**M4-H1-The Enabling Environment:Examples**

**Social Economic Environment:**

1. Education: Includes basic literacy and numeracy skills, as well as enrolment and completion of primary, secondary or tertiary formal education.
2. Communications: Includes access to technologies used for communication, including Internet and mobile. “Access” can mean skill, availability, cost.
3. Equality: Reflection of social or economic inequality, and the impact of this on participating in public life. Measures include Gini coefficient, Inequality Adjusted Human Development Index.
4. Gender equality: Specific focus of equality between the sexes.

*Youth Specific Examples:*

* 1. Classification of adulthood and the nature of youth being a transitionary state means that rights attached to adulthood aren’t easily handed over (aside from voting which is based on age)
  2. Poor education and training affects possession of life skills such as critical thinking and decision making
  3. Inequality and exclusion of social groups throwing up challenges for how do we reach groups such as rural young women and girls. Even when utilising participatory approaches to youth engagement, it is easy to be exclusive and focus engagement on youth ‘superstars’ who are part of the programme or system already.
  4. Health as seen in the 2014 Youth Wellbeing Index[[1]](#footnote-0)
  5. First generation with such a strong access to technology and communications.

**Social Cultural Environment:**

1. Propensity to participate: Cultural propensity or willingness of people to take part in civic activities
2. Tolerance: Acceptance or permissive attitudes towards difference (of opinions, race, religion, nationality, sexuality)
3. Trust: Levels of trust between people or institutions, which can lead to cooperation
4. Giving and volunteering: Propensity of people to get involved in more formal charitable activities (making donation, helping strangers, volunteering)

*Youth specific examples:*

1. Attitudes towards young people:

* The cultural norm of only viewing young people as beneficiaries, as opposed to partners and leaders.
* Stereotypes regarding the potential value-added of young people. Young people are seen as lacking in expertise, experience dealing with authorities or people in a position of power, technical knowledge, limited mobility, low confidence, weak public communications skills.
* Society views young people as a threat - volatile, aggressive or ‘anti-state.’ Young people often perceived as risky and aggressive, demanding and unaware of the implementation challenges development practitioners face.

1. Adults seen as authority: Power norms dictate that adults are more trusted and have greater authority
2. Young people’s sexual and reproductive health rights, particularly women and girls’, are sensitive issues for individuals and communities: Until there can be an open and honest dialogue, these prevalent and important issues are hard to address or attempt to resolve.

**Governance Environment:**

1. Civil society infrastructure - organisational capacity, civil society’s financial viability and the effectiveness of service provision organisations
2. Policy dialogue - civil society’s advocacy ability, budget transparency and civil society’s participation in policy
3. Corruption
4. Policy rights and freedoms - political stability, freedom, terror, rights and participation
5. Associational rights -
6. Rule of law - legal framework, electoral pluralism, confidence in honesty of electoral process, independence of judiciary
7. Personal rights - the rights not to be tortured, summarily executed, disappeared or imprisoned for political beliefs. Trade union rights and workers rights
8. NGO legal context
9. Media freedoms - free speech, press freedom, freedom on the Net

*Youth specific examples:*

* 1. Power as for youth engagement to be meaningful, it needs to address the issue of power dynamics. The age of decision makers is disempowering for youth. They may be able to vote, but due to age restrictions, are unable to stand for election. Young people are still underrepresented in decision-making, with only 1.65% of parliamentarians in their 20s.
  2. Lack of evidence around what works in youth programing.
  3. Lack of age-disaggregated data through which to create targeted development programs and measure their impact.
  4. Short-term engagement. Leads to a continual recycling of activities, whereby new members either reinvent structures.[[2]](#footnote-1) Government-led youth-related programing tends to focus on addressing pressing youth issues such as unemployment, education, health, particularly sexual and reproductive health and HIV/AIDS in a shallow or short-term way. Often government schemes are popular but criticized as ‘keeping young people busy’ without addressing the underlying structural issues that prevent sustainable improvements for young people livelihoods, health and wellbeing.[[3]](#footnote-2)
  5. Weak infrastructure: In many countries, young people lack direct access to institutional systems and structures within governments, the media and private and civil society sectors. This severely impedes their ability to advocate for their rights. In the rare cases where young people have been able to influence or make decisions, barriers within complicated infrastructure have tended to limit implementation. This destroys young people’s confidence and trust in such mechanisms.
  6. Access to information technology and open self-expression through social media

1. Centre for Strategic and International Studies and International Youth Foundation, 2014, Global Youth Wellbeing Index [↑](#footnote-ref-0)
2. Post-2015. ODI, Restless, Plan UK [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
3. “Nurturing Youth Leadership” [↑](#footnote-ref-2)