology)
- **Youth Participation and Empowerment:** Capturing data on how youth participate, make decisions, build skills, contribute to the agriculture sector, and the degree to which that level of engagement changes over the life of the activity
- **Gender Equality and Social Inclusion:** Measuring the degree to which equal rights, responsibilities, and benefits are extended to young women and men, and any relevant changes over time that can be attributed to the activity. Any information related to gender, including sex-disaggregated data, the WEAI if applicable, and other relevant quantitative and qualitative information, should also take age into consideration. The intersectionality of youth and gender is important to activity success in inclusion. Important data to capture for different ages and genders include:
 - › Access to resources physical assets, financial services, training and education, skills, etc.
 - › Application of new technologies or behaviors (including uptake of nutrition messages and actions)
 - › Income growth, yields, profit, and other economic benefits
 - › Empowerment, including leadership, decision-making, and financial control
 - › Time use



6.2 Indicators



TIP: Above all else, indicator data for youth-inclusive projects should be disaggregated by sex and by five-year age banding, as reflected in many of the 2016 Standard Foreign Assistance Indicators. The age bandings are defined as men and women ages 10-14, 15-19, 20-24, and 25-29 years, respectively.²⁷

Without considering age disaggregation, the project will not know if it has succeeded in including youth, much less in changing outcomes for youth.

Youth-inclusive Feed the Future projects are advised to use the youth cross-cutting indicator (CCIR):

CCIR 4: Increased youth empowerment and livelihoods: Percentage of participants in USG-assisted programs designed to increase access to productive economic resources who are youth (15-29) [IM-level]

In addition to the Feed the Future and Standard Foreign Assistance indicators, Missions with youth-inclusive projects should consider the **custom PYD performance indicators developed by USAID YouthPower**.²⁸



Resources: [Feed the Future Performance Indicator Handbook Definition Sheets](#) and [Feed the Future Progress Through 2017](#)

The [Positive Youth Development Measurement Toolkit](#) provides guidance and resources for measuring PYD outputs and outcomes.





Annex I: Examples of Feed the Future Activity Typologies

Four examples of different Feed the Future activity typologies, with corresponding activity purposes and theories of change related to youth engagement, are:

- Productivity Enhancement
- Competitive Agricultural Markets
- Poverty Reduction/Resilience
- Youth Employment and Entrepreneurship

GFSS Activity Typology (Anticipated Outcomes)	Youth Inclusion Theory of Change	Caveats/Limitations
Productivity Enhancement (Higher yields/hectar, number of farmers employing new techniques or technologies)	If youth are equipped with appropriate skills, access to economic assets, and a supportive enabling environment, then they can contribute to productivity increases at the farm level by adopting new techniques and technologies and as on-farm service providers in both ICT and “low-tech” activities such as integrated pest management, fertilizer application, etc. Over the long-term, productivity increases are expected to result in new off-farm and non-farm jobs.	Although this approach provides the best evidence-based foundation for the development of good medium- and long-term opportunities for youth in food systems, such opportunities will be more limited in the short term. Land and finance can be significant (and, in some cases, binding) constraints to youth inclusion.
Competitive Agricultural Markets (New jobs created, sales increases, investment, exports)	If youth are equipped with appropriate skills, access to economic assets, and a supportive environment, then they can contribute to the removal of value chain constraints (especially off-farm) and upgrade value chain performance, thereby contributing to sales increases and potentially to job creation.	There are a limited number of young people with access to both the economic assets and skills required to be an asset to value chain upgrading. In addition, value chains that offer the best entry points for young people now may not necessarily be those that offer the most long-term promise.
Poverty Reduction/Resilience (Number of households/youth with increased resilience as measured by income increases, diversity of income streams, increased savings/assets, reduced exposure to risk associated with those livelihoods, costs/barriers to entry, and/or other reduced vulnerability to shocks and stresses)	If youth are equipped with appropriate skills, access to economic assets, and a supportive environment, then they can contribute to both poverty reduction and household resilience through reduced risk to shocks and stresses and increased coping strategies and supports.	While opportunities for young people to contribute to resilience/poverty reduction may be greater than under other approaches, many of those jobs are unpaid and, where youth are not household heads, may benefit household resilience more than they benefit youth.
Employment and Entrepreneurship (Number of youth with new and better employment, including paid employment and self-employment)	If youth are equipped with appropriate skills (including soft skills), access to economic assets, and a supportive environment, then they will be able to obtain better opportunities for employment and self-employment.	Needs precision in defining “employment”: outside of microenterprise interventions that result in new youth business startups, most youth employment programs do not “create” new jobs per se. Rather, activities tend to equip youth to better perform in and/or enter existing jobs, increase earnings, increase savings, navigate the labor market over the long term, and/or gain self-confidence and other soft skills.



Typology 1: Productivity Enhancement: Projects with productivity enhancement outcomes seek to increase farm-level output, most often focused on staple crops. An illustrative activity purpose statement may be: “Increase productivity of select crops in targeted areas.” This may be accomplished through the introduction of new technologies, the adoption of better planting and harvesting practices, and/or via investments in research into more productive varieties.

EXAMPLE

Applying a Youth-Inclusive Approach for Productivity Enhancement

Feed the Future’s NAFKA (“grain” or “cereal” in Swahili) activity in Tanzania aims to improve smallholder farmer productivity and profitability within the rice and maize value chains. While targeted to all employable ages, one of the five objectives of this activity is to expand the depth and breadth of benefits—especially targeting women and youth—from the growth of the maize and rice subsectors. For example, the activity targeted young people in Kilombero district and worked to equip them with business management skills and agricultural inputs, which they used to provide key on-farm services such as spraying, weed control, and protection against crop diseases and pests to raise productivity of target crops.

As another example, the Feed the Future Uganda Commodity Production and Marketing Activity has developed a “village agent model” under which Village Agents—a majority of whom are youth—are the main interface with farmers, buying produce on behalf of exporters, processors, traders, or apex farmer organizations. With buyer and CPM activity encouragement, agents bring extension, inputs, and other services closer to farmers.

Typology 2: Competitive Agricultural Markets: Associated primarily with high-value crops, an activity with a competitiveness outcome aims to improve agribusiness performance. An illustrative activity purpose statement may be: “Increase the performance of smallholders and enterprises in select high value crops.” This activity typology typically works through agribusinesses or the wider value chains of which they are a part to upgrade product quality and/or open new markets.

EXAMPLE

Applying a Youth-Inclusive Approach for Competitive Agricultural Markets

The USAID-funded Kenya Horticulture Competitiveness Project (KHCP) worked with agribusinesses Canken and Mace Foods to incorporate youth into their supply chains. KHCP, through a local business service provider, organized young people into groups to serve as suppliers to Canken, an exporter of fruits and vegetables to the United Arab Emirates and Europe; 15-20% of their supply chain is now composed of youth. Mace, which sells mostly to domestic markets, offers embedded finance and technical training to young people who in turn deliver picking, drying, and transport services to Mace.

The Excellence in Higher Education for Liberian Development (EHELD) activity partnered with two universities to establish regionally recognized and competitive academic Centers of Excellence in order to produce Liberian graduates with market-relevant skills in the agriculture and engineering sectors. EHELD also promoted a pipeline of secondary school students to attract and prepare equal numbers of promising young Liberian women and men for these fields of study. In addition to updating their curriculum, these institutions received new books, updated lab equipment, and additional educational resources. University staff were trained in career services and establishing private sector partnerships, students and faculty participated in international exchanges, 162 students were placed in internships in the private sector, and nearly 300 students and 22 faculty members received scholarships to acquire degrees in target fields.



Typology 3: Poverty Reduction and Resilience: With a poverty reduction outcome, an activity attempts to lift the incomes of poorer populations. An illustrative activity purpose statement would be: “Reduce poverty in select districts.” Historically speaking, under this typology USAID Feed the Future programs have largely focused on raising the agricultural incomes of smallholder farmers by increasing their productivity and/or yields. By and large, youth inclusion has not been observed under this typology as youth are typically not landholders; special efforts must be made to consider ways to elevate the role of youth in activities focused on smallholder production. An alternative approach to achieving poverty reduction outcomes is one that builds household resilience to shocks and stresses by increasing household assets and savings, diversifying livelihood risk, and incorporating other strategies for managing and/or reducing risks as appropriate. This mixed livelihoods approach may intentionally focus on youth by increasing the earnings, employment, or savings of young household members.

EXAMPLE

Applying a Youth-Specific Approach for Poverty Reduction

The Value Girls Project, a USAID Global Development Alliance activity in cooperation with Nike, supported the development of small businesses by 2,400 young women in the poultry and horticulture value chains. Business activities were designed to build girls’ social assets, strengthen their financial capabilities, develop their business skills, and enhance their confidence and decision-making capabilities. Participants’ incomes increased by 51% relative to baseline incomes.

Typology 4: Youth Employment/ Entrepreneurship: This fourth typology is typically youth-specific in that the intended activity outcome is focused on youth as the primary, direct beneficiary. Activities under this typology typically aim to “Increase employment and self-employment among youth in Feed the Future areas” and/or “increase youth entrepreneurship in select agriculture value chains.” This outcome may also feed into a poverty reduction outcome, noted above, since youth from poverty-affected households are expected to see income gains as a result of new and/or better employment.

EXAMPLE

Applying a Youth-Specific Approach for Youth Employment

The Scale the Strengthening Rural Youth Development through Enterprise project (STRYDE) is a multi-country project covering Kenya, Uganda, and Rwanda, funded by The MasterCard Foundation. The project delivers skills training, business development skills, and mentorship to young people from 18 to 30 years of age. STRYDE claims more than 15,000 graduates, with an average income increase of 133 percent, 30 percent of graduates running micro- and small-enterprises, 37 percent engaged in farming, and another 11 percent having found wage employment. STRYDE 2.0 aims to expand into Tanzania and to double the total number of beneficiaries.

The USAID-funded Nepal Education for Income Generation (EIG) activity featured four components, one of which provided agriculture training to young farmers—mostly young women heads of households—in micro-irrigation systems, high-value vegetables, cereal crop production, non-timber forest products, fisheries, goat rearing, and pig and poultry farming. Of the more than 54,000 trainees under the agriculture component, an estimated 46,000 (85.7%) based on survey samples were employed at the end of the activity.



Annex 2: Youth Analysis Guiding Questions

1. Guiding Questions for Initial Youth Synopsis (Project Planning Stage)

Project Design Decisions:

- Will the project/activity adopt a youth mainstreaming approach, or will there be dedicated youth activities?
- What are the potential youth cohorts to be prioritized by the program, and how will each cohort be characterized, broadly speaking?
- Are there opportunities for cross-sectoral collaboration?

YOUTH SYNOPSIS – Guiding Questions

Segmentation: *How do the major demographic/economic patterns help us understand the particular circumstances of different youth cohorts and their relationship to the agriculture sector? Based on these findings, how might the project/activity link to other sector portfolios in the Mission (Economic Growth, Education, Democracy and Governance, Health)?*

- **Major demographic trends:** population pyramid by age, expected number of youth entering the labor force over the next 5-10 years and over the next few decades.
- **Youth and the economy:** Youth economic participation disaggregated by sex, by geographic region (districts and urban vs. rural), by age, by income level, youth unemployment and under-employment, labor force participation vs. labor inactivity, proportion of youth in informal sector, sectors of employment (current and future).
- **Education trends:** disaggregated by sex, by geographic region, urban vs. rural, by age, by income level, youth literacy rate, youth educational attainment, access to agriculture education and training opportunities.

Youth in the Agri-Food System: *Which youth cohorts are engaging in which functions of the agriculture sector and food system? What are the major barriers to and opportunities for youth engagement in the sector?*

- **Youth participation in agriculture:** Review youth participation in the sector and/or in specific value chains, proportion of young men and women in the agricultural sector, and where they can be found in the sector, what segment of youth (gender, age, income bracket, education level) are engaged at what points in the value chains, where are opportunities for youth to integrate into or upgrade their participation in the sector.
- **Systems influences:** Major policy or enabling environment constraints to youth participation in the agricultural sector (usually related to land tenure, inheritance laws, finance, business enabling environment (e.g., taxation on startups), market-relevant skills and experience), social and cultural norms that influence participation in the sector by young men and women, capacity of institutions to support youth as they integrate into agriculture and food systems.

Cross-Sector Collaboration (as appropriate): *To what degree do health and socio-political factors impact different youth cohorts' ability to participate in the agriculture sector in the target areas? Are there opportunities for cross-sectoral collaboration?*

- **Youth health trends in target geographic areas:** disaggregated by sex, geographic region, rural vs. urban, age, income level, HIV prevalence, nutritional status, sexual and reproductive health behaviors (age of first marriage, first child, first sexual encounter), psycho-social considerations.
- **Socio-political factors:** Understanding of issues related to marginalization, inequity, poverty, conflict/violence, civic participation (youth decision-making and leadership), and how young men and women are affected.



2. Guiding Questions for Youth Analysis (Project Design and/or Activity Design Stage)

Project Design Decisions – The youth analysis feeds directly into sections of the PAD and/or solicitation:

- **Project Purpose:** To what extent are the project purpose and expected results in alignment with the aspirations/needs/opportunities of target youth cohorts?
- **Context:** How does youth inclusion in agriculture and food systems contribute to overall project sustainability and local ownership?
- **Relationship to Mission CDCS:** To what extent will the project leverage its youth-inclusive activities with other sectors?
- **Project Description:** How will project activities and/or interventions be adapted to reflect the experiences of different youth cohorts?
- **Other Leveraged Resources:** What existing government and non-government youth resources can be leveraged toward this project?
- **Monitoring, Evaluation, Research and Learning:** What changes in behaviors among youth and/or youth stakeholders need to happen to achieve project goals?

YOUTH SYNOPSIS – Guiding Questions

Segmentation: *How are different youth cohorts defined? What are the key characteristics, assets, and agency experienced by differing youth groups? What aspirations, behaviors, opportunities, and challenges do they face?*

- **Youth behaviors, perceptions, and experiences:** What are young male/female opinions on participating in agriculture at different points in each value chain? Which value chains are most applicable to youth? Where are there entry points? Opportunities? Challenges? How much time do women and girls spend on unpaid agricultural work compared to men and boys? Do youth have the ability to make decisions about their own enterprises, money, and activities? How does this differ between males and females? What are the nutritional practices in the household, and how can youth behaviors, incentives, and motivations contribute to improved nutrition at the household level?
- **Youth assets:** What resources (money, land, equipment, networks, skills) can youth access and how does this differ for different youth cohorts, especially for males and females? Who controls young people's assets/resources, and are there any male/female distinctions? What barriers do young men vs. women face in accessing resources?

Youth in the Agri-Food System: *How are youth decisions and behaviors in the agriculture system shaped by family, community, institutions, norms, and policy environment?*

- **Youth participation in agriculture sector and/or in relevant value chains:** How do youth engage in the agricultural sector and how does engagement differ by sex, age, education, socio-economic status, geography, etc.? How are youth engaged in the food system (wage employment, self-employment, family plots, seasonal, formal vs. informal, paid or unpaid, mixed livelihoods)? At what points in the value chain are they engaged (production, post-harvest handling, processing, distribution, input supplies and services, etc.)? How do these experiences differ between males and females? What is the division of labor between young males and females? Which crops or livestock are young women or girls more likely to work with? What relevant activities or interventions have occurred before with young men and/or women, and what were the lessons learned? What skills do youth possess, and what skills need to be developed further?



- **Household dynamics:** How do youth contribute to household income? How does this differ for males and females? How are youth involved in decision-making at the household level?
- **Stakeholder engagement and perceptions of youth:** Who are the different stakeholders influencing youth participation in agriculture? What norms (individual and communal) and beliefs govern the participation of young men versus young women in agriculture at the family and community levels? What is the cultural context regarding the role of young men and women in society? How do market actors across the food system perceive young males and females and their roles in the system?
- **Policy and enabling environment:** What laws or policies govern youth access to the resources and productive assets necessary to succeed in agriculture? Do the laws/policies enable or disable young people's access? How does this differ for males and females? What are the relevant inheritance and land ownership laws and how do they affect the rights to assets and property of young women and men? At what age does a young person officially become an adult with all the corresponding legal rights (ability to sign contracts, own land, access finance)? How does this vary by youth cohorts?
- **Institutions (mapping of services):** What resources are available to enable youth development in society and the economy? Among the relevant agriculture services, to what degree do they reach and understand youth? Among the relevant youth services, how responsive are youth to agriculture markets?

Cross-Sectoral Collaboration: *What opportunities/ threats to youth come from other sectors? How can Feed the Future collaborate with other sectors?*

- **Education:** Would the project/activity benefit from increasing youth skills and/or improving the quality/relevance/reach of agriculture education and training providers? Are certain male/female youth cohorts, particularly those in conflict-affected areas, experiencing inequitable access to education?
- **Health:** Are there opportunities to introduce nutrition-sensitive interventions with participants who are young mothers? Is it possible to coordinate existing HIV prevention, family planning, prevention of early marriage or other health efforts with youth participants in the agri-food system?
- **Democracy, Governance:** Is there an opportunity or need to promote youth advocacy and/or civic participation in the agriculture sector?
- **Conflict:** To what extent could the project/activity address the drivers of conflict and violence-- e.g. those related to economic or social injustice-- among youth cohorts in conflict-affected areas?

Alignment: *What are the critical considerations to aligning youth skills, interests, and assets with the objectives of the project and the demands of the agriculture/food system?*



Annex 3: Additional MEL Considerations for Youth and Agriculture

Youth and Agriculture Learning Agenda

A recent USAID study that examined youth inclusion in select Feed the Future activities found that Mission staff who embrace an open, reflective culture are best equipped to adjust programs and make a significant impact with youth. In Uganda, for instance, activities that did not intentionally target youth, and subsequently experienced challenges with working with youth populations, were able to quickly adjust when they embraced a Collaboration, Learning, and Adaptation (CLA) approach. Developing a Youth Learning Agenda was also recommended as a priority for youth-mainstreamed program design.



Potential Youth in Agriculture Learning Agenda questions include:

1. How does the explicit and intentional targeting of youth in Feed the Future projects affect project outcomes as compared to not explicitly targeting youth? Which youth-inclusive approaches are most effective at achieving, or magnifying, intended outcomes? What are the other (unintended) benefits that Feed the Future projects have experienced from intentionally including youth in their programs? What are the risks or trade-offs of targeting youth in Feed the Future projects, and how can such risks be mitigated?
2. What specific traits, characteristics, skills, assets, resources, or other external factors make a young person more likely to engage in certain agriculture activities over others? What factors motivate youth to remain in or return to farming? What are the disincentives to engaging in agriculture or food systems, and/or other factors that attract youth to alternative livelihoods? What incentives work to engage youth in commercial agriculture as producers, aggregators, transporters, traders or end-market buyers? What specific issues influence the decisions of young female farmers specifically, and how can they be addressed effectively?
3. What are the major policy barriers impeding youth participation in agriculture and food systems? What interventions are effective at removing or overcoming these policy barriers, and to what extent are these interventions cost-effective?
4. What role can youth play in promoting nutrition-sensitive agriculture behavior change?
5. What role can youth play in promoting climate-smart approaches to agriculture?
6. In what way can youth engagement in agriculture and food systems contribute to gender transformation?
7. In what way have Feed the Future projects leveraged youth's willingness to adopt new technologies to benefit agriculture and food system productivity and performance?
8. To what extent, and in what way, does participation in agricultural value chains discourage youth involvement in crime or violence?
9. What strategies are necessary for youth to upgrade from lower return/subsistence agriculture to higher return commercial agriculture and agribusiness? What kinds of skills, assets, and resources are necessary for youth to make this transition and operate in commercial agriculture and agribusiness?





Unintended Gendered Consequences of Agriculture and Nutrition Interventions:

Consideration should be given not only to how gender affects youth access to and participation in agricultural or nutrition programming, but also how this participation may influence prevailing gender norms, as well as women and girls' opportunities more broadly. In agriculture interventions, for example, increased agricultural mechanization, for example, may relieve some women of time and work burdens. However, for other women (e.g., paid day laborers) it may mean reduced opportunities for work. A movement towards more formal structures of financial management (e.g., opening and use of bank accounts) has the potential to reduce young women's access to or control over use of household income. Additionally, providing a young woman with new opportunities for income generation could shift power dynamics within a household, and may require additional behavior change communication strategies for improving gender roles and relationships. In nutrition interventions, too narrow a focus on mothers may not only add to women's workloads but reinforce norms and knowledge gaps that prevent men from undertaking caregiving responsibilities and more equitable roles within the household.



Evaluating Youth and Gender Transformation: In order to evaluate the extent to which an agricultural project or activity decreases gaps between young men and women, the following questions could be adapted for project/activity evaluation:

- To what extent did the project increase young women's and men's income and/or participation in paid employment?
- How did the project change access to, ownership of, or control over land and other natural resources for young women versus men?
- To what extent did the project lead to decreases in unpaid work for young men and women?
- To what extent did the project alter decision-making among young men and women with regards to agricultural production and use of income?

Note: The USAID [YouthPower Learning](#) activity offers several opportunities for Missions and implementing partners to contribute to the Agency's cross-sectoral youth learning agenda, such as:

- Using state-of-the-art standards and practices in the measurement of PYD outcomes.
- Contributing knowledge-sharing products through the [youthpower.org](#) website.
- Attending YouthPower Learning events.
- Participating in one or more of the YouthPower Learning Communities of Practice, focused on youth engagement, gender and positive youth development, youth in peace and security, and cross-sectoral skills.



Youth Participation in MEL

Youth-inclusive CLA processes require an understanding of how and why changes occur from the youth's perspective. Youth participatory research offers youth an opportunity to share their voice, learn more about the social issues in their community, and gain critical thinking and analytical skills.²⁹ There are a variety of ways to include youth in research and evaluation, including:

- Enlisting youth participants to develop surveys and focus group questions
- Utilizing youth (e.g., post-secondary students) as student enumerators to be supervised and trained by a local subcontractor
- Training and paying young men and women to collect data from their peers
- Guiding young people through a community mapping exercise
- Facilitating discussions with youth participants on data results and findings
- Employing university students to conduct evaluations in partnership with their faculty advisors

EXAMPLE

Young people have contributed to the [Mastercard Foundation's research on dairy value chains](#) through its [Youth Think Tank](#) initiative. With the support of the Rockefeller Foundation, [ADD International and the Institute of Development Studies](#) trained youth with disabilities to conduct research with their peers on access to market systems in Uganda. Also in Uganda, [Restless Development](#) has conducted youth-led research on youth livelihoods, while globally they are engaging youth in tracking the Sustainable Development Goals through the [Accountability in Action Toolkit](#). Similarly, a special [UNICEF publication](#) is dedicated to adolescent participation in research.

As stated in the [Positive Youth Development Measurement Toolkit](#):

There are many opportunities and barriers to collecting data with youth, who can be considered both respondents but also data collection sponsors. Working with youth generally takes more time and supervision than with adults, which means that every phase of the research and program process will likely need more time than what is allowed. For example, project staff will need additional time to meaningfully include youth, which may also include training or capacity building for youth partners in the research or program design process.

Resources:

[YouthPower Learning Webinar: Engaging Youth in Research](#)

[YouthPower Learning Webinar: Engaging Hard-to-Reach Youth in Research and Evaluation](#)

[Positive Youth Development Measurement Toolkit](#)



Youth-Specific Tips for MEL

The following youth-specific tips for monitoring and evaluation have been drawn from previous youth livelihoods and agriculture projects:

Youth tend to be a highly mobile population, requiring creative tracking approaches. At the start of interventions, ask youth participants how they keep in touch with each other (e.g., SMS, Whatsapp, Facebook, and/or offline channels), and ask them for no less than five phone numbers of friends and family as points of contact, as youth change their phone numbers frequently. Technology (such as the use of SMS) is helpful in tracking youth, but only works to the extent that it is available in the most remote areas. In these situations, youth peer networks can be employed to keep track of participants: projects can assign “trackers,” i.e., youth in the local communities to keep in touch with their peers, engage them for data collection, or offer follow-up support.³⁰

Cohesive youth groups can assist with keeping in touch with youth over the long term. Internal savings and lending groups are one means to locate youth members. Alumni networks also offer a mechanism for keeping in touch with youth. As noted by the Akazi Kanoze (AK) project in Rwanda:

“With the vast number of...alumni spread across the country, the Alumni Network provides a mechanism to follow up with youth who are grouped together based on their specific trades and locations. In some cases, the youth organize into groups on their own, and in other cases AK supports the identification of Alumni Chapters based on location, specific trades and interests. Each Alumni Chapter elects an ambassador who checked in with (the project) quarterly to provide updates and identify opportunities for (the project) to support the alumni by linking them with local business owners, MFI representatives, and other key stakeholders in the value chain.”³¹



Annex 4: Gender Considerations for Youth-Inclusive Agriculture Projects

In addition to the WEA and the Gender Integration Framework, a tool developed by Feed the Future to examine seven key dimensions contributing to women's empowerment in agriculture, the following questions offer additional gender- and youth-related considerations for agriculture and food systems development:

1. Access to Resources:

Capacity to use the resources necessary to be a fully active and productive participant in society. Refers to access to natural and productive resources, income, services, employment, information, and benefits.

Access to Agricultural Resources: To what extent do young men and young women have access to the necessary resources (land, water, energy, equipment and capital assets, finance, information, and agricultural associations) to engage in select agriculture value chains? To what extent is this access different for youth than adults? How does this access differ across different youth cohorts?

Resources for Job Attainment (Wage Labor): Do young men/women have sufficient access to resources (e.g., financial, physical assets, services, relationships and networks) that could impact their ability to obtain a job in the agriculture sector? To what extent is this access different for youth than adults? How does it differ by youth cohorts?

Resources for Self-Employment: Do different male/female youth cohorts have access to different kinds or levels of resources (e.g. financial, physical assets, relationships and networks) that could impact their ability to start businesses or perform well in self-employment?

Access to Education: Are there disparities in baseline educational or skills levels, or access to training and education by different youth cohorts? Is there a difference in the ability to attain education by sex, by age, by geographic region (rural/urban)? What are the primary drivers of any observed disparities?

Access to Other Complementary Services: Do young men and women have access to the necessary health information and services that enable them to be ready and able to work? Do women and families have access to information/resources related to delayed marriage, family planning, reproductive health, and HIV treatment and prevention?

Access to Non-Formal Educational Opportunities: Are there differences in young men/women's ability to participate in non-formal skills development opportunities, such as clubs, volunteerism, leadership opportunities, mentors, sports, etc.? What factors explain these disparities?

2. Knowledge, Belief, and Perceptions

Capacity to use the resources necessary to be a fully active and productive participant in society. Refers to access to natural and productive resources, income, services, employment, information, and benefits.

Employment Preferences: Are there certain agricultural sub-sectors, or certain job functions within sectors, that are more socially and culturally acceptable for young men/women? What are the socio-cultural gender norms that affect the type and quality of work that young men/women perform?



Perceptions by Lead Firms, Employers, Value Chain Actors: How do employers and other value chain actors view the performance of young men vs. women? Do employers perceive male/female youth as possessing different skills sets? Is there a difference in how employers recruit, train, and develop the skills of entry-level males/females? Does perception of men/women by other value chain actors differ?

Perceptions by Family Members & Peers: What expectations do family members and peers place on young men and women in terms of their engagement in agriculture? What expectations are there regarding male/female education and employment? How do these expectations affect a young person's decisions and time use?

Masculinity, Femininity, and Economic Pathways: What are the social and cultural norms around definitions of masculinity and femininity, and how does that impact young people's decisions to pursue certain economic pathways? Does the target group include adolescents, who are in the time of their lives in which they are forming—and challenging—gender norms?

Adolescent Gender Norms: What examples are there of programs that work with adolescents to address (and challenge) conventional gender norms, i.e. encourage more gender equitable relationships and attitudes while simultaneously working on broader social transformations within families and communities? How might this these programs and the lessons learned from them inform future youth-inclusive Feed the Future programs in terms of approaches or potential partnerships?

Cultural Norms: How do expectations and norms around (early) pregnancy and marriage impact a young woman's engagement in agriculture and the economy writ large?

3. Practices and Participation:

Gender roles structure people's behaviors and actions. Refers to participation in activities, meetings, political processes, services, training courses, and/or education.

Employment Data: Are there disparities in male/female participation in the economy? Are males/females more likely to be found in the formal vs. informal sector? Is one group more likely to be unemployed and/or underemployed? Are women or men more likely to be reported as “inactive” in the labor market? How does this vary by age, by geographic location (rural vs. urban), and by educational attainment? What are the variety of activities that young men/women do to earn income and/or supplemental income? To what extent do young women engage in sex work (including taking on an adult male partner) to earn supplemental income and/or obtain assets (cell phones, etc.)?

Leadership and Management: Are men/women more likely to be found in leadership positions in the workplace or in business? Do women and men have equitable representation in leadership forums associated with target sectors (e.g., business associations, labor unions)? If not, why not? Do youth have access to role models?

Observed Changes: Have there been any changes in women's or men's participation in certain agriculture sectors or job functions? If so, what sparked those changes?

Physical Separation: Are there traditional norms around physical separation of males and females that would impact agriculture education, training services, and/or employment? Are men or women more likely to participate in the informal economy and how would that impact their participation in the project?

Mobility: Are there mobility constraints preventing young women or men from accessing education, training services, or places of employment, e.g. socio-cultural expectations or security concerns?

Workplace Environment: Are there safety/hygiene issues in terms of the physical space? Are there any concerns that related to gender-based violence? Are there expectations of sexual favors when seeking to start a business, enter employment, or advance in one's economic pathway?



4. Time and Space

Gender differences in the availability and allocation of time and the locations in which time is spent.

Household Responsibilities: How do household and childcare responsibilities impact time use, and how would those responsibilities impact a young man or woman's ability to access training and employment services? Are there examples of programs that have attempted to overcome these barriers?

Time to Engage in Training: If women have greater responsibilities in these areas, do they have enough time to also engage in entrepreneurship? Will participating in this project increase a woman's workload to an unsustainable level? Do meetings and trainings for the sector or job function accommodate all stakeholders?

Consider scheduling and time commitments, ability to travel/mobility, outreach, access, security/safety, etc.

Workload and Motherhood: Where are opportunities to reduce young mothers' workloads to promote healthy pregnancy, breastfeeding practices, introduction of health foods, and a sanitary home environment?

Access to Support Services: Is it possible for women to participate in the project that is being designed, or to open a business, if support services (for example, child care) are not available to them? Would women's household responsibilities prevent them from participating in a project at certain times of day or on certain days of the week?

Location of Activities: Do men or women typically work or spend the majority of their time in locations that would make it difficult for them to participate in the project?

5. Legal Rights and Status

How gender roles affect the way people are regarded and treated by both customary law and the formal legal code and judicial system. Refers to rights to ownership and inheritance, legal documents, representation, and/or due process.

Property Rights and Land Tenure: Are there laws or customary practices that impede young males or females from owning land or other forms of property? Are there restrictions on young males or females inheriting land? Which youth cohorts are most affected?

Finance: In what ways do laws, regulations, or financial institutions' practices impede young men/women from accessing finance? To what extent do collateral requirements and/or lack of credit registry impede youth from obtaining a loan? What other barriers discourage young men/women from accessing formal financial institutions? How do financial products and services align with young women's and young men's resources, needs, and preferences, including collateral, amounts, ability to bear risk, repayment rates, etc.?

Family Law: Is there a Family Code that defines the role of women as less than or different from that of men or that restricts women's participation in the economy? How do laws, policies, or practices around inheritance, marriage/divorce/separation, and children differentially influence young men's and young women's ability to marry or avoid marriage, secure access to or ownership of property, familial and social networks, and legal status in terms of ability to independently engage in contracts, businesses, and credit services?

Youth Policy: Is there a youth policy in place and what level of influence does this policy exert?

Employment: Are there prohibitions on women working at night or working in certain industries? Is there paid maternity leave or paternity leave? Are there incentives for women to work, such as tax credits or child care? What protections exist around sexual harassment and discrimination by gender, including for LGBTQI?

Safety: Are there laws that protect women from violence (including sexual harassment) in the workplace?



6. Power and Decision-Making

The ability of people to decide, influence, control, and enforce personal and governmental power.

Gender-based Decisions: To what extent do women vs. men hold the power to make economic decisions? Do working-age youth have the ability to make decisions about their own enterprises, money, and activities? Do youth have a say in decisions related to agricultural production?

Youth-based Decisions: To what extent do youth have opportunities for decision-making and leadership in the household? What decision-making and leadership opportunities do youth exert in the community? Are there youth-led organizations in the community?

Asset Control: Do youth (including young women) have control over and benefit from the funds and assets they may accrue as a result of participating in a project?

Organizational Decision Making: To what extent do young men and women actively participate in formal decision-making structures/bodies that address business-related issues (for example, agricultural cooperatives, local economic development committees, business associations, and chambers of commerce)? Do women and men hold an equal number of decision-making positions in these entities? Are youth appropriately represented in these bodies?

Youth Participation in Politics: At what age are young people eligible to run for elected positions? What proportion of governmental representatives (national, sub-national, local) are under the age of 30?



Annex 5: List of Resources



Tools for Conducting Youth & Agriculture Assessments:

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Kaufman, L. R. (2011). Community Youth Mapping. A Tool for Youth Participation and Program Design. Retrieved from: http://pdf.usaid.gov/pdf_docs/pnadz225.pdf

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Annex 6: Sample Terms of Reference for Youth and Agriculture Assessment

SAMPLE TERMS OF REFERENCE (TOR) FOR A YOUTH ASSESSMENT

Terms of Reference

Youth and Agriculture Consultancy

TITLE: Review of Youth Related Development Activities in Agriculture
PERFORMANCE DATES: Six Weeks: DATE – DATE
DUTY LOCATION: COUNTRY
TEAM COMPOSITION: **Two consultants: one international, one COUNTRY**

Background

With over 78% of population below the age of 30, COUNTRY has the world's youngest population. Among the approximately eight million youth aged 15-30 in COUNTRY, the unemployment rate is one of the highest in Sub Saharan Africa: 83% of young people are unemployed especially in the rural areas. And, with a population growth rate of 3.2% annually, COUNTRY will face a growing challenge to meet the needs of its young long into the future. Furthermore, 20% of females and 13% of males over the age of six have never had any formal education. Despite the availability of free secondary education, only 30% of children make it to lower secondary and only 12% complete the full secondary cycle. The most vulnerable and vastly underserved citizens are adolescent girls. COUNTRY's demographic profile is one of the country's most salient development challenges. The high fertility rate of nearly seven children per woman impacts economic development, the quality of education, and health care provision. Governance, political stability and security are also deeply influenced by high unemployment, resource depletion and recruitment of youth into conflict.

In response, the Mission Country Development Cooperation Strategy included youth as a key theme and aims to: (i) foster education, employability, and economic opportunities for youth (DO 1); (ii) engage youth positively within civil society (DO 2); (iii) assess and strengthen youth-specific interventions in the area of sexual and reproductive health (SRH) to address COUNTRY's high population growth; and (iv) provide social services to protect the large numbers of youth at risk.

Over the last ten years, a number of stakeholders have conducted research to increase the evidence-base of youth, however this information exists with various organizations with no central mechanism to collate and harvest lessons learned to inform youth-specific program interventions. The Mission is envisioning investments to achieve cross-cutting results in leadership, livelihoods development and agriculture skills, activities that would directly contribute to the Mission's recently developed Youth Results Framework.

Objectives and Activities

The USAID/COUNTRY Mission is seeking short-term technical assistance to help identify and analyze current challenges and opportunities for achieving large-scale systemic impacts for youth both in terms of participation in agriculture value chains and in terms of leadership and civic engagement.

The consultant will assess key findings, recommendations, and lessons learned in youth programming in COUNTRY over the past five years. He/she will review available research, carry out an assessment of current activities, consolidate private sector feedback on skills gaps, and develop a sector problem statement and recommendations to inform future investments in youth in agriculture.



This assignment will answer the following questions:

Target Youth Cohorts and Geographic Selection: What are the priority youth cohorts for the country and the USAID Mission, and what are the defining characteristics of the youth cohorts, and how are they currently engaged in the agri-food system? The Consultant will coordinate with USAID staff and refer to secondary sources to identify USG and host country government priorities with respect to target youth cohorts and geographic areas. Male and female youth's assets, activities, aspirations, needs and opportunities should be considered. As appropriate, justification for a specific age range targeted provided. Disenfranchisement and marginalization are important to address as a Do No Harm approach must avoid USAID investments from unintentionally prioritizing one group over another. In addition, youth have specific needs that differ from those of adults, further disaggregated by community, region and ethnic group. These components must be considered in order for a program to be effective and meet the distinct needs of each target population.

Mapping of Services and Knowledge/Evidence Review: What are the programs, approaches, and supports that have successfully promoted youth participation and upgrading within the agri-food system? Conduct a high-level mapping of the range of existing services and programs serving the youth cohort(s), taking into consideration the needs of different cohorts including males/females. This mapping will include activities funded by the government of COUNTRY, USAID, other donors, the private sector, and other sources. It will identify successful youth-specific or youth-inclusive models that enhance economic opportunities for youth in agriculture, including youth leadership and community engagement. The purpose of this objective is to increase evidence base in youth livelihoods, skills development, entrepreneurship, and employability within the agriculture sector.

Stakeholders: Who are the key stakeholders that influence youth participation in the agri-food system, and what are their relative perspectives, attitudes, behaviors, and incentives in the system? In addition to youth, stakeholders may also include parents and caregivers, relevant institutions of the partner country government, employers and lead firms, cooperatives and agriculture associations, savings groups, community-based organizations, and education and training institutions. An understanding of how stakeholder incentives influence youth engagement in agriculture (both negatively and positively) will be important.

Policy and Enabling Environment: What are the key policies, regulations, and cultural and social norms that are critical in assisting youth in upgrading and/or expanding their participation in agri-food systems? Consider land tenure policies and practices, family code and gender norms affecting male/female participation in the economy, policies and practices related to youth access to finance, trade and investment policies impacting the growth of micro-, small-, and medium-sized enterprises, education policy and regulation, coordination between relevant Ministries, private sector engagement in policy reform, etc. Examine the conflict dynamics that impact education and employment, e.g., incentives of stakeholders that drive policy, systematic exclusion within the COUNTRY education system.



Toward this end, the Consultant will carry out the following activities:

Desk Review: The consultant will carry out a desk review of existing research literature done by various stakeholders, including other donors, government, implementing organizations, civil society, academia, and private individuals. Analysis of research will result in recommendations on effective intervention models in youth in agriculture programming. Internal USAID documents include: USAID COUNTRY CDCS, Feed the Future Project Appraisal Document, program documents, and relevant reports. Consultant will create a reference list and make copies of the various research reports reviewed available for cross referencing.

Primary Data Collection: The consultant will conduct agreed upon site visits, meetings, and youth focus groups to gather information on activities and experiences:

- Conduct key informant interviews with USAID Feed the Future implementing partners, other donors working in youth or agriculture programs, and private agriculture sector stakeholders
- Conduct field visits to institutions that engage youth in agriculture as well as youth leadership programs
- Conduct focus groups with different youth cohorts

Analysis: The consultant will work with USAID Mission staff to lead and execute the following analytical tasks:

- Identify and analyze data sets available on youth cohorts (e.g. education, formal and informal employment, and other socio-economic data)
- Mapping/inventory of current youth leadership and agriculture activities in COUNTRY
- Develop scalability criteria for reviewing current programs. USAID will approve the criteria developed for determining scalability of current activities.
- Develop a list of possible current activities being implemented that may meet scalability criteria for both agriculture and leadership skills development.

Deliverables

1. Work-plan based on timeline and scope
2. Desktop analysis briefing to USAID
3. Presentation to USAID on site visits, meetings and focus groups
4. Preliminary report on consultancy
5. Final report and recommendations
6. E-library with all documents organized and saved

Timing

The maximum estimated timeframe for the assessment is six weeks, beginning tentatively on DATE and ending in DATE.



Qualifications or specialized knowledge/experience required for the assignment

International Consultant

The International Consultant will be an expert in youth economic opportunity with experience in agriculture/food systems. Experience with Feed the Future and other cross-sectoral programming is highly desirable.

Education

The International Consultant should have an advanced university degree in Agricultural Development, Agricultural Economics, Development Studies, Economics, or Social Sciences.

Work Experience:

- At least 15 years of progressively responsible professional experience, knowledge and skills in youth programming, planning and assessment
- Proven experience in the areas of youth development and youth livelihoods within the agriculture sector
- Demonstrated experience in designing integrated, cross-sectoral interventions in the areas of agriculture, employment, education, other relevant areas
- Proven experience in youth-inclusive strategy development or assessment
- Technical knowledge of agriculture and livelihoods programs, and experience with Feed the Future programming is highly desirable
- Knowledge of USAID program implementation strategies or initiatives for youth is desirable
- Knowledge of USAID project design processes, preferably in workforce development, livelihoods, and agriculture is desirable

Other skills

- Ability to analyze, synthesize information, and communicate outcomes clearly to different stakeholders
- Excellent analytical and organizational skills
- Excellent communication skills (verbal and written)
- Proficiency in word processing, spreadsheets, and presentation software
- Ability to work under pressure and adhere to tight schedules
- Ability to organize, facilitate, and lead consultative meetings at various levels

Local Consultant

The local consultant should be very familiar with agriculture and youth development activities within COUNTRY. The local consultant should be a development professional with extensive knowledge of the context, key actors, and stakeholders relevant to this assignment. The incumbent should have excellent organizational, technical, analytical, and interpersonal skills. The ability to organize, facilitate, and lead consultative meetings at various levels is required.



END NOTES

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¹⁴USAID Automated Directive System (ADS). ADS Chapter 201 Program Cycle Operational Policy, p. 13.

¹⁵For example, the CDCS for Nepal (2014-2018) and Bangladesh (2011-2016) highlights youth as a key cross-cutting issue in their Results Frameworks; the Mali CDCS (2015-2020) explicitly mentions youth as part of its development hypothesis for one of its IRs; and Rwanda’s Results Framework (2015-2020) has a dedicated, youth-specific Intermediate Result.

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