

# Module 1: Who are young people?



**USAID**  
FROM THE AMERICAN PEOPLE



**PEPFAR**  
U.S. President's Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief

**YOUTH POWER**  
ACTION

## Learning objectives:

By the end of this module, participants should be able to:

- Distinguish between different young people, adolescent girls and young women and explain how vary in terms of needs and assets.
- Describe how they will implement tailored engagement strategies for different groups that ensures diversity and inclusiveness in programs and operations.
- Propose meaningful roles and tailored capacity building to ensure the engagement of a diverse body of young people as part of development processes.

## How this will be achieved:

- By providing participants with an overview of how to understand the diversity of young people in their country.
- By teaching what specific obstacles there are for young women and adolescent girls in participating in and leading development (to be expanded in Module Four).
- By reviewing reasons why young people engage in development and understand what their motivations can mean for development impact and youth engagement strategies.
- By exploring how both donors and implementing partners can engage a diverse group of young people.



## Read and Reflect

A demographic of 1.8 billion strong with one key characteristic - they are all aged 10 and 24 - can be expected to be highly diverse in all other characteristics. In order to empower this generation and unleash the power of young leaders as agents of change, not only is understanding their different characteristics crucial, but also understanding their highly diverse lived realities.

Too often, programs that target youth primarily reach young men. The ability of girls and young women to participate in initiatives is often constrained by gender norms, such as domestic and care burdens in the household, discriminatory social norms regarding girl's mobility, and negative views about the appropriateness of their involvement in political issues or legal frameworks.

*"Youth are a transformative force; they are creative, resourceful and enthusiastic agents of change, be it in public squares or cyberspace."* **United Nations Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon, International Youth Day 2012**





# Youth according to USAID

In USAID's *"Youth in Development: Realizing the Demographic Opportunity"*, USAID explains that:

*"While youth development programs often focus on young people in the 15-24 year age range, the policy recognizes that USAID youth programs likely engage a broader cohort of 10 and 29 year olds: with the critical understanding that the transition from childhood to adulthood is not finite or linear and varies across and within countries."*

What definitions/policies do you use?







# Youth according DREAMS

## Youth Ambassadors

DREAMS Youth Ambassadors were involved in the design of this training. They defined youth by the level of responsibilities they have in life.

- Adolescents (10-19)
- Teens (13-19)
- Youth (15-21)
- Youth habitat (15-32) *The widest potential age bracket for youth incorporating all definitions*



**M1-H2**

The young ambassadors described youth for women as different to youth in general, demonstrating how youth can mean different things depending on the other characteristics of an individual. For the young ambassadors, young females could be divided into: adolescent girls (10-20) and young women (21-32).



# Read and Reflect

## Two Ways of Defining Youth

### 1. AGE:

Youth can be defined as a period in a person's life between specific ages. The ages vary in every country. In Uganda the draft national youth policy (2011-2016) refers to youth as 15-29, while in Zambia the national youth policy defines youth as 18-35 years of age. The most common definition, used by the UN and the World Bank, defines youth as between the ages of 15-24.

### 1. PHASE OF LIFE:

Youth can also be defined as a phase of life, where a person is transitioning from childhood or adolescence to adulthood. The markers of this phase of life can therefore be described as one of transition. **This is the way of viewing youth we will adopt for the continuation of this training.**







# Activity: Characteristics of Young People

*In discussing how to engage young people, it is sometimes easy to forget that we are talking about engaging a number of highly diverse young people, each with their own characteristics that make the youth engagement relationship with each individual young person unique. **Who** you engage affects **how** you engage.*

1. What are all the different characteristics that young people have in your country?
2. What about in your programs or initiatives? (consider age differences e.g. engaging someone who is 15 is different to engaging someone who is 28)

**Remember:** Young people most valuable for you to reach are often excluded and marginalized.





# Activity: Characteristics of Young People



***M1-H1***

Using handout M1-H1 draw your young woman or adolescent girl and consider:

- Where she is living?
- Does she go to school?
- What ethnicity is she?
- What does she enjoy doing in her spare time?



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## Activity: Diversity in engagement

*Revisit your drawing of a girl from activity M1-H2. Consider and add to your drawing:*

1. What does the young woman need?
1. What are the young woman's aspirations?
1. What are the barriers that could stop the young woman from engaging in a development program?

# Activity: Mabinti Tushike Hatamu

## Case Study



**M1-CS1**

Read M1-CS1 and consider:

Q. What are the strengths?

Q. Is there room for improvement in the program?

Q. What about the program design has allowed young people to be partners and leaders?

Q. What about the program delivery has allowed young people to be partners and leaders?

*Imagine your girl from activity M1-H2. What barriers could prevent her specifically, from engaging in the program?*





# Read and Reflect

## Possible solutions to overcome barriers in young women and girl's engagement :

- Go where the girls are and tailor initiatives
  - How we do it: Mother and daughter meetings to bridge generation gap and get parents' buy in,
- Create safe spaces and opportunities for young women to convene (but also be trained and participate alongside young men)
  - How we do it: [Information Resource Centres](#)
- Include female mentors and increase the visibility of women led organisations





# Read and Reflect

## Possible solutions to overcome barriers in young women and girl's engagement :

- Have male champions and engage the broader community in girls' participation and empowerment programs
  - How we do it: Mwanamke Tunu program in Tanzania involves community meetings with husbands.
- Policy level change is critical
- Building non-traditional allies
  - How we do it: Targeting religious/community leaders who can form a barrier to engagement
- Actively seek over-representation for young women in recruitment



# Read and Reflect

## Why do young people engage in development? *DREAMS Youth Ambassadors*

1. **Meaning and social interaction** - an opportunity to give meaning to their life and improve their situation through positive interaction with other girls (e.g. soap making business in Mabinti girls group)
2. **The need for change** - DREAMS youth ambassadors said this was their main motivation for engaging.
3. **Making a living** - engaging in programs as a way to gain skills and training needed for employment, further education
4. **Build confidence**- Once young people have engaged in development, they are likely to have the confidence, skills and motivation to continue engaging e.g. Ebola volunteers in Sierra Leone
5. **Through peer role models** - Engaged youth are more likely to make informed, positive decisions therefore avoiding risky behavior and acting as role models to their peers (as seen in the [Dance4Life](#) programme in Tanzania).



# Read and Reflect

## Why do young people engage in development? *From Restless Development*

1. They are ready to take up a leadership role in development, to build resilient and sustainable communities and to deliver change.
2. To be active citizens, where institutions are accessible and responsive and young people can influence those with power
3. The realize sexual reproductive rights for all, helping to end AIDS and enabling young people to be free from discrimination
4. To build resilient and sustainable communities where the agency of young people is at the heart of preventing and solving arising challenges and emergencies.
5. To see the 17 Global Goals realized.
6. To challenge and change perceptions of youth.



## **TOOL: Restless Development questions for considering diversity and shaping interventions**

1. How do young people in our country differ by regions, gender, education, religion, age and other defining characteristics?
2. Following from this, what are the different types of young people you work with?
3. Given the diversity of youth, what are young people's prevailing needs and aspirations, and what could be possible barriers to their engagement?
4. Following from this, how do these align to our programs to motivate them to engage with us and have this engagement be successful?

# TOOL: Restless Development's approach to engaging diverse groups of young people

Questions to ask:

1. What is my opportunity? OR Who is a 'youth' in my country context?
2. What role am I hoping young people will play and what do I hope they will bring?
3. Who suits that role?
  - a. Is this the most diverse approach?
  - b. Am I being inclusive of the socially excluded?
  - c. What are the characteristics that I should be mindful of?

**Expectation Setting:** Similarly as diverse as young people are, what will be their reasons for engaging in a development initiative? A good way to understand why young people engage with your initiative and ensure that you understand and manage those reasons is through 'expectation setting.'