



USAID
FROM THE AMERICAN PEOPLE



Photo: Shah Marai

YOUTH IN DEVELOPMENT

Realizing the
Demographic Opportunity

USAID POLICY YOUTH

OCTOBER 2012

“[T]here are underlying dynamics that are affecting young people everywhere – changes in demographics and technology, economics and politics that are bringing together this unique moment in history. Young people are at the heart of today’s great strategic opportunities and challenges, from rebuilding the global economy to combating violent extremism to building sustainable democracies.”

- Secretary of State, Hillary Rodham Clinton,
“Youth Rising,” Tunisia, February 25, 2012

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MESSAGE FROM THE ADMINISTRATOR

I am pleased to share with you USAID's first policy on youth in development. Building on the Agency's decades of experience working with young people, this policy provides guidance on pursuing smarter, more innovative, and more cost effective approaches to empowering youth to contribute to and benefit from their countries' development efforts. In so doing, we seek to accelerate economic growth, strengthen societies, and respond to the needs and aspirations of young people everywhere.

No challenge is more important. Last year, world population surpassed seven billion people, more than half of whom are under the age of 30. Changing age structures can provide the opportunity to benefit from a so-called "demographic dividend." As children live longer and family sizes decrease, the share of those people in working ages grows in comparison to the very young or very old. Coupled with strategic, evidence-driven and results-oriented investments, this phenomenon can add as much as two percentage points of growth for years. This is especially true in today's world of rapid transformation and connectivity, where youth serve as energetic change agents in their communities and countries.

But there is nothing inevitable or automatic about achieving this promise. Young people must be given the skills, resources and opportunities to succeed through quality education, access to health care, adequate nutrition, supportive families and social networks, and the promise of good jobs. If so, they can be proponents of stable democracies, strong societies and prosperous economies. If not, there is another, less hopeful vision: where a large part of the population in developing countries is unemployed, frustrated, volatile, and subject to the siren songs of warlords, crime kingpins and traffickers in persons alike.

Under this policy, we place a strong emphasis on integrating youth considerations as a cross-cutting factor in all our programming. We also stress the importance of building diverse partnerships and fostering innovation with and on behalf of young people, and the need to better evaluate our youth programming. The policy highlights the need for new research, particularly around youth, food security and climate change where evidence is more limited. While this policy is framed around the complex youth transition from adolescence to adulthood, it also addresses the important synergies with childhood interventions, including in health, protection, education, and nutrition.

With the release of this policy, USAID reaffirms its commitment to empowering young people with the tools they need to create a more prosperous and peaceful world for us all.



Rajiv J. Shah
Administrator

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

A Policy Task Team (PTT), chaired by Nicole Goldin from the Bureau for Policy, Planning, and Learning (PPL) with Mark Hanafin from the Bureau for Democracy, Conflict and Humanitarian Assistance (DCHA)/Executive Secretariat, produced USAID's Policy on Youth In Development. The PTT comprised seven individuals from across the Agency for their recognized knowledge and expertise on these issues. These USAID staff worked intensively and collaboratively in service to this critical policy, and will continue to serve as important resources in the policy's implementation:

- Christine Capacci-Carneal (Middle East and Asia Bureaus)
- Clare Ignatowski (Bureau for Economic Growth, Education and the Environment)
- Cate Lane (Bureau for Global Health)
- Erin Mazursky (Bureau for Legislative and Public Affairs)
- Mark Meassick (Mission/Kenya)
- Enrique Roig (Bureau for Latin America and the Caribbean)
- Jennifer Watts (Bureau for Policy, Planning, and Learning)

The PTT held a series of internal and external listening sessions, as well as a review of the knowledge and evidence base for international youth development and relevant lessons from domestic experience. Early drafting was further informed by Washington and mission resource groups, and we thank them for their thoughtful feedback and contributions. We would also like to acknowledge Devon McLorg, a Presidential Management Fellow for providing critical support to the Team in the final months.

This policy is also the result of robust consultations across the Agency and interagency, as well as with interested Congressional staff, external practitioners and partners, and youth themselves. With collaboration from partners, we engaged over 150 young people in 15 countries and over 100 practitioners. All contributions substantially informed and improved this final policy. We are grateful to Deputy Administrator Donald Steinberg for his commitment to this policy and the young people it serves.

As we move to implement this policy, we intend to embrace feedback on how to ensure the Agency is achieving maximum impact and sustainable partnerships with host countries, other donors, young people, and a wide range of youth practitioners.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This Policy on Youth in Development is the first of its kind for USAID. It is both timely and necessary as more than half of the world's population today is under the age of 30, with the vast majority living in the developing world. As Secretary Clinton said in Tunisia in February 2012, "...in every region, responding to the needs and aspirations of young people is a crucial challenge for the future." The policy is predicated on emerging best and promising practice for youth development and engagement that are gleaned from USAID and partner's experience in youth programming, as well as through consultations with young people across the developing world. The policy is further informed by principles and practices articulated in the *Presidential Policy Directive on Global Development (PPD)*, the *Quadrennial Diplomacy and Development Review (QDDR)*, the *National Security Strategy 2010*, *State Department Youth Policy 2011*, *USAID Forward*, and the *USAID Policy Framework 2011-2015*.

USAID has decades of valuable experience in leading efforts with young people and societies to enable safe and productive transition of youth to adulthood. However, USAID has not always approached its work with youth systematically. This policy puts forward an overarching goal for youth development along with related objectives and outcomes to be achieved. It outlines a conceptual approach to youth in development and provides guiding principles and operational practices in support of USAID's efforts to mainstream youth in development, carry out more effective programs, and elevate youth participation. Importantly, this policy will position USAID and its partners to capitalize on favorable global population trends by investing in programs and policies by, with, and for youth that seize opportunity and lead to sustainable growth and human development, including through the realization of what is often referred to as a demographic dividend.

Goal: Improve the capacities and enable the aspirations of youth so that they can contribute to and benefit from more stable, democratic, and prosperous communities and nations.

Objectives

- 1: Strengthen youth programming, participation and partnership in support of Agency development objectives.
- 2: Mainstream and integrate youth issues and engage young people across Agency initiatives and operations.

Expected Outcomes

- Youth are better able to access economic and social opportunities, share in economic growth, live healthy lives, and contribute to household, community, and national well-being.
- Youth fully participate in democratic and development processes, play active roles in peace-building and civil society, and are less involved in youth gangs, criminal networks, and insurgent organizations.
- Youth have a stronger voice in, and are better served by local and national institutions, with more robust and youth-friendly policies.

Sizeable youth populations are both an opportunity and a challenge. Development can be accelerated when the majority of youth in any country are able to make significant contributions to economic, social, and political life in a way that lifts countries out of poverty, ensures greater stability and promotes healthier societies. Alternatively, peace, progress and prosperity are held back when countries are unable to meet the basic needs of their youth. With few exceptions, in the coming decades, developing countries have or will have a population age structure that favors economic growth. For some countries, the window to capitalize on this opportunity is short, while for others, it is just opening or still a few decades away.

Reaching youth potential depends upon their preparation for and participation in development efforts; leveraging investments in early childhood in order to set the stage for tomorrow's development outcomes.

To achieve objective one, the policy provides a conceptual framework for youth in development that comprises four intertwined elements: *support, protect, prepare and engage*. Youth programming has traditionally been implemented within specific sectors, including health, education, employment, and civic participation. Increasingly, however, youth development practitioners recommend that sector approaches be broadened to include cross-sector and integrated approaches, and that greater attention be paid to strengthening youth development systems. This framework and guiding principles will shape efforts to meet objectives and achieve expected outcomes. These principles include:

- Recognize that youth participation is vital for effective programs;
- Invest in assets that build youth resilience;
- Account for youth differences and commonalities;
- Create second chance opportunities;
- Involve and support mentors, families, and communities;
- Pursue gender equality; and
- Embrace innovation and technology by and for youth.

To achieve objective two, the policy calls for Agency officers to mainstream, integrate and invest in youth to yield success, scale and sustainability across Agency core initiatives and priorities. It advances a development model that fully embraces youth potential and participation, and it provides insight into how to program strategically for this target group.

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. The policy asks all USAID missions to consider how they can mainstream youth across their portfolios, and provides guidance on when and how to prioritize and target intentional youth development efforts. While this policy is framed around young people's development, it also acknowledges the important links to and synergies with protection issues and interventions, as well as laws and policies protecting those aged 0 to 17 (who are defined as "children" by international standards and convention).

With this policy, USAID will begin to strategically reorient its development activities towards improving prospects for and partnerships with youth, thus further advancing USAID's broader development goal of shaping and sustaining peaceful, prosperous, just and democratic societies.

I. INTRODUCTION

YOUTH IN DEVELOPMENT

On October 31, 2011, the world population reached seven billion. Half of this population is under the age of 30, and 1.7 billion are aged 10–24, making this the largest generation in human history. Young people make up an especially large share of the population in developing countries, often the largest share.¹ In many places, this youth generation also spends more time in school, starts work later, and gets married and starts families later than previous ones.²

Globalization, technological advances, and the spread of social networking offer new opportunities for youth to connect and become more active participants in development, while at the same time making their lives more complex and challenging. This youthful demographic landscape must be a central part of any development policy, one designed to integrate young people more fully in political, economic and social life and enable them to share in the benefits of development.

Throughout history, young people have actively sought to bring social, political and economic change to their countries. In so doing they are sometimes credited with changing business as usual. Often they are portrayed as rebellious, destructive, reckless or violent. However, young people are today's and tomorrow's wage earners and entrepreneurs, educators and innovators, health professionals, political and civic leaders, vital to economic growth and well-being.

In its 2007 World Development report, the World Bank suggested that developing countries which invest in better education, healthcare, and job training for their record numbers of young people aged 12–24 could take advantage of their “demographic dividend” to accelerate economic growth and sharply reduce poverty.³ Experience at home and abroad shows that engaging youth in neighborhood, community and national development yields an opportunity to harness their energy, enthusiasm, skills, and innovative ideas to increase economic growth, foster social stability, improve civic participation, and ensure healthier, more

educated and productive societies.

USAID's Youth in Development policy recognizes that young people are both individuals transitioning through life's developmental stages, and actors in the development of their countries and communities. As young people, they experience physical, cognitive, emotional, and social changes that influence their needs, identities, and behavior as well as their opportunities.⁴ Research shows they also make choices and respond to incentives differently than do young children and adults. Better understanding of the biological, social and cultural dimensions of youth behavior will facilitate the design of programs that better support them, helping them to become part of the solution to today's challenges.

The policy grows out of the Agency and partners' experience in youth programming, an awareness of the principles on which it is based, and recognition of the need to identify clear policy goals and objectives as well as outcomes against which to measure results. It rests on two basic objectives: investing in youth programs and participation in support of USAID's development objectives; and mainstreaming and integrating youth issues across Agency initiatives and processes.

Drawing on best practices for youth development and engagement gleaned from Agency experience, as well as through consultations with young people and youth-serving organizations across the developing world, the policy is further informed by principles and practices articulated in the PPD, the QDDR, the *National Security Strategy 2010*, *State Department Youth Policy 2012*, *USAID Forward*, and the *USAID Policy Framework 2011–2015*. Youth are also reflected in the *Gender Equality and Female Empowerment Policy*, the *Development Response to Countering Violent Extremism and Insurgency*, the *Counter Trafficking In Persons Policy*, the *President's Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief (PEPFAR)*, *USAID Education Strategy (2011–15)*, *Climate Change and Development Strategy (2012 – 16)*; and the *U.S. Government Action Plan on Children In Adversity*.

¹ In Sub-Saharan and North Africa, about 40 percent of the population is under 15, and nearly 70 percent is under thirty (Lin 2012). In Latin America, the Caribbean and Asia, 28 percent of the population is aged 15–24 years, compared to 19 percent in developed regions (Population Reference Bureau, 2011).

² Rachel Nugent. (2005). *Youth in A Global World*. Population Reference Bureau.

³ World Bank Development Report (2007). *Development and the Next Generation*. The World Bank.

⁴ “The Adolescent Brain”, Jim Casey Youth Opportunities Initiative, 2011. Available at www.jimcaseyyouth.org.

The policy also responds to calls from Agency officers in the field and in Washington, for guidance in addressing their new demographic realities. USAID has been conducting youth programming for over two decades and in nearly 40 countries, yet efforts to estimate the dollar value of this work have been hampered by under-reporting. Records show that in recent years, at least \$300 million has been spent each year from various funding streams, though the actual value of investment is likely higher once cross-cutting and “untagged” projects for young people are taken into account. Since 1994, USAID has implemented four major global youth mechanisms including: Focus on Young Adults (1994-2000) and YouthNet (2000-2006) in the Global Health Bureau; Youth: Work (2008-2013) and EQUIP3 (2003-2012) in the Economic Growth, Education, and Environment Bureau. Under EQUIP3, USAID funded workforce readiness and cross-sectoral youth projects in 26 countries. Though USAID has been conducting programs targeting and benefiting youth, data has rarely been collected that allowed an evaluation of impact.

While addressing the needs of youth today, USAID’s Youth Policy recognizes that there is a continuum in development as children grow and transition into adults. The overlapping youth years are critical windows of opportunity to help older children thrive and reach their fullest potential. In lower- and middle-income countries, an estimated 200 million children under five years of age – more than 30 percent of the world’s children – fail to reach their developmental potential, limiting their future ability to contribute to their communities and families or obtain gainful employment.⁵

Failure to address adversity at this time leads to lifelong deficiencies and compromises future youth in development opportunities. USAID sector strategies pay close attention to childhood interventions, helping seven million children through nutrition interventions that prevent stunting, reducing child mortality with investments in water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH), family planning and maternal child health, and improving reading skills for 100 million children in primary grades by 2015. Yet enabling countries to empower youth in development and realize their demographic dividend requires continued investment into the teen years and beyond.

Investment in youth programs and services can reduce conditions that limit the potential for a demographic dividend, including for example high rates of youth unemployment, school dropout, early pregnancy, HIV/AIDS infection, and poor nutrition. Early marriage and pregnancy and limited family planning services are major contributors to the inability of girls and young women to complete their education, and achieve their full potential. Globally, young people ages 15-24 represent 45 percent of all new HIV infections, with at least 95 percent of all new infections occurring in less developed countries,⁶ while some 70 percent of premature deaths among adults can be linked to harmful behaviors, such as smoking and alcohol use which are initiated during adolescence.⁷ Increasing our investment in youth will amplify and sustain important health and social gains from childhood interventions.

WHO ARE YOUTH?

Youth is a life stage, one that is not finite or linear. Key multilaterals define youth as 15-24 years for statistical purposes, yet for policy and programming many countries and organizations expand this range to reflect the broader range of changes and developmental needs in the transition to adulthood, as well as the diversity among cultural and country contexts. USAID uses the term youth and young people interchangeably and while youth development programs often focus on youth in the 15 to 24 year age range, USAID programs also are likely to engage individuals aged 10-29 as a broader youth cohort. The transition to adulthood involves multiple and overlapping physical, cognitive, emotional, political, social and cultural changes. Successful youth engagement and programming is based on a lifecycle

continuum, beginning with deliberate attention to the critical years of children entering adolescence and into young adulthood. USAID views early adolescence as the onset of youth transition with recognition that those under age 18 are universally considered children and subject of numerous national and international norms and legal protections this policy seeks to reinforce. At the same time, this policy is reflective of youth voices and perspectives. When consulted, some younger youth have identified themselves as teens or youth, rather than as children. Recent research provides new understanding about brain development, physical changes, and social and emotional development that can be used to inform and target programming along the youth life span from adolescence through early adulthood.

⁵ Grantham-McGregor, S, et al. (2007).

⁶ Youth and the Global HIV/AIDS Pandemic, Advocates for Youth (2008).

⁷ Glasier A, Gulmezogul, A; Schmid G, et al. (2006).

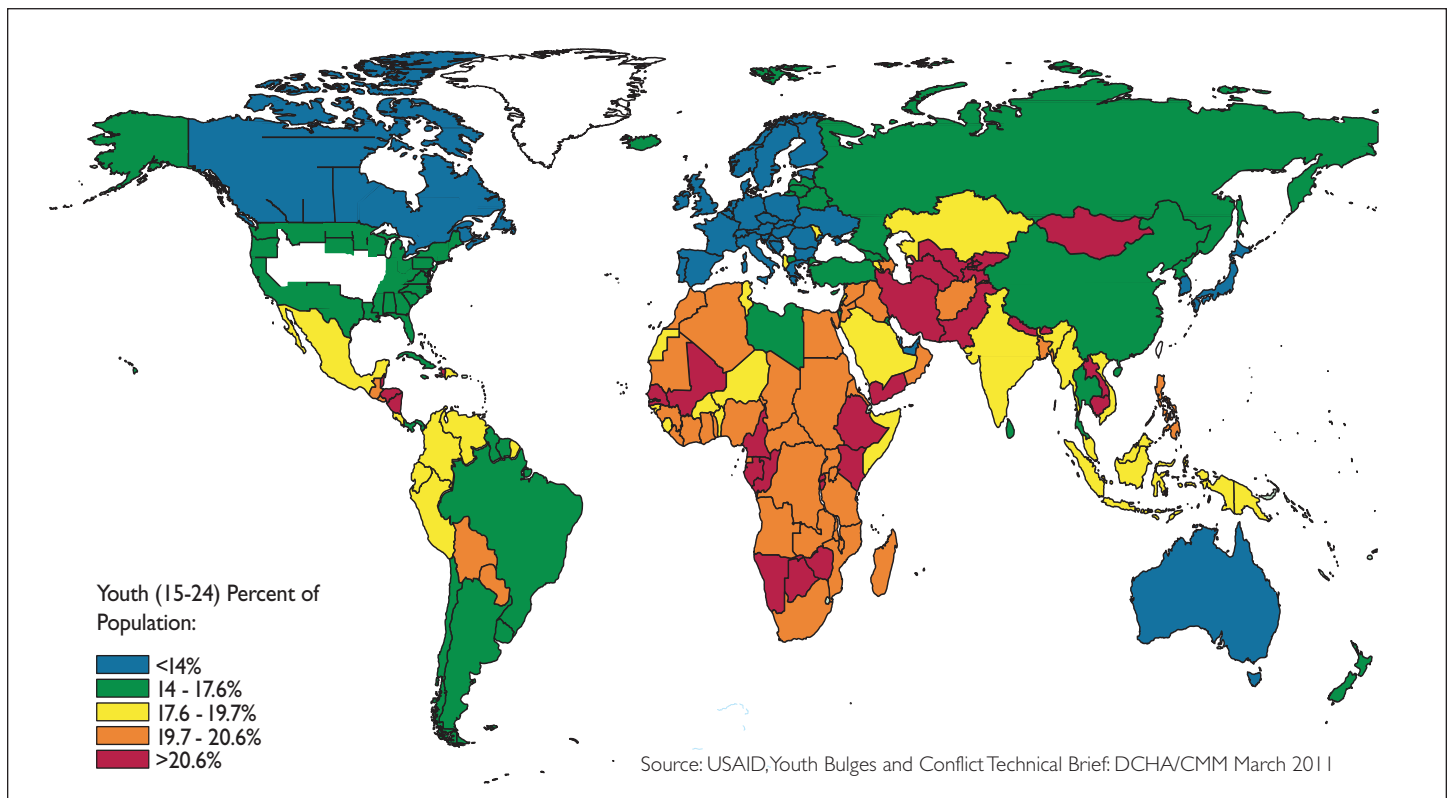
II. CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES: A GLOBAL SNAPSHOT

While youth face enormous challenges, particularly with regard to employment and livelihoods, they nevertheless represent the opportunity of today and tomorrow—as educators and innovators, entrepreneurs and investors, health professionals and scientists, politicians and peacemakers. This makes it doubly important to invest in them now—making it possible for future generations not only to survive but also thrive, and so that countries that invest in their youth can realize the vitally important ‘demographic dividend’ these youth represent.

Societies that have begun their demographic transition (from high to low birth and death rates) have lower dependency ratios – or a lower number of dependents to the total work-

ing age populations. All else being equal, lower dependency ratios can favor higher productivity and economic growth with a resulting increase in a country’s per capita gross domestic product (GDP) when appropriate education, labor, and economic policies are also in place. Put another way, more people engaged in productive work can mean more growth. Coupled with higher domestic savings and investments in economic development and family welfare, this type of demographic transition can create elevated rates of economic growth referred to as a demographic dividend.

In Sub-Saharan and North Africa⁸, around 40 percent of the population is under 15, and nearly 70 percent is under 30 – representing “pre-transition” age structure. Yet many develop-



⁸ Lin, 2012

ing countries, in Asia for example, are now experiencing or have begun to experience declining fertility rates, and larger shares of the population are working and contributing to national economies. However, economic growth does not automatically accelerate as fertility rates and dependency ratios decline and the share of working age population increases. Realizing a demographic dividend also depends on a favorable policy environment, which includes good governance, macroeconomic management and trade and labor policies aligned to development goals, and adequate investment in those goals.⁹ Therefore, in sub-Saharan Africa and elsewhere where fertility rates are poised decline, it is imperative to establish an enabling policy environment now so that children and youth can benefit from investments in education, health, employment and livelihood creation to become productive adult workers today and in the near future.

Economic Opportunity

Realizing the demographic dividend requires getting more young people into productive employment and income generating activities, making the current scale of youth underemployment and unemployment a matter of worldwide concern. The International Labor Organization (ILO) estimates that over 75 million young people worldwide are unemployed, and more than a billion jobs must be created in order to accommodate new workers and reduce unemploy-



Richard Bernardo, 18, of conflict-afflicted Mindanao region of the Philippines, completed a two-month automotive servicing course for out-of-school youth under USAID's EQuALLS Project.

Credit: Rojessa Tiamson-Saceda/EQuALLS Project

ment.¹⁰ Also alarming is the increasing number of youth 'NEETs – Not Employed or in Education or Training' – ILO data for 24 developing economies show an average NEET rate of 12.4 per cent for young men and 28.1 per cent for young women. Unemployment rates among young people everywhere are higher than among adults – averaging nearly three times the rate of the adult workforce. The challenge in cities can be particularly acute, as urban youth often face greater labor market barriers due to their lack of prior job experience and lack of links to professional networks and contacts, or the fact that their education and training did not prepare them for the world of work or is not matched to growth sectors. They are also entering a labor market in which informal or part time jobs are the most rapidly growing form of employment, especially since the onset of the 2010 financial crisis, so the jobs they can find are generally short-term with little job security and few, if any, benefits. Yet, in many developing countries, agriculture still remains the heart of the economy, utilizing up to 70 percent of the labor force. In terms of financial inclusion, youth aged 15-24 are 33 percent less likely to have a bank account. It is therefore increasingly important that programs seek to address both the demand and the supply side of job creation, promote self-employment and entrepreneurship, engage youth productively in agriculture and value chains, and expand access to services for economic success such as financial literacy and information communications technology, banking and credit.

Youth Learning

Overcoming inequity requires a population that is informed, educated and skilled. In fact, investment in education has increased and developing countries have experienced major gains in education for young people. By 2009, some 531 million students were enrolled in secondary education, and 165 million in tertiary education.¹¹ Results show that investment in early education and literacy is foundational to continued progress and achievement. Gender gaps have also been closing: the ratio of girls to boys in primary school in 2010 was 97:100, up from 91:100 in 1999, and 96:100 in secondary school, up from 88:100 in 1999. The total out of school population fell from 106 million to 67 million between 1999 and 2009, with the share of girls in this population dropping from 58 to 53 percent. While completion rates are less satisfactory – for example, in 19 African countries, up to 95 percent

⁹ Bloom and Canning, 2008.

¹⁰ The Youth Employment Crisis: A call for Action. International Labour Organization, 2012.

¹¹ Report of the expert group meeting on 'Quantitative Indicators for the World Programme of Action for Youth', New York, 12-13 December 2011.

of girls drop out of secondary school¹²— improved data collection shows that many school drop-outs eventually return to school. In Ethiopia, almost 75 percent of primary out-of-school children will eventually return, while in Cambodia, Liberia and Zambia, most out-of-school children will attend school at some point in the future.¹³ Youth literacy, which is a vital prerequisite for education as well as employment, is also improving as a result of increased investment. The global literacy rate for youth (aged 15 to 24) increased from 83 to 90 percent between 1990 and 2010. Yet in many USAID-footprint countries, youth literacy rates are still low, especially for rural youth and girls — though gender gaps are gradually narrowing globally. In 2010, there were 95 literate young women for every 100 young men, compared to 90 young women for every 100 young men two decades ago.¹⁴

As national and global enrolment rates improve, there is growing attention to groups that are harder to reach, including migrant and refugee youth, street children, rural youth, married girls and young people with disabilities. While open source platforms and the Internet hold much promise for learning access, per the International Telecommunications Union (ITU), 77 percent of those over age 25 in the developing world are not online and 70 percent of under 25-year olds — 1.9 billion — are not yet online. There is also increasing attention to the quality of educational systems to ensure schools teach the information and skills youth need in order to enter the workforce or participate in civic life. In addition to cognitive skill development, “non-cognitive skills such as perseverance, motivation, risk aversion, self-esteem and self-control are strongly predictive of life outcomes.”¹⁵

Youth Health

Health and nutrition among young people is another area in which investment pays off, and adolescent health has improved to a lesser extent than that of younger children. In a recent study of 50 countries, childhood mortality was reported to have declined by more than 80 percent in the past 50 years. By contrast, adolescent mortality has only marginally improved.¹⁶ The leading causes of youth mortality worldwide are injury (traffic accidents, violence, drowning, and fires), suicide, pregnancy and childbirth, respiratory infections, HIV, tuberculosis, and meningitis. Moreover, around 70

percent of premature deaths among all adults have been linked to smoking and alcohol use and other behaviors initiated during adolescence.¹⁷ The biggest risk factors for all youth include alcohol, unsafe sex and illicit drugs.¹⁸ Among girls and young women, however, complications of pregnancy and childbirth are the greater danger: the proportion of girls aged 10-14 that die in pregnancy or childbirth is five times higher than that of women aged 20-24, and twice as high among girls aged 15-19. The vast majority of these deaths take place within marriage, making the fight against early marriage and the promotion of youth sexual and reproductive health critical.¹⁹

Adolescents are particularly vulnerable to malnutrition, which is common among young people living in poverty. Over 500 million youth live on less than \$2 per day; some 238 million (22.5 percent) live in extreme poverty, surviving on less than \$1 dollar per day. Accordingly, the United Nations Secretary General has urged countries to prioritize nutrition in national development. And this trend tends to be worse for youth who were undernourished in early childhood, thus compounding the problems and underlining the need for integrated and coordinated child-youth programming. Global attention is also increasingly focused on food security, which has been subject to more and more frequent crises in the last decade.

Young people, and young women especially, are also particularly vulnerable to HIV infection. There were 2.7 million new HIV/AIDS infections in 2010, down 21 percent from 1997. About 40 percent of new HIV infections are among young people age 15-24, yet only 40 percent of young men and 38 percent of young women have comprehensive knowledge about HIV transmission. However, far more young people know how to prevent HIV infection. As a result, HIV incidence has fallen in 33 countries, 22 of them in sub-Saharan Africa. According to UNAIDS, declines in new HIV infections have been primarily due to changes in behavior—including among young people, as well as by greatly increased access to HIV prevention, care and treatment services.²⁰ In this regard, youth also are important influencers in families and communities, promoting positive behavior across generations.

¹² Cited in www.7billionactions.org, a UNFPA global internet campaign initiated in June 2012

¹³ There are dramatic regional differences in tertiary education, ranging from 63 girls for every 100 boys in sub-Saharan Africa to 128 girls for every 100 boys in Latin America and the Caribbean (UN MDG Report 2012).

¹⁴ UN MDG Report, p. 19.

¹⁵ JPAL 2012, p. 4.

¹⁶ Sawyer, et. al. 2012.

¹⁷ Glasier, et al. 2006.

¹⁸ Expert group meeting on Quantitative Indicators, 2011, p.16.

¹⁹ Cited in www.7billionactions.org

²⁰ UN AIDS Data Tables 2011.

Peace, Security and Democracy

Achieving the benefits of investment in young people depends on a secure environment and a belief by youth that they have a stake in governance, peace and democracy. Young people especially suffer from a lack of physical security in their daily lives. Children and youth who witness or experience violence at home, on the street, at school, or wherever it occurs are significantly more at risk for health problems, anxiety disorders, poor school performance and violent behavior.²¹ Worldwide some 250,000 homicides a year occur among youth aged 10–29 years, 41 percent of the annual global total.²² Violence against young women is particularly alarming. While this varies across countries and cultures, a 2005 World Health Organization study found that in 10 out of 15 countries studied, 20–36 percent of women aged 15–19 years old reported being subject to at least one act of physical violence in the previous year. A six-country study found that women who were younger than 20 years when they married or started living with their husband or partner were more likely to report physical or sexual violence than those who were older than 20 years.²³

Violence, high school dropout rates and the challenges of the school-to-work transition can create conditions for youth to be recruited into criminal networks, armed groups, youth gangs, and trafficking, all of which contribute to sustained violence, extremism and insurgencies.²⁴ Political and civic marginalization can further fuel discontent. It has been suggested that a “youth bulge” (especially one that is made up of many unemployed or idle young men) may result in social unrest, war or violent extremism. Indeed, 86 percent of all countries experiencing the outbreak of civil conflict have populations with a majority under the age of 30.²⁵ However, studies on population trends and incidences of civil conflict suggest that the security concerns related to youth are more nuanced, and that a large youth population is only one of many risk factors involved in civil conflict, crime and violence. While large youth cohorts are often exploited to confront deeper social grievances, they are not the cause of violence. Other factors include rapid urbanization, poor natural resource management, economic stagnation, unemployment, limited social investment, and few opportunities for political participation.²⁶ In fact, engaging young people in creating safe environments—safe schools, safe neighborhoods, safe jobs, safe cities—is already showing positive results. Similarly, while accurate accounts of youth voting are lacking, anecdotal experience shows that youth civic and political education and participation supports stabilization and democracy.

²¹ See USAID Gender equality policy, p. 7.

²² See WHO Fact Sheet #356 “Youth Violence”, August 2011.

²³ Hindin et al., 2008

²⁴ The Development Response to Violent and Extremism and Insurgency, USAID Policy, September 2011

²⁵ Collier, et al., 2006.

²⁶ Cincotta, et al., 2003.

III. GOAL AND OBJECTIVES

USAID envisions a world in which women and men, girls and boys enjoy economic, social, cultural, civil and political rights and are equally empowered to secure better lives for themselves, their families and communities; and to access quality education, health care and employment opportunities, exercise their own voice, and live free from intimidation, harassment, discrimination and violence.²⁷

The goal of the Youth in Development policy is to improve the capacities and enable the aspirations of young people so that they contribute to and benefit from more stable, democratic, and prosperous communities and nations. In support of this goal, USAID will work towards two objectives:

I: Strengthen youth programming, participation, and partnership in support of Agency development objectives.

USAID will implement programming designed specifically to support, protect, prepare and engage young people to access quality education, health and nutrition, jobs and livelihoods and to live free of violence and abuse, particularly in conflict and crisis situations in order to harness the demographic opportunity and achieve broader development outcomes. Scaling up our investment in youth programs will sustain and amplify important health and social gains from childhood interventions, and enable them to bear fruit. Increasing youth participation in the development of policies, programs and services should inevitably lead to better results.

As youth initiatives are tested, evaluated and proven effective, USAID should explore scaling up through creative partnerships with public and private institutions and communities at-large, including country-level ministries and the private sector.

2: Mainstream and integrate youth issues and engage young people across Agency initiatives and operations.

Many areas of development work can be significantly strengthened by considering the age demographics and life conditions of young people, and incorporating their perspectives, aspirations and ideas. USAID will strive to mainstream and integrate youth into program planning across sectors, increase their meaningful

participation, and incorporate youth development practices across systems and into areas of escalating investment such as food security, global health, child protection, and climate change, while promoting gender equality and embracing science and technology by and for youth.

USAID will seek to identify and strengthen youth-led and youth-serving organizations and networks. USAID will further seek to identify, support, and promote research and innovation by, with, and for youth. It is expected that Agency policies, country strategies, and partnerships will be inclusive of youth and will actively leverage the assets, priorities, and ideas of young people.

USAID efforts towards these objectives are designed to achieve three critical outcomes across multiple programs and sectors:

- Youth are better able to access economic and social opportunities, share in economic growth, live healthy lives, and contribute to household, community, and national well-being.
- Youth are empowered to participate in building peaceful and democratic societies and are less involved in youth gangs, criminal networks, and insurgent organizations.
- Youth have a stronger voice in, and are better served by, local and national institutions, with more robust and youth-friendly policies.

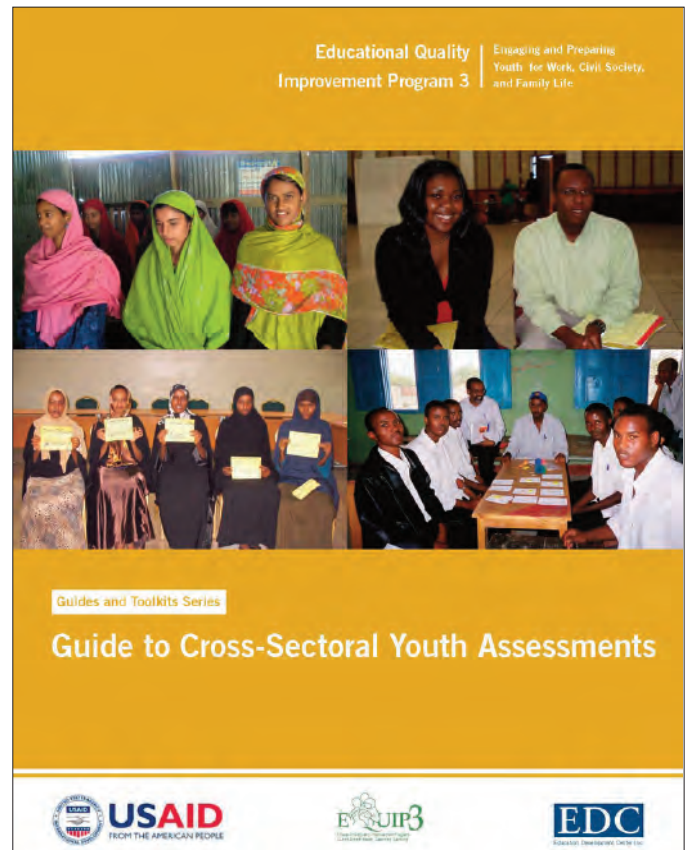
Applying selectivity and focus in meeting objectives

In an era of scarce resources, multiple USG national security interests and variable country contexts, not all missions will be able to, or necessarily need to, focus on youth in the same way. USAID can also be more effective by being more strategic about where it conducts youth work, and what the focus of those programs is. USAID activities in countries where the age structure favors achievement of the demographic dividend need a different investment strategy than activities in countries where the demographic transition has only just begun or is years away. This policy will affect countries differently, given varying operating environments, and national commitment to programming for youth. The policy expects USAID operating units to strategically consider how mainstreaming youth can support the achievement of their development objectives. To ensure adequate selectivity and focus in where we do youth work and what we

²⁷ Vision shared in USAID Policy on Gender Equality and Female Empowerment, 2012.

UNDERSTANDING YOUTH: THE POWER OF ASSESSMENT

Since 2004 USAID has innovated methodologies for conducting cross-sector youth assessments to enable missions and development partners to identify critical dynamics in education, employment, health, security, and democracy and governance that affect young people’s life chances. Trained youth in developing countries participate with expert assessment teams and lead mapping teams: they facilitate focus groups, collect and analyze data, and offer input to strategic programming decisions. Often these assessments allow diverse technical offices in USAID Missions to collaborate closely to develop more integrated responses to youth challenges. USAID’s YouthMap project is bringing youth-driven cross sector assessment methodology to eight countries in Africa. (Photo on right depicts the *Guide to Cross-Sectoral Youth Assessments* developed under the EQUIP3 Project.)



do, the policy recommends that each mission examine the potential for enhanced youth programming by conducting strong assessments, considering demographic trends, country context and indicators as well as national priorities, and age appropriate programming. Further analysis and guidance on considerations for selectivity and focus can be found in Annex A.

Youth assessments provide a detailed understanding of the needs of the diverse youth population including the identification of vulnerable youth, the areas of greatest need, the conditions that may drive youth toward risky behavior; and the potential opportunity for impact. Informing USAID Country Development Cooperation Strategies (CDCS) and in concert with other development partners, USAID Missions are encouraged to consider the entire span from adolescence to young adulthood—including inter-generational implications—to arrive at the highest priority interventions.

IV. OBJECTIVE ONE: STRENGTHEN YOUTH PROGRAMMING, PARTICIPATION, AND PARTNERSHIP- FRAMEWORK AND GUIDING PRINCIPLES

With this policy, USAID seeks to strengthen youth programming, participation and partnership in support of Agency development objectives. Youth in Development at USAID is the intentional, ongoing process of assisting youth in their transition from childhood into adulthood. It is based on a **conceptual framework**—drawn from best practices in youth specific programs—comprising four interacting elements:

- **Support:** Meeting basic youth developmental needs and valuing their contributions.
- **Protect:** Preventing and responding to violence, exploitation, abuse, and neglect; and ensuring young people are safe and receive care.
- **Prepare:** Building youth competencies and skills to become informed, healthy and productive citizens.
- **Engage:** Creating channels for dialogue and participation that enable youth to contribute to their own and their communities' development.

USAID **support** efforts center on the creation of an enabling environment, envisioned as a youth 'ecosystem' that supports youth at the individual, family, community and national levels.²⁸ These efforts utilize a systems approach, which shapes the policies, norms, values and beliefs of individuals, communities, local and national institutions towards positive life trajectories for youth through partnerships, coordination, and coalitions across sectors and among diverse youth and adult stakeholders.

Protection efforts focus on preserving young people's rights, and bolstering and aligning programs in adherence to national and international legal frameworks regarding vulnerable youth, conflict and disaster response. Protection programs will incorporate commitments, policy and best practices per the forthcoming U.S. Government Action Plan on Children in Adversity. USAID's youth portfolio will also incorporate other relevant USAID policy, strategy guidance, and tools towards the safety of all young people.

Particular attention will be given to early marriage, gender-based violence, trafficking in persons, and the rights of lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender (LGBT) populations.

Preparing youth for adulthood occurs within and across multiple sectors and domains by strengthening capacities and building assets. Mounting evidence holds that holistic or integrated youth programming can be particularly effective in addressing the complexities of young people's lives. Cross-sector approaches comprehensively address youth life transitions (learning, work, health, family, citizenship) and are designed around common factors (e.g., education, employment, life skills, security), leading to overlapping positive outcomes across multiple domains. They also respond to the USAID Policy Framework which advocates integrated approaches that leverage resources and generate transformative outcomes on complex, multi-dimensional issues.

Efforts to **engage** youth involve elevating their voices and ensuring meaningful opportunities to contribute to resolving issues and promoting positive change in their communities and nations. Youth engagement also involves preparation of adults to listen to and work with young people. There is a need to improve the quality of partnerships with youth, to provide more concrete platforms for youth participation, to support existing local youth networks and initiatives, and to include youth in science, technology and innovation initiatives. USAID will collaborate with other USG agencies to support youth engagement through Youth Advisory Councils; and other types of consultation mechanisms (online or in-person), at home and abroad.

Annex B illustrates different types of sector, cross-sector and systems projects that serve to support, protect, prepare and engage youth in development.

Guiding Principles

Youth programming varies widely owing to the distinct phases of the life span, the multiplicity of sectors and policies that influence youth development outcomes, the diversity among youth and

²⁸ The Commonwealth Secretariat (2007) recommends the involvement of ministries of health, finance, economic development, housing, justice, education, environment, and agriculture.

their needs and aspirations. In order to take these into account while at the same time utilizing best practice interventions and responding to broader Agency objectives, the following principles are designed to improve the consistency and quality of USAID's youth development efforts:

- Recognize youth participation as vital for effective programs;
- Invest in assets that build youth resilience;
- Account for youth differences and commonalities;
- Create second chance opportunities;
- Involve and support mentors, families, and communities;
- Pursue gender equality; and
- Embrace innovation and technology by and for youth.

Recognize youth participation as vital for effective programs.

Given the opportunity and preparation, youth are valuable partners, who can offer insight, guidance, innovative thinking and solutions. They know how to reach other youth in ways that can improve knowledge, shift attitudes, and ultimately change behaviors. By strengthening their social and leadership skills, youth participation not only reduces passivity and apathy among youth but also promotes a positive view of young people in the wider adult community.

EFFECTIVE YOUTH PARTICIPATION IN THE USAID PROGRAM CYCLE

- Youth are consulted in policy development.
- Youth have specific roles in assessment, program design, implementation and evaluation.
- Youth-serving and youth-led organizations are supported.
- Youth have dynamic platforms for voice and innovation.
- Strategies are informed by youth input and by research on what works and life conditions of young people.

Invest in assets that build youth resilience. Although youth embody the means and assets that societies need to build prosperous futures, societies will only realize these gains when they invest in youth development. Youth assets are both *internal* (e.g., self-motivation, responsibility, decision-making) and *external* (e.g., safe schools, caring neighborhoods, parental involvement, positive peer influence) that facilitate their ability to succeed regardless

BUILDING YOUTH RESILIENCE IN POOR AND CONFLICT-AFFECTED COUNTRIES

In very low-income or conflict-affected countries, research has found that conventional notions of 'jobs' are often no longer applicable, in either the public or private sector, making it important to understand the adaptive and coping strategies that enable people to survive, earn and work in a variety of different ways. This is particularly important for youth, whose energy and creativity are vital to sustain the kind of small, informal enterprises that fill the economic vacuum left by lack of infrastructure and large scale investment.³⁰ Rather than focusing on just jobs or skills training, USAID also brings together the various elements needed to develop a range of motivational and coping skills.

In Haiti, the Haitian Out of School Youth Livelihood Initiative incorporated technical elements from basic education, economic growth, PEPFAR/OVC, conflict mitigation and food assistance to improve livelihood preparation for out-of-school youth and build a long-term implementation network to support them. By build-

ing both youth and community-level resilience, the program enables youth to better cope with the violence and poverty that is endemic to Haiti and help communities to recover from hurricanes and the earthquake that devastated the country.

In Honduras, the escalation of narco-violence and gang-related crime, together with cross-border trafficking from Colombia, Venezuela, and Mexico has resulted in unparalleled levels of extortion and violence. Poverty and corruption, plus the inability to create secure communities have left young people particularly vulnerable to engaging in gang violence and petty crime. USAID Honduras is implementing a cross-sector program that includes juvenile justice, municipal crime prevention and security infrastructure, and services for youth-at-risk in order to foster youth resiliency, focusing on increasing the ability of young people, many of whom are recent arrivals, to absorb shocks and overcome the challenges of poverty, insecurity and violence.

²⁹ One framework of child and youth developmental assets was created by the Search Institute based on over 2 million surveys. See Search Institute website for further details.

³⁰ IDRC, 'Social Innovation towards Sustainable Livelihoods for Youth', 2000.

of gender; socioeconomic status and ethnicity. Studies show that young people who possess more assets (both internal and external), many of which have a foundation in early experiences, are less likely to engage in risky behavior and more likely to thrive, even in challenging environments.²⁹ Resilience focused programs should also be informed by USAID's forthcoming Policy and Program Guidance: *Building Resilience in Areas of Recurrent Crisis*.

Account for Youth Differences and Commonalities.

Youth are as diverse as the societies in which they live. Their ability to thrive and succeed is affected by such factors as economic status, gender, marital status, disability, sexual orientation, ethnicity and religion. At the same time, the transmission of global culture through media, technology and migration unite youth and promote shared generational experiences. Targeted assessments are needed to develop youth strategies and programs that respect and respond to different youth needs, capitalize on commonalities, and ensure protection and opportunity for all young people, especially those who are marginalized and vulnerable. Programs must also respond to existing policy directives related to specific groups such as LGBT or disabled youth.

Create Second Chance Opportunities. Youth development is greatly affected by many factors; including but not limited to, conflict, crisis and natural disasters, extreme poverty, labor exploitation, disability, HIV/AIDS, early marriage and/or child-bearing, or lack of family care. Second chance programs – which for many are “first chance” programs – provide hard-to-reach youth with opportunities to develop skills, broaden their social networks, and experience a greater sense of safety and belonging. By successfully responding to the exploitation and abuse of youth—whether from armed groups, criminality, child marriage, or human trafficking, communities not only build individual opportunity but provide a foundation for long-term social stability and prosperity.³¹

Involve and support mentors, families, and communities. Youth development requires the involvement of multiple actors and systems, including families, schools, faith-based groups and community-based organizations as well as businesses and government institutions. Families and communities provide the primary level of support for youth development that is reinforced by health, education, and other systems. At the same time, attention and effort should be applied to ensure adults are prepared to listen to and effectively work with young people. Research shows that feelings of “connectedness” gained in schools and/or family is central to steering clear of risky behavior.³² Where youth

INVOLVING TEACHERS AND PARENTS TO CREATE SAFER SCHOOLS

In Tajikistan, where UNICEF reports that 23.3 percent of students feel a daily sense of hopelessness, and as many as 25 percent skip school owing to school-based violence and threats to their personal safety, USAID/Tajikistan aimed to improve attendance and learning outcomes by supporting a Safe Schools project. Community members (including students, teachers, and parents), NGO staff, and government officials in education, health, social welfare, were trained to reduce violence and gender-based violence by addressing students' basic safety needs. As a result, the understanding of gender-based violence across communities, along with their willingness to prevent it, has improved by nearly 25 percent.

have fallen outside family care or formal systems, strong communities and non-formal networks and institutions are especially critical. U.S.-based research has shown that mentors provide important support and guidance for youth and that safe, well-run mentoring programs increase youth engagement in positive social relationships, increase academic achievement and school engagement, and contribute to more positive outlooks among youth.^{33,34} International youth experts suggest that support of youth by caring, consistent adults is essential for youth who have been affected by conflict or disaster:

Pursue gender equality. USAID's Youth in Development Policy is strongly committed to achieving gender equality. Promoting sexual and reproductive health of young people, reducing unplanned pregnancies and improved levels of education and earnings of young women are essential to establishing conditions for broad societal change, including the demographic dividend. Sex and gender differences emerge most sharply with the onset of puberty, affecting the life trajectories of girls and boys in profoundly different ways. In many societies, adolescent girls and young women have less opportunity and fewer resources than young men: less food, schooling and medical attention, less access to paid employment and less free time, along with a strong potential to be married off before the age of fifteen.³⁵ When puberty

³¹ Women's Refugee Commission (Sep. 2009).

³² Cunningham, et. al. 2008, World Bank.

³³ In the U.S., a caring consistent adult mentor has been found to be the most important asset for ensuring positive youth development. Theokas & Lerner (2006); Larson (2000); Herrera, C. et al. (2007).

³⁴ Tierney, J.P., Grossman, J.B. & Resch, N.L. (1995). Rhodes, Spencer; Keller; Liang, & Noam. (2006). Childtrends (2002).

³⁵ 1 in 3 girls in the developing world are married under the age of 18, and 1 in 7 is married before her 15th birthday. Forty-six percent of girls under 18 are married in sub-Saharan Africa; 38 percent in South Asia; 21 percent in Latin America and the Caribbean; 18 percent in the Middle East and North Africa. UNICEF (2011).

³⁶ Buvinic, M. et. al. (June, 2007); Barker, G. (2000)

CAPTURING “THE GIRL EFFECT”

Girls make up 70 percent of the world's out of school youth and strategic investments in girls' education and health represent an enormous opportunity to improve their lives. For each additional year a girl remains in school beyond the fourth grade, her wages rise 20 percent, and if she receives seven or more years of education, she will marry four years later and have 2.2 fewer children. Since women reinvest 90 percent of their income in their families, investing in girls has a multiplier effect, as successful girls and women contribute to healthier and more prosperous families and communities. Led by the work of the Nike Foundation, the Coalition for Adolescent Girls, and others, this phenomenon has become popularly known as “the girl effect.”

USAID is increasingly investing in programs to unleash the potential in girls. For example, knowing that girls will have a greater impact in their communities if they are trained to become leaders, the Power to Lead Alliance – a public-private partnership with CARE – enhanced the leadership skills of girls in vulnerable communities in Egypt, Honduras, India, Malawi, Tanzania and Yemen.

signals their potential for motherhood, girls may have to drop out of school to marry and begin childbearing. Young women and girls are also highly vulnerable to sexual exploitation and gender-based violence. While adolescence for boys can be a time for expanded participation in community and public life, it is also a time when some young men face increased health risks or are socialized in ways that lead to violence and discrimination against women or other young men.³⁶ Yet, young women and men everywhere are re-fashioning gender norms for the 21st century, and development partners must work with youth as well as adults in the community to create more opportunity for both young men and women, boys and girls.

Embrace innovation and technology by and for youth.

As ‘digital natives,’ today's young people have more access to information, networks, new technologies, and new forms of communication than previous generations. Though millions of youth still live and go to school beyond the reach of the Internet, with the help of mobile phones, the technology gap can and must



Students in Kenya participate in playing a mobile game that teaches them the importance in making good choices as part of the Half the Sky Movement which USAID supports.

Credit: Ed Owles, Worldview

continue to close. Greater access to technology contributes to young people's abilities to generate solutions and find opportunities and resources formerly out of reach. When combined with increasing scientific and technical know-how, connective and information technology accelerates development innovation and stimulates positive, equitable change. When young people's creativity is supported and they have space to share ideas and network, they become innovative partners in development.

SHAQODOON – USING MOBILE PHONES FOR WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT IN CONFLICT-AFFECTED ENVIRONMENTS

In Somalia, the USAID-funded “Shaqodoon” (Somali for “job seekers”) project provides at-risk youth in Somaliland, Puntland, and South-Central Somalia with access to training, internships, work, and self-employment by working with employers to identify demand and then assisting education and training providers to develop programs more focused on meeting demand. The project uses innovative technology to help achieve its goals: Shaqodoon is producing interactive, Somali-language audio programs on financial literacy and entrepreneurship and linking youth to opportunities through the use of cell phones and web-based technologies. The Shaqodoon SMS/text message-based InfoMatch service connects youth with jobs, internships, and trainings – all through their mobile phone. The project has directly impacted nearly 10,000 Somali youth – with training and gainful employment.

³⁷ Girls Count, Center for Global Development (2009) and The Girl Effect Fact Sheet. Available at www.girleffect.org

V. OBJECTIVE TWO: INTEGRATING AND MAINSTREAMING YOUTH

This policy conveys the vital importance of smarter, inclusive, coordinated investments in youth that will significantly contribute to attaining USAID's development outcomes and support our partners to realize demographic dividends. It underlines the need

for greater integration and mainstreaming of youth across the Agency's work, which can be achieved by employing three main approaches: mainstreaming youth into core initiatives, ensuring youth issues and participation are integrated throughout the pro-

MAINSTREAMING YOUTH IN PRESIDENTIAL INITIATIVES

Global Health Initiative (GHI): While adolescence is generally considered a healthy time of life, many young people in the developing world face significant reproductive and sexual health risks due to early sexual initiation and/or unprotected sexual activity. In low income countries as many as one in six births occurs to a young woman aged 15 to 19, often at great risk to both mother and child. Half of all new HIV infections occur in people under age 25, and in countries with a generalized epidemic, young women are often infected at a much higher rate than young men. The Global Health Initiative aims to reduce from 24 to 20 percent the proportion of young women aged 18-24 who have their first birth before age 18. Many of PEPFAR's efforts to ensure an AIDS-free generation focus on reaching young people with HIV prevention information and services to decrease their risk of HIV infection, as well as earlier diagnosis and appropriate treatment of HIV in young people, especially to reduce their risk of horizontal and/or vertical transmission of HIV.³⁸

Feed the Future (FTF): Inclusive agriculture sector growth is a cornerstone of the FTF approach to food security and hunger. Recent studies suggest that every one percent increase in agricultural income per capita reduces the number of people living in extreme poverty by between 0.6 and 1.8 percent. FTF strives to increase agricultural production and the incomes in rural communities who rely on agriculture for their livelihoods. Investments in inclusive agriculture-led growth encompass improving agricultural productivity, expanding markets and trade, and increasing the economic

resilience of vulnerable rural communities. FTF seeks to unleash the proven potential of small-scale agricultural producers to deliver results on a large scale. Given demographic realities and workforce composition, country-level FTF strategies and projects are increasingly targeting youth with vocational education, agricultural extension, training, resources and platforms for participation. In Ethiopia, for example, as part of USAID's efforts to build resilience in and reduce vulnerability in drought prone areas, FTF will support a rural workforce development program that engages youth and vulnerable households dependent on pastoral livestock systems for their livelihoods.³⁹

Global Climate Change Initiative (GCCCI): Through its climate change work, USAID is committed to engaging and preparing young people as a constituency for policy change, as innovators, and as the emerging green industries workforce. As stated in its 2012 Climate Change and Development Strategy "USAID will reach out to engage youth at home and abroad as thought partners and will build a dialogue with youth constituencies regarding climate change... Recognizing the active manner in which this constituency is already engaging in such international forums as the Rio 2012 conference on sustainable development, USAID's climate and youth experts will work together to partner with youth organizations to bring awareness to the impacts of climate change on youth and the opportunities it poses for young entrepreneurs, advocates, students, and others."⁴⁰

³⁸ See www.ghi.gov

³⁹ See www.feedthefuture.gov

⁴⁰ USAID Climate Change and Development Strategy, 2012

gram cycle, and applying relevant USAID Forward reforms and operational processes to youth.

Mainstreaming Youth through Planning and Design

At the country level, the primary planning tool is the CDCS. CDCS Guidance states that Development Objectives (DO) should integrate approaches, principles and resources from vari-

ous sectors and sources to achieve a common objective, such as community-based stabilization, youth development and empowerment, improved economic governance or effective social service delivery, and endeavor to integrate issues such as gender, youth, and capacity building.⁴¹ In accordance with CDCS guidance, operating units should engage youth in consultations and include youth issues as appropriate in parameter-setting, development objectives and results frameworks. USAID's *Project Design Guidance* includes youth analysis as an optional component and recognizes youth as key stakeholders for consultation. In addition, certain missions may be asked to discuss how they considered youth in their budget requests.

YOUTH IN USAID COUNTRY DEVELOPMENT COOPERATION STRATEGIES

CDCS Guidance states that youth is to be considered in formulating a mission's DO, asking: "Does the DO consider the particular issues associated with youth?" With regard to a multi-sector DO, CDCS Guidance further states: "Multi-sector DOs: Integrates technical approaches, principles, and resources from various sectors and sources to achieve a common objective such as community-based stabilization, youth development and empowerment, improved economic governance or effective social service delivery. . . DOs and Intermediate Results should attempt to integrate issues such as gender, youth, and capacity building."

For example, Ethiopia's CDCS includes a Development Objective (3) to "Improve Learning Outcomes". Historically, the majority of Ethiopians have not had the benefit of formal education and/or training: 20 million youth have not been taught basic skills such as literacy, numeracy, critical thinking, decision-making and rational analysis, especially in rural areas. An estimated three million primary school-aged children and over 20 million youth are outside of the formal school system, and a large proportion of out-of-school youth have had no education at all (84 percent in rural areas; 33 percent in urban areas). Ethiopia has one of the highest urban youth unemployment rates at 50 percent and there is a high rate of youth under-employment in rural areas, where nearly 85 percent of the population resides. Thus, the need to address skills training for out-of-school youth is urgent. Recognizing that the large youth population in Ethiopia presents another specific challenge to the education system, the CDCS also includes an Intermediate Result (3.2) to "Improved Workforce Skills Development," and youth is also listed as a cross-cutting consideration for the whole DO.

USING THE DEVELOPMENT CREDIT AUTHORITY (DCA) TO SUPPORT YOUTH

Beyond traditional projects, USAID has the ability to leverage its resources to support young people in innovative ways. For example, banks are often reluctant to lend to young entrepreneurs because they lack credit history, have insufficient collateral, and have no history of profitability. In 2012, USAID/Kosovo's Young Entrepreneurs Program invested \$246,000 through the Development Credit Authority (DCA) spurring a local bank to lend up to \$2.1 million to Kosovar youth, fostering entrepreneurial opportunities and stimulating local economic growth and job creation.

Leverage Procurement Tools, Financing Mechanisms and Strategic Partnerships

By applying USAID Forward implementation and procurement reforms, USAID can expand support for local grassroots youth-led and youth-serving organizations, and strengthen the capacity of relevant host country ministries to provide more effective youth services. USAID should also seek to increase youth activities in partnership with other donors, as well as the private sector through mechanisms such as the Development Credit Authority, Global Development Alliances, and Development Innovation Ventures. As these initiatives are tested and proven effective, USAID will explore scaling up through innovative financing and partnerships with public and private institutions and communities at large.

⁴¹ CDCS Guidance Version 3; per Agency Executive Message 9/12/2011

Monitoring, Research and Learning

USAID and other donors and partners have accumulated a significant body of knowledge, best practices and lessons learned that have influenced the objectives, framework and principles presented in this policy. Remaining gaps in knowledge and evidence require rigorous research and evaluation to expand and nuance the collective knowledge base about effective youth programming in developing countries. To drive increased evaluation and learning, USAID will better track and monitor investments, strengthen efforts to collect age disaggregated data and utilize youth specific indicators. Practical knowledge is particularly strong in the areas of youth skills development, livelihoods, and financial services; school dropout prevention and educational achievement; health knowledge and behavior change (pregnancy, HIV and maternal child health); civic engagement; and conflict and crime prevention. More limited evidence is available on youth and food security and climate change. Similarly, deeper research is warranted on quantitative, cost-benefit impact of cross-sector and more holistic programming.

In collaboration with the other agencies of the USG, other donors and partners, USAID will expand learning efforts around youth development to improve results-driven programming. In accordance with USAID's Evaluation Policy, all youth programs falling at least within the median of the mission portfolio will be evaluated by a third party and the results will be shared within country and across the Agency.⁴² USAID/Washington will work with missions to identify and mobilize resources for impact evaluations of critical youth interventions for which we need definitive judgments of effectiveness.

YOUTH IN THE STATE DEPARTMENT/USAID FOREIGN ASSISTANCE "F" FRAMEWORK

Recognizing the need to more consistently track and monitor youth programming, a Key Issue for youth in the F Framework was revised and reclassified in 2011. As a specifically cross-cutting issue, with its own category ("M"), this Key Issue for Youth Development (YDV) is now defined as "Youth Development activities support, protect, prepare, empower and engage youth, aged 10-29 years, (including adolescents and young adults) for participation in civil society, work, and family life; and enable them to participate in addressing the development challenges of their communities and nations. Youth development activities can be programs, partnerships, policy reform, institutional strengthening, grant-making, and research and evaluation that actively and constructively involve and support young people. These activities help develop the knowledge and skills, attitudes, networks, resilience, systems, assets and resources youth need for successful transition to adulthood. They may be in any sector, including health, education, economic opportunity, democracy and governance, peace and security, food security and climate change."

⁴² The Evaluation Policy (January 2011) requires missions to identify at least one opportunity for an impact evaluation for each development objective of their CDCS (p.6). <http://www.usaid.gov/evaluation>

VI. AGENCY ROLES AND COORDINATION

This policy challenges USAID to integrate and mainstream critical priorities concerning youth across its programming, and to more aggressively seek and plan for effective, evidence-based youth programming.

USAID currently has no formal structure or Agency-wide funding source for youth development, and therefore it has been a challenge to mainstream, integrate, and coordinate youth activities.⁴³ To improve coordination, accountability, transparency, and management of USAID's youth portfolio:

- AID/A will designate an Agency coordinator responsible for youth development issues to advocate for and integrate youth into Agency Initiatives, oversee policy coherence, support implementation and training, and to serve as a senior representative on youth issues in the interagency and external community, in coordination with bureaus, missions, and other relevant Agency coordinators.
- Relevant USAID Washington bureaus and programmatic offices will designate and hold accountable a youth portfolio lead to coordinate youth programs and issues within the bureau or office, and to lead future efforts and provide technical support to missions.

The coordinator and bureau and office leads will be empowered to work collaboratively to develop tools, action plans, and provide technical support for policy implementation. The group will leverage existing agency platforms to build out its community of practice. They should develop an action plan that should include the following elements: developing indicators, organizing an evidence gathering exercise, identifying opportunities for increased training, and facilitating youth engagement activities. The plan would also identify specific opportunities for collaboration with the State Department, Peace Corps, Department of Labor, and other USG agencies.

USAID Missions that prioritize youth should designate a youth portfolio lead to ensure high standards and evidence-based approaches to youth programming, address policy implementation issues in country, promote local youth input into USAID planning, liaise with Washington-based youth activities, and to facilitate interagency coordination. Missions prioritizing youth are strongly encouraged to establish youth working groups composed of technical sector experts to ensure cross-sector synergy in youth activities as well as adequate funding. Improved collaboration among USG agencies and other development agencies through, for example, joint funding or programming around youth development will advance expected outcomes.

As USAID is committed to inclusive management and leadership, the Agency will also seek to expand platforms for youth participation and engagement within the Agency to “walk the talk,” and benefit from perspectives offered by younger professionals – including for example supporting young professional affinity groups, Junior Officer programs overseas, and mentoring programs in line with USAID Forward targets.

⁴³ In September 2012, USAID established a Center of Excellence on Children in Adversity within its Global Health Bureau to lead its developmental protection work regarding 0-17 year olds facing adverse conditions.

VII. CONCLUSION

This policy challenges USAID to integrate critical priorities concerning youth into the mainstream of its programming, to more aggressively seek and design effective, evidence-based youth programming, and to increase the participation of young people in its work.

Because this elevated approach is relatively new, we recognize that practices will be developed and refreshed over time as the Agency implements this policy. Nevertheless, over time, USAID expects to see change in a number of ways. For example, at the planning level, youth should be more strategically and prominently featured in CDCS and other policies and strategies. With expanding youth portfolios, the number of dedicated technical youth specialists in regional and pillar bureaus and offices is also expected to rise. Youth programs at USAID are funded by multiple bureaus, missions and initia-

tives, and funding toward youth programming from existing resources is likely to increase, especially in high youth population countries. The evaluation, research, and learning agenda will yield an enhanced body of knowledge around what works in youth development and how to increase impact. As best practices for youth development are garnered and assimilated into institutional practice, USAID will transform program design and implementation with better results using fewer resources.

Youth are the major stakeholders of today and tomorrow. It is essential that their ambitions and aspirations become part of the current development paradigm. The USAID Policy on Youth In Development is a critical step towards a fresh approach to development, one that proactively ensures youth can fulfill their dreams for prosperity, freedom, and justice.



At the inauguration of a USAID-funded market in Port-au-Prince, Haiti, rich frescoes painted by local artists flanked the walkways and interior walls.

Source: Andrea Edwards/CHF International

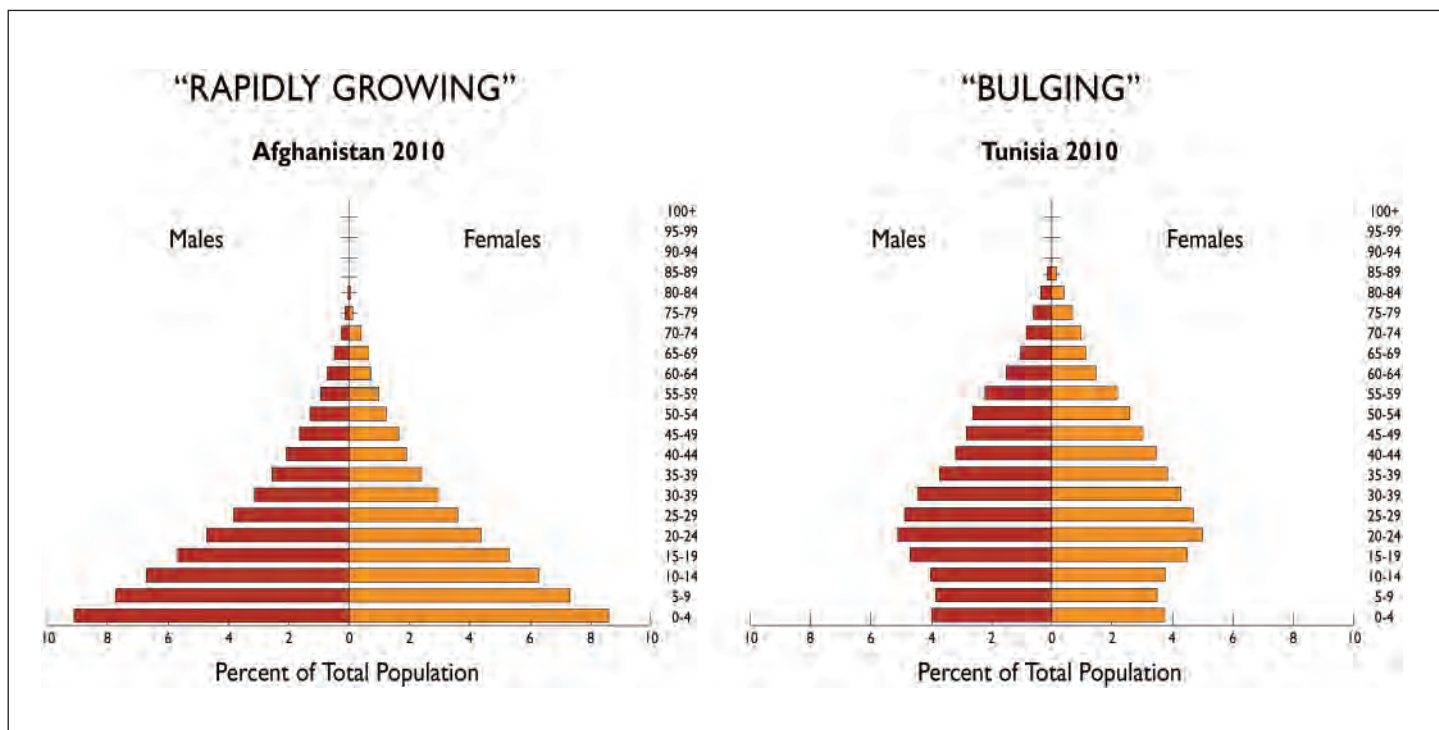
Annex A: Factors for Selectivity and Focus

Consider demographic trends. Understanding the population structure for a country – whether there is a majority youth population today or increasingly large and growing youth population – will help missions pinpoint appropriate development objectives that may involve or affect youth.⁴⁴ The population pyramids (below) show two types of age structures that are common in the countries where USAID works. Afghanistan has high birth rates and a “rapidly growing” young population. It will have a young population for decades to come, but there is not likely to be a large “youth bulge” unless there is a rapid acceleration of declines in fertility.⁴⁵ In contrast, Tunisia rapidly reduced its fertility as it went through the demographic transition and has a significant youth “bulge.” (Annex C shows select USAID countries with youthful populations e.g. percentage of population under age 15 and percentage of population aged 10-24.)

“Growing” countries have a significant proportion of their population under the age of twenty-five. These countries are in the early stages of the demographic transition and will have large youth populations for the next 40-50 years. In growing countries,

missions should invest in health and education systems for children and youth, and create favorable and enabling policy and institutional environment for future youth development. Youth participation and programming should be integrated across the portfolio to reap more near-term development outcomes. Growing countries include Bolivia, much of sub-Saharan Africa, Haiti, and Pakistan.

“Bulging” countries have low birth rates and large youth populations. These countries will transition in the next 10-20 years to a situation where birth and death rates equalize. Before reaching that point of stability however, these countries will experience a sustained “youth bulge,” requiring urgent attention to and investment in youth development. Missions in these countries should mainstream youth into their strategies and prioritize the immediate – and sometimes acute – youth needs in employment, education, health, civic and political participation. Bulging countries include Jamaica, most Middle East and North African countries, Vietnam, Bangladesh, and Uzbekistan.



⁴⁴ Leahy, E. et. al., (2007)
⁴⁵ Population pyramids 2010 and projections for most countries can be found at http://esa.un.org/unpd/wpp/population-pyramids/population-pyramids_absolute.htm

Identify country specific indicators with social, economic and political contexts:

There are no internationally recognized youth development indices at present.⁴⁶ There are, however, many sector indicators that will suggest whether, when and how to program for youth development and engagement. A significant number of unemployed youth, for example, suggests a need for workforce readiness, livelihood creation and entrepreneurship projects for youth. Fragile, conflict, post-conflict, or disaster environments must include youth in stabilization, humanitarian efforts and peace building. High rates of early pregnancy and/or HIV infection among youth suggest the importance of reproductive and sexual health education and services.

Incorporate needs by age: The stage of development along the life span will strongly determine the type of intervention selected.⁴⁷

- **Early Adolescence (10-14 years):** This is a critical time to build on previous investments in child health, nutrition, and education, and to lay the foundation for life skills, positive values, and constructive behaviors. The onset of puberty makes reproductive health and maturation an important area of focus. As the brain is now primed to learn new skills, developing critical thinking skills is essential. Vulnerabilities—especially for girls—may be particularly acute, so protection efforts should be emphasized. Appropriate interventions will include preventing child labor, school drop-out, early marriage, pregnancy and sexual exploitation, and expanding learning opportunities, promoting gender awareness and tolerance for diversity.
- **Adolescence (15-19 years):** These years are critical to sustain and expand health and education gains, protect against rights' abuses such as trafficking, exploitation, or hazardous work, and prepare youth for citizenship, family life and the workforce. Programming includes health education for healthy lifestyles, promotion of positive gender norms, provision of youth-friendly reproductive health services, academic retention and vocational education, financial literacy and saving, soft skills and service learning, mentoring peer networking, civic engagement opportunities, and legal rights' education. Second-

chance opportunities that allow disaffected youth to reconnect or reintegrate into school and society are particularly important.

- **Emerging Adulthood (20-24 years):** As behaviors form with last brain development, programs should continue to support positive and constructive decision-making and build resilience. Second-chance opportunities are still important. Examples of relevant programs include advanced education and job-specific training, life and leadership skills, livelihood and citizenship opportunities, asset accumulation, and reproductive and maternal health, family support.
- **Transition into Adulthood (25-29 years):** Although physical maturation is largely complete, learning continues. Programs should link youth to employment and civic engagement opportunities, as well as enable youth to build assets and provide economic, health and social support for family life (housing for example). In post-conflict situations, programs that provide accelerated learning opportunities to make up for lost years due to war, and psychosocial support programs are often needed.

⁴⁶ In 2011, the UN convened an Expert Group to develop quantitative indicators of performance against its World Program of Action on Youth. From 2003 – 2005, the UN convened a group to standardize measurement of youth development based on the Human Development Index. Using four indicators: Health (percentages of the population with access to potable drinking water as well as knowledge of HIV/AIDS); Knowledge (literacy rates and completion of a secondary education); Decent Standard of Living (youth unemployment rates and the number of youth living on less than \$1 a day); and Participation (national voting age and the presence of representative national youth organizations), a Youth Development Index (YDI) was conceived though never formally adopted.

⁴⁷ Developmental protection programming for those aged 10-17 years should incorporate guidance and adhere to in the U.S. Government Action Plan on Children in Adversity.

Annex B: Project Specifics: Illustrative Youth in Development Project Types

Sector	Cross-sectoral & Integration	Systems
<p>Utilizing best practice for specific interests and modalities for addressing sector-specific needs.</p> <p><u>Examples</u> of well-established sector programming for youth include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Workforce training programs that combine technical & employability skills development with on-the-job training, counseling & job search support. ■ Peer sexuality education programs & youth-friendly reproductive health services. ■ Agriculture extension for young farmers. ■ Accelerated, flexible learning programs for youth to enable primary or secondary level completion. ■ Conflict mitigation training for youth. ■ Voter education campaigns to target youth (“Rock the Vote”). ■ Awareness campaigns and protection programs to prevent and respond to sexual and labor exploitation. 	<p>Agency stakeholders in different sectors working together on concrete assessments, projects, evaluations – towards multiple development outcomes.</p> <p><u>Examples</u> of promising cross-sectoral collaborations:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ School-based programs that address health, nutrition, employment, & civic participation needs of youth. ■ Youth livelihood programs targeted to youth at risk for HIV. ■ Awareness campaigns around Girls’ rights and child marriage. ■ Agricultural programs that coordinate with nutrition, women’s empowerment and environmental programs. ■ Computer training for ICT-sector jobs for former child soldiers in post-conflict countries. ■ Safe Spaces that may provide multiple services including legal aid, informal education, health guidance, sport and play, and computer access. ■ Service learning and volunteerism projects that build leadership, citizenship, and life skills. ■ Sports programs for leadership, reconciliation, and health. 	<p>Building sustainable local and national institutions, policies and systems to support youth at scale, involving diverse stakeholders concerned with youth.</p> <p><u>Examples</u> of systems programs:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Developing and sharing a vision of youth development across systems (education, justice, health, etc.). ■ Tracking of common youth indicators across sectors. ■ Building system capacity for coordination across all sectors. ■ Enabling access to and consolidation of research and new approaches across systems and sectors. ■ Coordinating youth-serving organizations for improved efficiency and outreach to under-served youth. ■ Strengthening the capacity of mentors and community youth advisors. ■ Supporting the development of national youth policies, and strengthening national and municipal youth institutions. ■ Creating and supporting networks among youth. ■ Creating awareness campaigns around gender-based violence and exploitation in communities and schools.

Annex C: Top 40 USAID Countries: "Rapidly Growing and Bulging" Populations as % of Total, 2010

USAID Countries with Youthful Populations

USAID Countries with Youthful Populations	% of Population under 15	% of Population aged 10-24
Afghanistan	46	32
Albania	23	21
Angola	28	33
Azerbaijan	22	20
Bangladesh	31	27
Benin	44	32
Botswana	34	34
Burkina Faso	45	34
Burundi	46	33
Cambodia	33	29
Cameroon	43	31
Cape Verde	32	29
Central Africa Republic	40	34
Chad	46	34
Comoros	43	31
Cote d'Ivoire	41	32
Democratic Republic of Congo	46	34
Djibouti	36	31
El Salvador	32	26
Eritrea	42	33
Ethiopia	41	33
Gabon	36	31
Gambia	44	30
Guatemala	41	32
Guinea	43	33
Guinea-Bissau	41	34
Haiti	36	30
Honduras	38	28
Iraq	43	30
Jordan	37	27
Kenya	42	33
Kyrgyzstan	30	25
Laos	38	30
Lesotho	37	35

Annex C: Top 40 USAID Countries: "Rapidly Growing and Bulging" Populations as % of Total, 2010

USAID Countries with Youthful Populations

USAID Countries with Youthful Populations	% of Population under 15	% of Population aged 10-24
Liberia	43	34
Madagascar	43	32
Malawi	46	35
Mauritania	40	32
Mongolia	27	24
Mozambique	45	34
Namibia	36	30
Nepal	36	28
Nicaragua	35	28
Niger	52	33
Nigeria	44	33
Pakistan	35	28
Republic of Congo	41	34
Rwanda	42	22
Senegal	44	31
Sierra Leone	43	32
Solomon Islands	40	32
Somalia	45	32
South Sudan	44	n/a
Swaziland	38	35
Syrian Arab Republic	36	28
Tajikistan	37	28
Tanzania	45	32
Timor Leste	42	n/a
Togo	41	32
Turkmenistan	29	24
Uganda	48	34
Uzbekistan	29	25
Viet Nam	24	23
West Bank/Gaza	42	32
Yemen	44	33
Zambia	46	35
Zimbabwe	43	33

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