



USAID
FROM THE AMERICAN PEOPLE

THE HOPE OF TOMORROW

INTEGRATING YOUTH INTO THE TRANSITION OF EUROPE
AND EURASIA

2014 UPDATE

November 2014

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Toward Gender Equality in Europe and Eurasia: A Toolkit for Analysis May 2012, Doc ID: PN-AEA-292

Tackling the Demand that Fosters Human Trafficking August 2011, Doc ID: PN-ADZ-753

The Other Side of the Gender Equation: Gender Issues for Men in the Europe and Eurasia Region July 2011, Doc ID: PN-ADZ-757

Education Vulnerability Analysis for the E&E Region September 2010, Doc ID: PN-ADX-519

Trafficking of Adult Men in the Europe and Eurasia Region June 2010, Doc ID: PN-ADW-368

Out of the Broken Mirror: Learning for Reconciliation through Multi-perspective History Teaching in Southeast Europe May 2010, Doc ID: PD-ACS-531

Best Practices in Inclusive Education for Children with Disabilities: Application for Program Design in the Europe and Eurasia Region March 2010, Doc ID: PA-00H-PH4

An Evaluation Framework for USAID-Funded TIP Prevention and Victim Protection Programs December 2009, Doc ID: PN-ADR-430

Transitions towards an Inclusive Future: Vocational Skills Development and Employment Options for Persons with Disabilities in Europe & Eurasia October 2009, Doc ID: PN-ADS-499

The Prevalence of Disability in Europe & Eurasia September 2009, Doc ID: PN-ADT-697

Toolkit for Integrating Domestic Violence Activities into Programming in Europe and Eurasia July 2009, Doc ID: PN-ADO-921

The Job that Remains: An Overview of USAID Child Welfare Reform Efforts in Europe and Eurasia June 2009, Doc ID: PN-ADO-922

Best Practices in Trafficking Prevention in Europe and Eurasia January 2009, Doc ID: PN-ADO-543, PN-ADO-765

Methods and Models for Mixing Services for Victims of Domestic Violence and Trafficking in Persons in Europe and Eurasia December 2008, Doc ID: PN-ADN-297

Social Work Education and the Practice Environment in Europe and Eurasia December 2008, Doc ID: PN-ADN-298

Best Practices for Programming to Protect and Assist Victims of Trafficking in Europe and Eurasia November 2008, Doc ID: PN-ADN-295

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ACRONYMS

AO	Assistance Objective
CARE	Cooperative for Assistance and Relief Everywhere, Inc.
CIDA	Canadian International Development Agency
DEC	Development Experience Clearinghouse
DHS	Demographic and Health Survey
E3	USAID Bureau for Economic Growth, Education, and Environment
E&E	Europe and Eurasia
EBRD	European Bank for Reconstruction and Development
EU	European Union
FLEX	Future Leaders Exchange
GIZ	Deutsche Gesellschaft fuer Internationale Zusammenarbeit
IIE	Institute for International Education
IQC	Indefinite Quantity Contract
ILO	International Labor Organization
IREX	International Research and Exchanges Board
KSC	Knowledge Services Center
LWA	Leader with Associates (a USAID contract mechanism)
MOBIS	General Services Administration's Management, Organizational, and Business Improvement Services
NGO	Non-governmental Organization
ODC	Other Direct Costs
PHARE	European Union's Technical Assistance Program to Central and Eastern Europe
PHN	Population, Health, and Nutrition
PVO	Private Voluntary Organization
RA	Rapid Appraisal
SA	Stakeholder Analysis
SOW	Scope of Work, Statement of Work
STI	Sexually Transmissible Infection
SWOT	Strength Weakness Opportunities Threat Analysis
TACIS	EU Technical Assistance Program to the Commonwealth of Independent States
UK	United Kingdom
UN	United Nations
UNAIDS	Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
USAID	US Agency for International Development
WB	World Bank
WHO	World Health Organization

CHAPTER I: INTRODUCTION TO YOUTH ASSESSMENTS

Exploring the topic of youth in transition countries leads to three major premises. First, the youth cohort is a largely untapped force for furthering transition goals. Second, youth are highly vulnerable to many of the adverse impacts of transition. Third, the opportunity cost of ignoring this subset could have major implications for the long-term success of transition in the region.

“Youth in Transition Countries,” E&E Bureau Discussion paper, September, 2000

Providing responsive programs and services that effectively integrate youth into the social, economic, and political transition of Europe and Eurasia (E&E) requires timely, accurate, and focused information. Assessments of the specific contexts and conditions of youth populations are vital to informing USAID Missions in their efforts to strengthen youth programming, participation, and partnership. These assessments will need to inform Missions on the specific challenges and opportunities faced by youth in their countries and provided insights into the best strategies to engage young people across their initiatives and operations. A primary focus of the youth assessment is to gather an “inside view.” That is, mobilizing relevant youth groupings to articulate their views, values and experiences to those conducting the assessment. Other external perspectives, such as youth experts, national and local government officials, and educators, are also included in the assessment. However, the emphasis is on the voice of youth themselves in order to ensure that the priorities identified by the assessment are grounded in the specific country’s realities relevant to their youth population.

The purpose of this manual is to provide USAID Missions in the E&E region with tools and methods for designing assessments that can illuminate the situation of youth in their countries. In most cases, Missions will use a rapid appraisal approach for their assessments, because it is a systematic method that quickly gathers key information about relevant groups and conditions. Assessments provide the initial information for missions to make evidence-based decisions in terms of developing programming and designating resources to address the critical issues currently facing young people. This manual provides the E&E Missions with guidance on how to design a youth assessment how to develop a statement of work (SOW) for their own office or a contractor to implement the assessment, and how to apply the assessment findings to their Assistance Objectives (AOs) and programming.

Missions are expected to use this manual as a *resource guide* for their particular circumstances and needs. It does not provide a specific model for implementing activities and is only one resource of the many available to help the Missions mobilize youth behind new initiatives and programs.

I.1 ORGANIZATION OF THE MANUAL

This manual is designed to provide Missions with an overview and general understanding of the assessment process and specific considerations when collecting information about their youth populations. More detailed discussions of the individual elements of the assessment process can be found in the appendices. The manual includes many tools that will help Missions to prepare and implement youth assessments, including concrete steps required, sample checklists, and selected examples. The assessment process described below is intended to serve as a generic template that can be customized by the Missions according to their own needs, capacities, and resources. The steps detailed in this model include:

1. *Preliminary Review*: Gathering existing knowledge and data to provide a general understanding of the youth population.
2. *Stakeholder Analysis*: Conducting formal and informal interviews with a broad range of youth-related stakeholders (and most importantly youth themselves) to understand the key issues and structures that influence the health and well-being of young people in the region/country of interest.
3. *Assessment Design*: Identifying the primary issues related to youth in terms of the Mission's objectives and designing a data collection process to address specific assessment questions. This chapter includes the overall process for creating a Statement of Work for the assessment.
4. *Assessment Implementation & Oversight*: Implementing and guiding the assessment to ensure successful data collection and relevant findings.
5. *Using Assessment Results to Inform Planning*: Applying the findings and recommendations from the assessment to design strategies and interventions that are evidence-based and have the greatest promise for success.

1.2 OPPORTUNITIES FOR YOUTH PARTICIPATION IN ASSESSMENTS

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.
USAID Youth in Development Policy, October, 2012

USAID Youth in Development Policy makes clear that all Missions are expected to incorporate youth participation across their operations with its two objectives:

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

Conducting a youth assessment provides an early opportunity for Missions to engage young people in the identification of important issues and engaging in positive social and economic change. There is no one blueprint for how to involve young people within assessments. However, involvement by young people can assist the Missions in finding entry-points into the population and develop more intensive roles in participation in terms of youth and integrated programming. Each Mission should consider the roles and methods in which involving youth in the assessment project will be productive, meaningful, and feasible.

Productive: Incorporating youth in the assessment should be approached with the aim of producing valuable insights and information that will help achieve the Mission's objectives. That is, the role(s) of youth should be clearly defined in the assessment design (and even in the SOW) before inviting young people to participate. This will ensure that those youth recruited can participate fully and productively, and not result in unnecessarily delays the assessment process. For example, if youth are to be involved

in conducting surveys or focus groups, it is important to make sure that they have the basic educational and/or language requirements to do so.

Meaningful: In addition to ensuring youth participation will be productive to the Mission’s objectives, it is equally important to incorporate youth involvement in the assessment in ways that is also meaningful from the youths’ perspectives. For example, if the assessment involves youth in defining key issues and problems facing young people within the country, there should be some follow-up to ensure that they are informed if and how their concerns will be addressed. It is important to recognize that youth are not a monolithic group. Youths’ concerns may differ based on sex, sexual orientation and gender identity, disability status, minority status, and socioeconomic status, location characteristics (urban/rural, etc.). Likewise, it is crucial that youth, in all their diversity, be treated as equal and empowered partners within the assessment, rather than low-cost labor or passive subjects of research.

Feasible: Incorporating youth within the assessment requires a considerable amount of organization and time. The level of participation will obviously be a deciding factor in how much time and planning is required, and ultimately if the roles assigned to local youth are feasible. In some circumstances, even though youth participation in the assessment itself may need to be limited, the voice of youth will be critical in identifying future roles for young people in the implementation of program activities.

Table I provides examples for potential opportunities to incorporate youth participation in the Mission’s assessment. It is up to the Mission to determine the specific roles and capacities in which youth will be involved. In most cases, youth will most likely be involved in one or two phases of the assessment. Remember that the more specific the Mission is in how youth are to be incorporated in the desired roles, the more they will be able to contribute. Likewise, incorporating youth participation into the assessment will also require a level of flexibility from contractors and the Mission itself, as often the roles of youth will need to be adjusted and continually modified according to those particular groups and individuals who agree to participate.

Table I. Potential Opportunities for Youth Participation within the Assessment

Assessment Phase	Examples of Youth Opportunities for Participation
Preliminary Review	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Gathering existing data sources, background information, and current research • Providing information and insights through informal conversations and feedback
Stakeholder Analysis	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Providing information and insights through informal conversations and feedback • Identifying key issue and problems facing youth • Defining topics, subaltern populations, political/cultural contexts
Assessment Design	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Defining topics, subaltern populations, political/cultural contexts • Refining research questions • Assisting in piloting of protocols and instruments
Collecting Assessment Data	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identifying and contacting youth within different demographics (especially hard-to-reach individuals) • Informing and recruiting local communities about the assessment • Assisting in administrating surveys, conducting focus groups, or individual interviews • Providing information and insights as interview or focus group participants, or survey respondents
Data Analysis	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Assisting in the entry and/or coding of data • Assisting team in interpreting results from data collection efforts, providing further context and triangulation of findings
Mobilizing Action	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Disseminating findings of assessment through formal networks such as youth NGOs and universities • Disseminating findings of assessment through informal networks such as social media

- Assisting Mission in using assessment findings to design programming
-

CHAPTER 2: INFORMING THE DEVELOPMENT OF YOUTH ASSESSMENTS

In order to design a youth assessment, Missions should first gather existing information and data that are relevant to their program and the specific contexts and issues of youth within their countries. This initial review of available information will assist in framing and focusing the assessment on critical information and indicators, and to identify specific groups to target needed. First, Missions can conduct a *preliminary review* of existing reports and readily available information resources to gain an initial understanding of the youth population as well as the types of programming that the Mission and other agencies are conducting. Second, Missions should conduct a *stakeholder analysis*, which can identify the key parties and groups that are invested in youth issues and programming within the country. These two initial processes are vital to informing and focusing the design of the assessment data collection and pinpointing the parties who will be asked to participate.

In the early stages of planning for its assessment of youth, the Mission chooses one of the following levels of review, depending upon its needs and objectives.

- **Comprehensive, Global Review.** A comprehensive youth assessment is designed to identify the contextually specific problems of development for youth and/or to describe the relationships between the problems of youth. A comprehensive review might be conducted for example, when there are concerns about youth unemployment, and the Mission wants a broad study of the youth situation across the majority of the Mission portfolio. Other areas of research could include the participation of youth in local organizations or the capacity of institutions to incorporate the needs of youth into their educational or corporate culture.
- **Detailed, Sectoral Review.** A sectoral review goes into greater depth on specific sectors the Mission already identified as priorities, such as an assessment focusing on health. Sectoral reviews are designed to provide a detailed analysis of specific areas and require a more detailed and specialized inquiry than the comprehensive review.
- **Combination Review.** A combination review addresses both the elements of global data and a more detailed sectoral review. Most assessments fall somewhere along a continuum of the two levels.

2.1 CONDUCTING A PRELIMINARY REVIEW

While not required, Missions are encouraged to conduct a preliminary review on the country's youth that draws upon readily available information early in the Mission's effort in order to determine the needs of youth. The preliminary review is centered on a series of key indicators and it is a relatively inexpensive way for the Mission to get a quick snapshot of the situation of youth before committing more time and resources to collect their own data. The review may be used to help design the assessment, to answer some assessment questions, to cross-check other data, or to provide a comparison. The Mission may want to conduct this collection and review of existing data using Mission staff, locally contracted consultants, or a contracted assessment team to collect the information and prepare summaries for its review.

A preliminary review consists of defining key concepts and issues, identifying indicators that measure those concepts and issues, and collecting available data on the indicators relevant to the social, health, and economic conditions of youth. At least three benefits could result from such a review.

- First, defining terms and collecting data on relevant indicators may provide a common language for discussion and information in specific areas where the Mission is most active.
- Second, an effort to complete an indicators table may highlight areas where youth are particularly vulnerable in your country, especially if the table is structured with a side-by-side comparison with a young adult cohort (e.g., ages 25 to 29, or 25 to 34).
- Finally, it may reveal information gaps, which would help to set priorities for subsequent data gathering and interviews.

Table 2 provides advantages and disadvantages of document studies for consideration.

Table 2. Advantages and Limitation of Using Existing Data for Preliminary Reviews

Advantages	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Available locally • Inexpensive • Grounded in setting and language in which they occur • Useful for determining value, interest, positions, political climate, public attitudes, historical trends or sequences • Provide opportunity for study of trends over time • Unobtrusive
Limitations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • May be incomplete • May be inaccurate; questionable authenticity • Locating suitable documents may pose challenges • Analysis may be time consuming • Access may be difficult

AVAILABLE SOURCES OF DATA

Considerable data are already available relevant to youth in the E&E region. The Bureau, USAID's Development Exchange Clearinghouse (DEC), and other international donors and researchers have compiled and analyzed a host of relevant information that can be directly provided to Missions.

The obvious first step in a preliminary review of youth information is to check the Mission library or shared computer drive of the Mission for related reports and data. Information on a specific issue or on the situation of youth in general may be available from earlier studies or monitoring documents, such as trip reports, mid-term reviews, and trip notes. Missions can also make a request that USAID's Knowledge Services Center (KSC) conduct a search of the Washington-based records as well.

There are several other routes to collecting existing data about youth issues and may include host government sources, donors and other organizations, and using hired locals.

Host government sources. Government ministries often collect a variety of data, including census data, labor statistics, education statistics, and data on use of government benefits. The type and quality of government-collected statistics vary significantly by country. The following sources may be available from the host country government:

- Disaggregated demographic information (population distribution, death rates, suicide rates, etc.);
- Technical department surveys and analyses from Ministries (e.g., Ministries of Education, Labor, Health, Social Welfare or Youth, Sports and Culture);
- Departmental records and reports; and

- Maps, aerial photographs, and district gazetteers¹ (depending on the need).

Donors and other organizations. Multilateral organizations, bilateral aid agencies, and NGOs are ubiquitous throughout E&E. Initial data-gathering should always include a search for reports and other documents prepared by these organizations. By skimming these reports (or just looking at the table of contents), the Mission can gain an idea of what kinds of information are available, who is working on the same or similar issues, and what questions have already been answered. Examples of these types of documents include:

- International donor evaluation reports (such as World Bank, European Union Technical Assistance to the Commonwealth of Independent States (TACIS), and bilateral donors);
- In-country reports produced by NGOs and other donors (such as UNICEF, the British Know How Fund, Open Society Institute, and others); and
- Books and other publications.

Using Local Hires. The Mission should not initially invest a significant proportion of assessment resources in detailed local research that requires a lengthy timeline with no clear focus. However, the Mission will want to take full advantage of previous research available on youth, and this information can often be gathered and synthesized quickly and inexpensively using local hires. It is recommended that a local researcher be included in the eventual assessment team; for the preliminary review, this local hire can begin finding available information before the official assessment begins (e.g., an international team arrives in-country). The local researcher should also search non-traditional sources of data (such as newspaper articles or youth magazines), review these documents, and summarize them into a briefing document for the assessment team. This briefing document can provide a real-time initial glimpse into the current circumstances facing youth.

USING AVAILABLE DATA IN THE PRELIMINARY REVIEW

Preliminary reviews should include an initial review of youth-related data that are available from national and international sources. While some data are perhaps not relevant for USAID purposes or for the situation in each Mission, they do provide a useful starting point for discussion. Table 3 presents a list of possible indicators by sector. The indicators in this table do not represent the entire field of all possible indicators for each of the sectors. Instead, the table provides some examples of indicators that have been found useful to estimate the current condition of youth by sector. It is advisable that each Mission select its own indicators to be reflective of the realities in the country (countries) in which it works. For example, a Mission may choose to add qualitative response fields, such as the names of influential magazines targeted at youth. If Missions choose to use the following table as a model, it is advisable not to exceed 10 indicators per sector. The purpose of this table is to provide an initial overview of the situation of youth, not present a detailed assessment.

1. Lists of place names.

Table 3. Selected Indicators of the Status of Youth²

General Categories	Indicators	Sources of Data
Demographic Indicators	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Percentage of the total population • Structure of youth population by sex • Structure of youth by residence area • Internal migration of youth • Migratory flow of youth • Average age of first marriage • Average age of divorce • Rate of marriage • Rate of marriage by sex • Fertility rate of youth • Percentage of youth from single parent households 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Census or Statistical Offices • U.S. Bureau of Census, International Database • TransMONEE Database • Human Development Indicators • World Development Indicators
Living Standards and Life Quality Indicators	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Average net wage per month • Youth assessment of decent living • Level of consumption • Youth assessment of housing • Security on the street • Level of social tolerance • Perception of special social groups • Level of life satisfaction • Spare time activities by youth 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ministries of Economy • TransMONEE Database • Human Development Indicators • World Development Indicators
Health Status Indicators	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Quality of the health care system • Number of health facilities for youth • Prevalence of TB among youth by sex • Prevalence of STIs among youth by sex • Prevalence of HIV/AIDS among youth by sex • Causes of disease in youth by sex • Self-assessment of health status by sex 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • WHO • Ministries of Health • TransMONEE Database • Human Development Indicators • World Development Indicators • UNDP, WHO, UNAIDS • USAID KSC or DHS Surveys
Economic Participation and Unemployment Indicators	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Number of employed youth by sex • Structure of employed youth by sex • Characteristics of employment by youth • Employment by sector of the economy • Employment by location • Percentage of unemployed by sex • Length of unemployment by youth by sex • Active youth population by level of education 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ministries of Labor • TransMONEE Database • Human Development Indicators • World Development Indicators • The Economist • Department of Labor • ILO
Education Indicators	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Enrollment rates by sex • Abandonment rates by sex • School population over time by sex • Perception of education by sex 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • UNESCO • Ministries of Education • TransMONEE Database • Human Development Indicators • World Development Indicators

2. Ministry of Youth and Sports, Romania, Youth National Action Plan in Romania (YNAP), 2001.

Civic and Political Participation Indicators	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Satisfaction with political life • Level of trust in institutions • Perception of democracy • Level of openness about political views • Perception of citizen participation in society • Perception of influence on government • Types of activities involved in 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • NGOs working in civic development • TransMONEE • Human Development Indicators • World Development Indicators • USAID KSC
Deviance and Delinquency Indicators	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Number of youth committing offenses • Stage of judicial process • Number of accused youth by offense • Number of irrevocable sentences given to youth • Drug users by age group • Drug users by location • Suicide among youth by sex 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • TransMONEE • Ministries of Justice • UN Agencies • Local NGOs • Focus Groups with students

Collecting data for standardized indicators is often a simple way to gain an overarching understanding of the youth situation. Youth indicators can highlight the internal characteristics of the age cohort itself, including differences among key characteristics. For example, the data in Table 4 shows a sample of the structure of unemployment by youth according to age and location of cohort.

Table 4. Example of Youth Indicators: Percent of Youth Unemployment by Location

Location	Youth Cohort 15-19 years	Youth Cohort 20-24 years
Capital/Major Metro Areas	26.4%	14.7%
Regional Capitals	32.4%	18.4%
District Capitals	38.9%	24.7%
Rural Districts	44.7%	32.3%
Western Region	26.4%	12.7%
Central Region	32.7%	16.7%
Eastern Region	35.5%	22.4%

Youth indicators may also reveal useful information in relation to other age cohorts, to examine the current condition of youth in comparison with previous generations. An example of this type of indicator data is in Table 5, which shows a sample of youth cohort data alongside adult information.

Table 5. Example of Youth Indicators: Youth Unemployment by Educational Level*

Unemployment by Level of Education	Youth (15-19 years)	Youth (20-24 years)	Adults (25-34 years)	Adults (35-54 years)
Secondary School Incomplete	47.9%	29.7%	22.4%	26.7%
Completed Secondary Schooling	39.3%	22.4%	19.9%	22.1%
Completed Post-Secondary Technical Training	29.3%	18.7%	15.4%	12.1%
Completed Some University Study	NA	19.9%	14.4%	13.1%
Completed University Degree	NA	16.4%	9.8%	7.8%

* Includes only those actively seeking employment (excluding full-time students and homemakers)

NA: Not available

2.2 CONDUCTING A STAKEHOLDER ANALYSIS

It is important to identify the various stakeholders within the country, including what they think, and their power and influence, when designing a youth assessment. Along with the preliminary review, one of the first substantive activities that the Mission should undertake is to conduct a stakeholder analysis (SA) of the groups, organizations, and institutions in the specific social arenas in which the youth assessment is focusing.

Stakeholder analysis “has the advantage of being a flexible, context-specific paradigm that helps focus attention on specific problems, actors, and opportunities for change.”³ It allows the Mission to determine systematically who the principal social actors are in an area vital to the assessment, and leads them to consider (and to investigate) what their values and views are, what power and authority they may have to influence decisions and actions, what their objectives and goals would be with respect to the area of interests; whether they would support particular policy approaches, be indifferent, or create obstructions; and to what degree the different individuals or groups might be involved as participants in the appraisal or in subsequent policy initiatives.

The SA will be helpful both in providing the overall context of the system being investigated, as well as providing specific, concrete information that gives insight into the activities or condition of the demographic subgroups within a youth cohort. SA can provide answers to the following questions:

- Who can provide important insights into the area at which we are looking?
- Who can, through the power they hold and their place in the system, be supportive and cooperative in furthering potential youth initiatives? (What are their values, objectives and goals, and interests?)
- Who, through the power they hold and their place in the system, can prevent advancement or create obstacles in the way of potential youth initiatives?

A SA in the context of an initial youth assessment should be focused on specific questions or policy concerns, even if detail program objectives or activities have yet to be identified. The queries that shape the SA need to be linked to definable issues and potential proposed outcomes. For example, each of the illustrative scenarios (e.g., HIV/AIDS, unemployment, and youth and civil society) focuses on a specific area of concern that has policy implications. The SA is most useful when it is structured to answer specific questions that can lead to proposals for action.

The following three characteristics should guide the framing of the focus area of the SA.⁴

1. The themes should be specific and “definable.” Policymakers and managers will need an area of substance around which to articulate proposed actions.
2. Any issues known to be socially and politically controversial should be identified, so that the assessment team is able to determine what aspects of potential activities or programs are controversial and to whom.
3. The themes should be clear enough that they can yield recommended actions coming out of the analysis.

WHAT ARE EXAMPLES OF STAKEHOLDER GROUPS?

Given the directive of USAID to integrate youth into all aspects of programming, SA will necessarily include a large, varied panorama of social actors who will be vested in the conditions and circumstances of youth. The youth cohort itself is the most obvious and important group of stakeholders, and should be active participants throughout the assessment. Because youth may perhaps be the least likely to be

3. Chevalier, Jacques, “Stakeholder analysis and natural resource management,” <http://www.carleton.ca/~jchevali/stakeh2.html>, p. 2.

4. Schmeer, Kammi, “Stakeholder Analysis Guidelines,” Section 2, pp. 2-5.

organized and have articulated interests, they may need the most facilitation in making their own perspectives and experiences heard. The Mission needs to ensure that from the very beginning of the assessment process, the input of youths of various backgrounds and identities are included.

Stakeholders obviously include the most influential decision-makers and public actors, such as:

- Those in government who have control over public resources in education, health, and other ministries;
- Popular figures and media voices who highlight and focus on youth issues;
- Leaders of organizations that advocate for youth ends, attempt to educate youth on specific issues (such as health practices or employment) or who organize youth to carry out activities; and
- Manufacturers and merchants who target the youth market and are potential employers.

Other stakeholder groups may include churches, sports associations, community organizations, clubs, and other voluntary organizations. Stakeholders in the youth arena also include parents and families, teachers, counselors, and others who work with and guide young people.

Box I. Potential Groups of Stakeholders

Youth

- Specific youth population of interest (by age, sex, socioeconomic status, minority status, disability status, sexual orientation and gender identity, etc.)

Representatives of the Government

- Ministry of Education (policy for youth and relative importance/priority)
- Ministry of Health (policy for youth and relevant importance/priority)
- Ministries or other governmental agencies relating to youth issues
- In post- conflict areas or compulsory service countries – military leaders

Representatives of NGOs

- Other international donors (World Bank, European Union's PHARE/TACIS, EBRD, bilateral donors, etc.)
- International NGOs (CARE, World Vision, etc.)
- National NGO networks and groups working in youth issues or on youth projects, such as disadvantaged youth, public health, education, training, street children, etc.
- Religious institutions
- Civic groups, clubs

Beneficiaries and other member of the local community

- Selected school directors/faculty/universities
- Journalists
- American Chambers of Commerce/Junior Achievement programs/other business or private sector groups
- Youth and youth leaders: university students, participants in USG-funded training and exchange programs.
- Cultural, recreation centers
- Sports groups and associations

Staff on Site

- Peace Corps Volunteers
- USAID Contractors

More detailed information on how to go about organizing a stakeholder analysis can be found in Appendix B, Stakeholder Analysis.

CHAPTER 3: DESIGNING A YOUTH ASSESSMENT AND DEVELOPING THE STATEMENT OF WORK

Once Missions have a general understanding of the youth in their countries and have identified key stakeholders, they can begin to design their youth assessments by developing a scope of work (SOW). A well thought-out SOW is critical to undertaking a good youth assessment regardless of the intended objectives and methodologies. Devoting adequate time and effort in preparing a good SOW directly impacts an assessment's quality, relevance, and usefulness.⁵ This section of the manual presents the basic preliminary steps involved in designing a youth assessment through creating a strong SOW.

The content and detail of a SOW will vary depending on how extensive the assessment is, what kinds of resources are available to the Mission, and the experience of Mission staff in preparing SOWs. However, the steps outlined below are the basic components to designing any type of information gathering and can serve as a guide to the Missions for their youth assessment.

Box 2. Basic Steps to Designing an Assessment and Developing a SOW

- STEP 1. Identify Purpose of Assessment
- STEP 2. Define Assessment's Objectives
- STEP 3. State Key Questions, Identify Activities, and Develop a Plan
- STEP 4. Assign Human and Financial Resources
- STEP 5. Estimate Time and Cost Factors
- STEP 6. Review Decisions
- STEP 7. Involve Stakeholders
- STEP 8. Draft the SOW

If the assessment is to be done in-house by Mission staff, the SOW should include the methodologies and work plan for the assessment. However, if the assessment will be carried out by outside consultants, the Mission may not want to prescribe the detailed approach and methodology. In some instances, it may be advisable for the Mission to identify the objectives and need for the assessment only and leave the details of implementation up to the contracting organization. Further information and detail about preparing a scope of work for an assessment using a rapid appraisal may be found in Appendix A and a sample SOW may be found in Appendix D.

3.1 IDENTIFYING THE PURPOSE OF THE ASSESSMENT

As with any research effort, the purpose of the assessment should be clearly stated, including the specific questions it should address and how the resulting information is intended to be used by the Mission and other parties. The stated purpose will help the Mission determine the level of effort and extent of data collection that will be required to fulfill this purpose.

The following questions focus on the purpose of the assessment, the Mission's expectations, and the potential audience(s) beyond the Mission who will use the results of the activity. Thinking through these questions will help to determine the objectives for the youth assessment. In considering the assessment purpose, the planners should keep in mind the needs of the stakeholders and the target audience for the study. These needs will also influence the level of assessment required to achieve its purpose.

5. USAID, "Preparing and Evaluation Scope of Work," Performance Monitoring and Evaluation TIPS, No. 3, USAID Center for Development Information and Evaluation, Washington, DC, 1996.

Purpose Questions (see employment example below)

1. Why are youth being assessed at this time?
2. How are the assessment results going to be useful to the Mission?
3. Have any major changes (in the economy, government programs or priorities, society, etc.) occurred recently?
4. Are any major changes anticipated in the future?

Box 3. Purpose of the Youth Assessment: Employment Example

1. Due to a stagnant economy and the slow pace of privatization of large-scale state enterprises, official unemployment has remained low. However, workers now are finding that their jobs have been terminated and they are entering the labor market to seek new work. Youth now face dual difficulties in securing employment: first, the job market did not expand sufficiently to absorb them in recent years before privatization began; and now, although economic activity is picking up, they face competition from newly laid-off seasoned workers who are struggling to find new employment. The perception of growing youth-related social problems – idle youth, increased street crime and drug use, and the fear of a “lost generation” – has moved both the government and USAID to conduct an assessment of the employment situation of youth to be able to design more effective policy responses.

2. The Mission already has a focus on labor market reform, especially related to supporting the Parliament in developing revisions to the national labor law and working with independent trade unions. The Mission has also advised the Ministry of Labor on the design of an active unemployment program, involving labor market research, and management training, and with the reform of the banking system in developing credit mechanisms to strengthen small business creation. USAID officers also have been investigating the possibility of expanding their activities into job training. The results of the assessment will provide a base of information to determine whether and how new activities related to job training might include, or even be targeted to, the youth cohort.

3. The situation of youth was already growing critical as the cohort of under-25 matured and yet found little career opportunity in the large state enterprises. Leaders already recognized as well that technical and vocational training was out of sync with the changing economy, no longer providing training in the kinds of skills that led to new jobs. They have also perceived that the social problems mentioned above are growing. With the increased pace of privatization and institutional reform of the productive public sector, the situation appears even more critical.

4. The Mission does not anticipate higher levels of funding. However, with a new strategy required in the next two years, it may well be that the Mission can expand its focus on the situation of youth by re-orienting and refining on-going activities.

3.2 DEFINING THE ASSESSMENT'S OBJECTIVES

When the Mission decides the general level and purpose of the youth assessment, the next step is to define the specific objectives of the proposed data collection. These objectives will determine the information required to achieve them, which in turn will help to determine the types of tools and methodologies required for the assessment. Staff from different offices may want the assessment to

provide different types of data; the differences need to be thoroughly discussed, prioritized, and resolved prior to writing the SOW. For example, Mission staff may find that they would like an extensive assessment of youth across all sectors, but resources only permit an assessment of one sector. This section should help the Mission think through competing demands to develop clear and focused objectives.

By keeping in the mind the overall purpose of the assessment (Step 1), Mission staff can better identify and prioritize the objectives for the data collection. Has the Mission become aware of new information about youth? Was there a change in legislation or government organization that may drastically affect the status of youth in the country? Was there a catastrophe to which the Mission needs to respond? Does the Mission have sufficient funds to deploy before the end of the fiscal year?

The following text box suggests some key questions that planners should consider when developing a SOW for a youth assessment.

Box 4. Key Questions to Assist Planners in Defining Youth Assessment Objectives for a Scope of Work

- What category or populations of youth should be targeted?
- What are the information needs of the Mission?
- Who is the audience for the assessment?
- What is the timeframe?
- Can the assessment be done in-house? Or by a contractor?
- What resources (time, labor, travel) are available?
- Can other donors contribute resources to the assessment?
- What information resources already exist in this area (preliminary review)?

Information Needs Questions (see democracy example below)

1. How would you describe previous assessments of youth?
2. How could any previous assessments have been made more useful?
3. What kinds of information do you think the assessment should contain?
4. What information about youth would be most useful to the Mission? Your clients? USAID/Washington?

Box 5. Mission Information Needs: Democracy Example

1. Previous USAID assessments of youth have focused on health conditions. They have provided no insight into the attitudes of youth towards democracy and civil society institutions. Other donors have conducted polls to determine who votes and why, but no special attention was given to the 15-24 age cohort.
2. Those assessments might have provided good data on youth attitudes towards voting, but should at least provide the team a baseline measurement of political involvement, recognizing that voting is often the simplest and most common form of political participation, but does not necessarily constitute approval of or confidence in the political system. Those polls also did not ask for whom people voted, so we have little data on which political parties and issues resonate with the country's youth.

3. The assessment will obtain several types of information. First, the Mission will need information on the level of political and civic involvement of youth and on current efforts by political or civic organizations to target youth in their activities or increase youth involvement. Data on youths' attitudes toward and interest in democratic development and civil society institutions, broken down into specific categories of institutions, are paramount. The Mission also needs to gauge the level of trust the country's youths have in various institutions and processes (i.e., local charities, national non-governmental organizations, local governments, courts, parliament, executive agencies, elections, etc.) and perceived access to decision makers.

4. The Mission is most interested in youths' attitudes and perceived access to decision makers. Partners in the government would like to know about levels of trust in the various governmental institutions and political processes. Political parties will be interested in trust in the political processes and perceived access to decision makers, particularly at the local level. USAID/Washington is most interested in the level of civic and political participation and the level of trust in political institutions and processes.

Potential Audience(s) Questions (see health example below)

1. What groups of people are involved with youth or are affected by youth issues (stakeholder analysis)?
2. What sorts of information about youth would be most useful to each of these groups?
3. Should representatives from other groups be interviewed while planning the assessment or during the assessment?
4. What are the multiple audiences (stakeholders, ministries, donors, Mission, Agency) that have need of information on youth?
5. Which groups should receive information about the assessment when it is complete? Should special reports be directed to specific groups?⁶

Box 6. Potential Audience(s): Health Example

1. In the area of health, some of the groups that are involved with youth are primary care physicians, nurses, pharmacists, HIV/AIDS and family planning clinics, and hospitals. Outside the health community, other groups that are affected include educators (e.g., high schools, polytechnic institutions, and universities), employers in all sectors, and social welfare administrations. Non-governmental organizations that provide health, education and training, counseling and material goods are likely to be adversely affected by a growing number of HIV/AIDS infected youth, or will need to re-direct their programming to better meet the needs of this segment of society.

2. All stakeholders would be interested in hearing from the youth themselves, particularly women under the age of 25, regarding their needs and interests. Health providers might be particularly interested to know where youth feel there are gaps in provision or quality of care. Educators want to know what methods of communication and messages would be most effective in reaching youths that are at risk for HIV/AIDS infection. Social welfare agencies might be interested in learning how to target existing funds more effectively to address the particular needs of young women.

6. Strecher, Brian M. and W. Alan Davis. (1987) How to Focus an Evaluation. London: Sage Publications.

3. Since HIV/AIDS in youth transcends a number of sectors and affects a wide variety of people both directly and indirectly, it is important to talk with a variety of stakeholders to assess where new programming can be most effective. For this instance, a local researcher compiles and summarizes available information and reports from international donors and foundations, as well as relevant census data, prior to the team's arrival in order to inform the approach to be taken in the assessment of youth. If the initial research leads to interesting findings, then follow up meetings should be conducted during the course of the assessment.

4. The primary audience for the assessment is the Mission. However, since many other international donors were contacted during the assessment, it would be beneficial to provide a brief executive summary of key findings (1-2 pages) so that the work is not replicated. The Mission might consider holding individual follow-up meetings with each of the government representatives with whom they met during the assessment to show that their recommendations and observations have been taken into consideration in planning new programs. If the findings show that the atmosphere is ripe for a constructive dialogue about HIV/AIDS in youth, it might be a good time to host a two-day workshop on the issue or to begin a coordinating committee among the main stakeholders.

3.3 STATING KEY QUESTIONS, IDENTIFYING ACTIVITIES, AND DEVELOPING A PLAN

Once the Mission identifies the overall purpose and objectives for the youth assessment, the next step is to identify *key assessment questions*. These key questions will outline the assessment plan, determine the methodologies to be employed, identify the activities, and help inform a tentative work plan.

The main questions that guide this aspect of the assessment planning are: *What are the key research questions? What methodologies should be used? What activities will be undertaken?*

KEY QUESTIONS

Key questions specify what research information, data, analyses and recommendations are needed to achieve the purpose and objectives of the assessment. These questions are typically detailed addressing specific issues and concerns of the youth in country. Often, the initial review will help generate key questions. Identifying these key questions is necessary whether the research will be done in-house, by a consultant, or by a contracting firm. The following are some health-related examples of key questions for youth assessments.

- What have been some of the effective messages that have been successful in reaching youth at risk from HIV/AIDS in this country (literature review; interviews with educators, parents, HIV/AIDS experts, Ministry of Health, other donors)?
- What are the best methods for communicating these messages to at risk youth (literature review; surveys and interviews of educators and youth; focus groups)?
- Should messages to youth about HIV/AIDS be gender-specific (same as above, triangulate)?
- At which level(s) (lower secondary grades, upper secondary grades, out-of-school youth) would educating youth about the risk of HIV/AIDS be most effective (literature review; interviews with educators, parents, HIV/AIDS experts, Ministry of Health)?
- What should parents of youth be taught about HIV/AIDS and what is the best way to reach them (literature review; interviews with educators, parents, HIV/AIDS experts, Ministry of Health)?

- What kinds of HIV/AIDS educational materials are being provided for youth in the country now (interviews with youth, educators, parents, HIV/AIDS experts, Ministry of Health, other donors)?

METHODOLOGIES

The data collection methodologies used in the assessment should correspond to the kinds of information needed to respond to the key questions and satisfy the data needs of the audiences. The methodologies may be qualitative (i.e., observations, non-structured interviews, focus groups), quantitative (survey, structured interview), or a blend of the two, with qualitative data providing context and enrichment for the quantitative data. For discussion about the types of data collection methodologies that are available and appropriate for a youth assessment, please refer to Chapter 4: Methodological Consideration in Designing Youth Assessment.

ASSESSMENT ACTIVITIES

The illustrative list of assessment activities is provided in Box 7 below and includes some of the likely steps, general responsibilities, and activities of an assessment team. The SOW will contain greater specificity and, to a degree, will depend upon whether the Mission has decided to use a team composed of internal, external, or combination of experts. If the Mission decides to hire consultants or a consulting firm to conduct some or all of the assessment activities, the tasks assigned to those consultants represent the main points of the work plan. The differences between these three types of teams are discussed in greater detail in the following text, and, to some extent, will determine the types of methodologies to be employed.

Box 7. Illustrative Assessment Activities for the SOW

Preparation

- Provide inputs regarding evaluation design; bring refinements and specificity to the assessment concerns and questions.
- Review information and documentation made available by the Mission.
- Design or refine the instruments to collect additional information as needed.

Implementation

- Undertake site visits as necessary.
- Conduct interviews (or implement other data collection methods; the work plan should be specific).
- Facilitate stakeholder participation, if part of the scope.
- Provide regular progress reporting and briefings to the Mission.
- Analyze and synthesize information; interpret findings, develop and discuss conclusions and recommendations; draw lessons learned.
- Prepare deliverables (including interim and final reports).
- Participate in discussions of the draft evaluation report.

Follow-up

Provide debriefing or guide reflection or discussions if a workshop is required.

Further discussion of work plan activities may be found in Chapter 4: Methodological Considerations in Designing Youth Assessment.

3.4 ASSIGNING HUMAN AND FINANCIAL RESOURCES

An important aspect of scope development for a Youth Assessment will be to determine the scale of resources, both human and financial, that will be required for it to yield the results desired. Recruiting the right researchers to work together on the team will be crucial to ensuring that the expertise is on hand to be able to transform the general assessment objectives into appropriate data collection instruments, to foster the social relationships necessary to mobilize the organizations and communities that need to be involved, to carry out or oversee the data collection in the most effective way, and to analyze and synthesize the resulting information into a form tailored to Mission needs. Providing sufficient financial resources and tailoring expectations and requirements to the funding available are also key to the success of the effort.

STAFFING

While Appendix C: Recruiting and Organizing the Assessment Team, provides a more in-depth discussion of staffing issues, it is important to note here that developing the SOW includes making certain decisions about team composition. Who will be on the team? Who will lead the team? This initial discussion will give the Mission planners a sense of the staffing choices they will have to make. As in all such short-term endeavors, in which solid results are needed after intensive work over a relatively short time-frame, the scope should call for a well-qualified Chief of Party (CoP) or Team Leader to work with Mission staff, direct and coordinate the effort, organize data collection, and guide the analysis and drafting of the assessment document. Two other specialties should be included in most instances (and the CoP may fill one of these roles). First, the team should have a research specialist or methodologist, who can guide the instrument development, prepare and train any needed data collectors, manage the data collection process, and ensure that the resulting data is available in a form that can be synthesized in the assessment document to provide supportable findings and recommendations. In some cases, a more junior researcher should also be included to manage the technicalities of data cleaning and data entry, the coding of qualitative data, and work with the research specialist to ensure that the information collected is coherent and usable. Including both roles may be a cost effective way to cover the many diverse activities centered on the data. Second, at least one expert in youth development – often with a background in education, social work, sociology, or economics – will be needed to provide the base of knowledge of the research and programming on youth issues needed to develop detailed areas of inquiry and to contextualize the local assessment findings within the broader discussion of youth programming. Ideally, many or most of these persons are national-level staff, although it is very important to have at least one key team member (such as the CoP) who is very familiar with USAID policies and practices.

Other roles that potentially should be considered are interpreters, transcribers (for interviews and focus groups), data collectors/interviewers, and a person dedicated to making the team's logistical arrangements, from setting up appointments to arranging travel to ensuring that the team has all the materials and functioning technology that it needs. In a youth assessment, it is good practice to ensure that some members of the team are youth. In particular, having youth as data collectors and interviewers of other youth may assist in establishing rapport and increasing the likelihood that respondents provide accurate data since they may be more open with their peers about difficult subjects than with older adults.⁷

Given these requirements, available options for staffing may include the following individuals or a combination of the following types of people.

7. Having youth serve as data collectors introduces other concerns that are addressed in Chapter 4.

- Local hire staff
- Local hire consultants or consulting firms
- Expatriate staff
- International consultants and consulting firms
- Staff from other international donor organizations
- Staff from other U.S. Government agencies operating in the country who can be assigned by their agencies to the task
- Staff or volunteers from NGOs or PVOs operating in the country
- Staff or volunteers from host country government agencies or institutions (supported financially by their own agencies or institutions)

The size of the team needs to be calibrated to the objective of the assessment. A country-wide assessment bridging more than one sector clearly needs to have more resources and a more diverse team than one more narrowly focused by topic. The number of interpreters would be linked to the linguistic realities of the country and other team members. An assessment that can draw on partner institutions may require USAID to support a smaller team than one which must be completely self-sufficient. While working with partners may reduce the financial requirements for USAID, Missions will have less control over the team and data used, so any trade-offs should be carefully considered in advance.

ASSIGNING FINANCIAL RESOURCES

Mission staff may have greater flexibility in assigning financial resources for a youth assessment than they may realize. The Mission may choose to use its some of its own resources to fund the youth assessment, or to request the *pillar bureaus* (Bureau for Economic Growth, Education, and Environment; Bureau for Global Health; or Bureau for Democracy, Conflict, and Humanitarian Assistance) to fund the assessment, either fully or partially.

Missions also have a number of *existing contract mechanisms* at their disposal for recruiting assessment teams. Almost any indefinite quantity contract (IQC) holder should be able to conduct an assessment in its field of expertise, and a task order is probably the fastest way to initiate the work. A list of current IQCs and their holders is available online at <http://www.usaspending.gov/>. Other options include a purchase order for a small, well-defined appraisal; letting a new contract for a large-scale appraisal; or using such government-wide mechanisms as the General Services Administration's MOBIS mechanism.

Also consider *leveraging financial or other assistance* from non-governmental organizations and international donor institutions. Several Missions in Europe and Eurasia have coordinated programs successfully with the World Bank, UN Development Programme, Deutsche Gesellschaft fuer Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ), European Union (PHARE and TACIS), and the Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA). All of these organizations have web sites for additional information, and most of them have offices in each of the countries of Europe and Eurasia.

3.5 ESTIMATING TIME AND COST FACTORS

Even the most experienced staff may have a difficult time predicting the exact length of time needed for an assessment and foreseeing all of the costs associated with it. This section of the manual provides general guidance about the length of time each task of the assessment might take and what factors to include in estimating the cost of the assessment.

Considering the overall purpose of the assessment and other Mission activities will help the planning team to determine an approximate start and end date for the youth assessment.

- What key milestones are coming up in the Mission planning process for which the assessment results may be useful?
- By what date is the assessment report needed for these?
- Are there interim reporting dates or is a single, final report sufficient?

TIMING CONSIDERATIONS

Often the time allocated for the assessment is too short when compared to the expected outcomes. For a simple assessment, a total of 30 to 45 workdays is adequate in most cases. However, there are numerous factors that can impede the assessment's progress, including the complexity of the assessment, the availability of personnel and stakeholders, and exogenous factors like weather, illness, political unrest, war, and airline strikes. Some specific considerations are included below.

Complexity. The time that the assessment will take is dependent largely on the complexity of the assessment. The more complex the assessment in terms of the data collection processes, the types of groups to be located, the number of working languages, and the geographical distribution of the stakeholders, the more time must be allowed.

- Will the assessment examine several sectors contributing to the status of youth, or will the assessment focus on specific issues? Will the team try to talk with a broad range of stakeholders or will the members only talk with a small number of stakeholders with specific types of expertise

Data collection and analysis. Another factor contributing to amount of time that needs to be allocated for the assessment is the availability and accessibility of data. The more steps that are required to obtain the data, the greater the time frame will be.⁸

- Pre-assessment data collection and analysis:
 - What information has the Mission collected in its preliminary review?
 - Are the data easily accessible, collected on regular basis, and reliable?
 - To what extent will additional literature review be required, and how accessible is that information (online, paper files, various locations)?
- Preparation for in-country data collection:
 - If new data are being collected, for example through a survey, what national laws or policies exist regarding data privacy and confidentiality?
 - What type of new data will be collected (qualitative, quantitative, both) and how will it be organized and analyzed?
 - To what extent will data collectors and interviewers need to be trained to complete their tasks to USAID's quality standards?
 - Is there a need for translation in the data collection process (instruments/protocols, responses, or both)?
- Management of in-country data collection and analysis:
 - Will key groups or individuals be available to provide information only at certain times?
 - Will there be conferences, seminars, or meetings where large groups of youth may be coming together, which researchers might visit and contact various individuals or groups of youth?

8. Questions excerpted from Strecher, Brian M. and W. Alan Davis. (1987) How to Focus an Evaluation. London: Sage Publications.

- Can other organizations contribute resources to the assessment (for example, data, logistical assistance, or staff time) for data collection, cleaning, coding, and analysis?
- Does the involvement of staff of other organizations (partners, but not under contract to USAID) introduce any potential conflict of interest or bias in the data collection and analysis process?

Personnel. Mission staff should also take their own availability and the availability of potential stakeholders into consideration, when identifying what human resources can be directed toward the assessment. If Mission staff are available only on a part-time basis, the time frame for completing the assessment will necessarily increase.

- Are other Mission personnel available and able to respond to high-priority requests and action items that come in during the course of the assessment?
- How many of the meetings and interviews with key stakeholders are sufficiently high-level or political to require Mission attendance?
- Are any key stakeholders in government or other positions likely to turn over during the assessment period?

Weather and season. Weather can significantly impact the ability of the assessment team to travel, thus raising travel and per diem costs. Flights may be delayed or canceled in extreme hot, stormy, or wintry weather. Roads can become impassable in some areas during winter or rainy seasons. While it is not possible to predict all weather events, weather patterns should be taken into account when scheduling an assessment, and contingency plans may be useful if an assessment must occur during a period that is typically characterized by bad weather conditions. Observed holidays and other seasonal events must be taken into consideration as well. For example, assessments that must be conducted when children and youth are in school will be limited by the school year, while assessments focusing on youth in rural areas may need to be scheduled around harvest times.

Distance and normal travel times. In large countries, the long distances between cities often mean that planners should carefully consider and build in adequate travel time. Even within the cities, time is an important consideration. It often takes an hour to get from one side of a large, congested city to the other, by metro or taxi, which limits the number of meetings that can be held in a day. Travel time must be factored into the level of effort and time required to do the assessment.

DEVELOPING A DRAFT BUDGET

Depending on the level of data collection, assessments can often be completed with a budget of between \$85,000 and \$250,000. However, a variety of factors could increase the cost of the assessment, including delays in implementation due to unexpected circumstances on the ground, complexity of the assessment, location, and number and experience of the staff. As discussed earlier, the main categories of expenses are labor, travel, and other direct costs.

Box 8. Factors That May Affect Cost Estimates

- Delays may increase labor time spent: home office staff may spend additional time adjusting logistical arrangements or replacing personnel if the proposed team members are not available during the new timeframe or the team on the ground may not be able to use time efficiently if key stakeholders are unexpectedly unavailable (particularly early in the assessment period as they will have less flexibility in juggling data collection and data analysis tasks).
- A broad geographic scope may include smaller cities and rural areas and may require travel to areas with irregular transport service or poor roads.
- The more complex the assessment and the more stakeholder groups and data collection instruments used, the more expensive the assessment becomes.
- Translation and interpretation costs may be high depending on the number and technicality of documents to be translated and the availability of good interpreters with sectoral expertise.
- Economy class fares vary widely by time or year and day of week, and the less notice the team has, the more expensive the fares will be. If a consultant has a medical waiver to travel business class, the costs are much higher.
- Local hire staff are typically much less expensive than international consultants.

Labor. Labor is calculated by multiplying the number of days by the daily rate of the consultants. How labor rates are determined varies, depending on the contract mechanism. Many IQCs have fixed labor rates at various skill and experience levels, and these rates are published in the IQC materials. These fixed rates already include overhead or indirect costs and fee (if there is any). Cross-referencing these rates and the qualifications desired in the assessment team allows USAID to develop a cost estimate. It is important to be realistic, however, in gauging whether junior or mid-level consultants are likely to have the skills needed that are not captured in the minimum education and years of experience defined in the IQC schedule. As a rule of thumb, USAID solicitations typically require expatriate assessment team members who are fairly senior with sectoral and methodological expertise, which means they likely will be billed at the top rates in the IQC schedule. A fairly accurate expatriate labor cost estimate can be developed, then, by multiplying the total number of team labor days by, for example, the two highest fixed labor categories.

Local consultants typically comprise part of a contracted assessment team as well, and their labor rates will be determined by the Mission's local pay schedule (FSN/CCN compensation schedule) or by the prevailing market rates for the skills required, which requires additional documentation and approval by the Contracting Officer (CO). For skills that are commonly needed, cross-referencing the FSN/CCN compensation schedule and the qualifications required of local consultants provides the second part of the labor estimate (though in many cases, this labor cost will be included in Other Direct Costs rather than in labor categories). If the mix of skills and experience needed is rare, it probably warrants a discussion with the CO in advance.

Finally, it may be useful to have experts on the team who are neither from the U.S. nor the country in which the assessment is taking place, however contracting regulations may preclude that possibility. For budget purposes, these third country nationals (TCNs) may be included within the labor categories for U.S. personnel only if the contracting organization has received prior approval to remunerate TCNs at equivalent rates to U.S. personnel. Otherwise, TCNs are subject to the FSN/CCN compensation schedule, which may prove to be problematic if those rates are significantly lower than a TCN's established consulting rate.

When using external consultants, remember to factor in several days at the beginning of the project (prior to consultant travel to country) to allow time for the consultant(s) to read background materials and prepare for the assessment.

Travel and Per Diem. For travel expenses, Missions are required to use the U.S. Department of State travel guidelines to determine the per diems for their country, found at http://aoprals.state.gov/web920/per_diem.asp. Missions have different rules about the per diem paid to local consultants and staff for internal travel, so the specific Mission's rules should be taken into account when estimating per diem costs.⁹ The biggest single travel expense is often international airfare. In-country travel, particularly when internal flights are required, is also an important budgetary consideration.

Other Direct Costs (ODC). Other direct costs include local transportation, interpreters and other local staff, costs for training data collectors, supplies, insurance, copying, equipment and facilities rental, postage and shipping, and communications (i.e., telephone, fax, and internet access). Typically, indirect costs are added on top of these general expenses.

3.6 REVIEW DECISIONS

Now that preliminary objectives are set and staff and financial resources are determined, it is useful to review some of the decisions that have been made about level of effort, availability of information, and cost and timing among others. This step is an important element of the Mission's risk management for the assessment. Below are some questions to help guide the review of decisions made thus far.

- Are the assumptions that have been made about the length of time required realistic?
- Are the assumptions about level of effort realistic?
- Are the assumptions about the availability of information realistic?
- Are the assumptions about the costs realistic?
- Are youth integrated into the assessment process as stakeholders and as team members?
- What if the team's initial findings show that youth programming is not needed in the sector they have been hired to look at?

3.7 INVOLVING STAKEHOLDERS

Before finalizing the scope of work, it is important to obtain agreement by the key stakeholders to the overall plan of action. The Mission should consider inviting all of the youth assessment stakeholders, who have been described in detail earlier in this chapter, to a meeting to discuss the draft scope of work. The agenda might include the following:

- Presentation of a four- to five-page summary of the assessment criteria, including objectives and strategies, key assessment questions, time frame, and key groups to be included as informants in the assessment.
- Discussion of the assessment design. Listen to all points of view and attempt to reach consensus on priority goals for the assessment (if such agreement has not already been reached), whether the assessment team should be comprised of external members, internal members, or both,

9. It is important to note that having different per diem rates can create difficulties for the assessment team. For example, if the local lodging rate does not cover a hotel with meeting space, internet, and other amenities, the team members may stay in different locations, which would make it harder for them to work together. While it saves some money, it also reinforces the expatriates' privileged position vis-à-vis the local consultants.

data collection methods, and resources that each stakeholder might be able to contribute to the assessment (potential partnership and cost-sharing, if appropriate).¹⁰

Following the meeting, the Mission should prepare a one- to two-page summary of the meeting to share with all of the attendees.

3.8 NEXT STEPS—DRAFT THE SOW

Having gone through the above steps, Mission staff will be ready to prepare the necessary components of the scope of work (SOW). As noted earlier, the main components of the scope of work are:

- **Background and purpose.** Summarize in a paragraph the topic to be assessed and describe the purpose of the assessment, including who will use the results and how.
- **Objectives and assessment questions.** Specify the objective of the assessment and list the major questions the assessment should answer, specify the area and population to be considered, and if possible, the kinds of measurement to be used.
- **Assessment methods.** Describe the overall assessment approach and data collection methods, providing as much guidance as possible (e.g., data collection instruments, procedures, and analysis) and identify sources of available data.
- **Composition of the assessment team.** Identify the skills, knowledge and experience required to carry out the assessment (e.g., education, field and assessment experience, knowledge of subject, and language proficiency), distinguishing between desired and required skills, and specify the respective roles of the team and the client.
- **Outline the major tasks.** State the specific tasks the assessment team is responsible for and a preliminary schedule. For example, suggest that the team meet with certain officials early on and provide a work plan for review. A sample timeline could be provided that includes all major tasks and deliverables.
- **Deliverables.** List products to be delivered, to whom and when, such as the work plan, sampling plan, data analysis plan, pilot testing of instruments, IRB review (if appropriate), training of data collectors (if appropriate), regular data collection updates to the Mission, draft report and executive summary, oral debriefing, and final report and executive summary. This section should also specify what should be in the report, and indicate whether or not the report should be translated.
- **Financial requirements and logistical support.** Give the budget for the assessment, including reporting requirements about financial matters, and identify any logistical support that the Mission will provide.

Appendix D to this manual illustrates the key components typically included in a scope of work, and a sample scope of work from the Republic of Macedonia (to assess educational needs of minority youth) shows how those components might be addressed.

10. Depending on the local situation, some of this may have been done in advance. If USAID is working in partnership with another organization on youth issues, for example, decisions about priority goals and cost-sharing might have been made before any other preparatory work was undertaken.

CHAPTER 4: METHODOLOGICAL CONSIDERATION IN DESIGNING YOUTH ASSESSMENTS

This chapter discusses important considerations when selecting specific methodologies for a youth assessment that will assist Missions in the design and oversight of their assessments. The first section provides an overview of the methodologies and discusses key considerations and requirements for selecting a data collection strategy. More specific discussions of the most frequently used methodologies used in assessments and especially in rapid appraisals is followed with in-depth material on methodologies located in Appendices E and F. This discussion assumes the reader has some familiarity with research and evaluation methods.

4.1 OVERVIEW OF RESEARCH METHODS FOR YOUTH ASSESSMENTS

A research methodology is the consistent application of research tools and/or approaches to collect the data needed to answer assessment questions. Most assessments, including rapid appraisals, draw from a variety of methods to fully answer research questions. The primary methods include:

- *Literature Review*: Using and synthesizing available information from USAID and other donors or sources (e.g., reports, demographic analyses, studies, etc.).
- *Interviews*: One-on-one discussion with key informants and stakeholders where they are asked a series of questions about a desired topic.
- *Focus Groups*: A facilitated discussion with a small group of key informants or stakeholders where they are asked a series of questions about a desired topic.
- *Surveys*: Structured set of questions (often closed-ended) that can be administered by phone, mail, internet, or in person.
- *Structured Observation*: A systematic review of behavior, an organization's operations, or environmental conditions.

It is important to adopt research methods that will collect the data required to answer the research questions in the most feasible and appropriate manner.

4.2 IMPORTANT CONSIDERATIONS IN DESIGNING ASSESSMENTS

There are numerous factors to consider when selecting methods for a youth assessment. Several important factors, applicable to all methodologies, are listed below for Missions to consider when designing assessments.

SAMPLING

The preliminary review and stakeholder analysis should enable Missions to identify the relevant parties to be included in the assessment. It is especially critical to identify young people who can provide insights into the diversity of identities and/or experiences and needs across the population. Examples of relevant diversity may include: economic status; sex; marital status; educational, program, and employment experiences; disability; absence of parental care; sexual orientation and gender identity; and ethnicity and religion. In addition to considering the diversity of individuals within the sample, another consideration is the overall number of individuals that will be included in the assessment. The sample size has direct implications for the level of expected rigor of the assessment results, the time required and the costs associated with the assessment. Assessment approaches that rely on primarily qualitative approaches (i.e., rapid appraisals) typically do not require large numbers of participants because their goal is to provide a 'snapshot' description of a population or situation, rather than a statistically

significant representation. However, USAID is increasingly focused on evidence-based programming, and approaches that are more rigorous have more weight in guiding decision-making. Depending upon the timing and the purpose of the assessment, achieving a certain level of rigor may or may not be a priority in comparison to the need for speedy preliminary information about the context of youth in the country.

ACCESS

Another issue related to sampling is the ease of access to the specific groups of youth that should be recruited to participate in the assessment. For example, schools, civil society organizations, and social programs are often used as a means to access youth for the purpose of interviewing, surveying, or for focus groups. It is important to note that the organizations through which youth are reached are going to also predetermine the types of youth ultimately reached. For example, university students may be limited to those who come from higher-income families, have mastery of the national language (and no knowledge of minority languages), and/or have no experience looking for employment. Likewise, at-risk youth or those in the most need of programmatic support may be the most difficult to contact and include in the assessment. Missions should consider what types of accommodation may be necessary or useful to ensure that all target groups can participate, which might mean something as simple as holding focus groups in a ground floor location so youth with mobility issues have easy access or multiple data collection procedures.

If the assessment includes hard-to-reach youth, or hidden populations not identified in the stakeholder analysis, special recruitment techniques may be needed. A common technique for finding respondents within these groups is called snowballing. Simply, one respondent identifies and refers the researchers to others. While these samples are not representative, it is usually a reliable way to reach vulnerable or isolated social groups. Snowballing works best in exploratory, qualitative, and descriptive research, making it well-suited to youth assessments focused on illegal, illicit, or socially unacceptable behavior. The most important characteristic of snowballing is that it can reduce distrust among respondents and has been used to research gang behavior, drug use, prostitution, pick pocketing, and HIV/AIDS incidence.¹¹ Snowballing, however, requires a longer field work period than other sampling techniques so the team has time to identify, contact, and collect data from potential respondents as they are identified.

LANGUAGE AND CULTURAL CONSIDERATIONS

Diversity in language also adds a level of complexity to any assessment. Multiple languages require not only the translation of instruments and interview questions, but ensuring the integrity and communicability of key concepts and ideas from one language to another. Issues should be described in colloquial dialects and phrasing (and not simply formal translations) to ensure that concepts do not lose their meaning in translation.

Cultural context is also important when designing an assessment. Key informant interviews can be conducted effectively with an interpreter. For focus groups, community interviews, and administered surveys, however, the moderator or administrator should be a native speaker (and may need to be matched on some characteristic to the respondents) to ensure that rapport and trust can be built rapidly. Maximizing respondents' comfort level and allowing them to use the language most natural to them (including slang and dialect) generally yields the best and richest data in which the respondents' meaning comes through most clearly. The recording or transcription can be translated and the

11. Atkinson, Rowland and John Flint. "Accessing Hidden and Hard-to-Reach Populations: Snowball Research Strategies," *Social Research Update*, no. 33. University of Surrey, <http://www.soc.surrey.ac.uk/sru/SRU33.html>

assessment team can observe the focus group with a simultaneous translator, but the interaction is too stilted to be useful when these tools are utilized with an interpreter.

PILOTING TESTING OF PROTOCOLS AND INSTRUMENTS

All data collection protocols and instruments should be pilot tested before the main data collection effort begins. This is a vital step in all methodologies to ensure that the time and resources invested in the assessment will result in the highest quality data possible. Piloting can include a number of different formal and informal activities to insure that the interview, focus group, survey, etc. questions are relevant and comprehensible to intended respondents. For example, members of the target population can review the instruments and protocols and interviews can be conducted with several individuals from different target groups (i.e., in each language and with each major respondent category) to ensure that the questions elicit the desired information and that the instrument's administration is appropriate and relevant to all. Pilot testing can also help identify any unintended biases in the questions or missing categories. Assessment contractors will be primarily responsible for the piloting of protocols and instruments, and Mission staff should ensure any scope of work incorporates this important step, and that it is reflected in the team's work plan and timeline.

CONSENT AND THE PROTECTION OF RESEARCH PARTICIPANTS

Because youth assessments typically focus on youth as people and their lived experiences, youth assessments are generally considered human subject research, as opposed to performance evaluations, which are not. Although they may use identical methods to obtain information from the same target groups, the information requested is about the person rather than an activity or program, which requires that the assessment comply with additional USG regulations regarding human subject research. The assessment must be approved by an ethics review committee or institutional review board (IRB).¹² When contacting youth and other stakeholders from whom data will be collected, it is vital that they be informed of their rights and that the team obtains their consent. In particular, all participants must be informed of the intended uses of the data to be collected, their right to refuse to participate at any point during the data collection, and any guarantees of confidentiality and/or anonymity (if appropriate). These procedures are standard practice in any human subject research. Written or verbal consent should be obtained from individual assessment participants before they take part in interviews, focus groups, or observations. In those cases where data are intended to be collected from youth who are legally minors (the age of majority may vary among countries), it is important to ensure that their guardians are informed of, and consent to, their participation. Schools and other institutions often collect data directly from minors without parental involvement (e.g., grades, attendance); however, if the assessment team is collecting personal information about youth (as opposed to information about the school, lessons, teacher performance, etc.), parental consent should not automatically be assumed.

The assessment team should review each data source and participant group individually to identify the levels of consent required (i.e., verbal, written, parental, etc.) and any potential vulnerabilities that may occur from the collection of the data. Informed consent requires that potential participants not only receive information about the assessment, but that this information is provided in a comprehensible and meaningful manner. This may entail providing a description of the intended uses of the data in pictorial, verbal, or other formats and using concepts and language which are culturally appropriate and intelligible.

12. If it is not clear whether an assessment requires IRB approval, please consult with PPL. Contractors may also have their own IRBs that will review the assessment and protocols, but USAID may want to use its judgment rather than relying on contractors.

The most common risk for potential participants in youth assessments is a breach of privacy when it comes to potentially sensitive or stigmatizing information. Examples of these types of confidentiality concerns may occur when collecting data about individual behavior (e.g., sexual practices, illegal activity), youth identities (e.g., sexual orientation, political affiliations, ethnicity, religious identities), and health status (e.g., HIV positive, medical needs). For assessment purposes, most data can be collected anonymously (i.e., encoding data to separate responses from identifying information such as name, address, etc.); however, an individual's information may not remain anonymous depending upon the size of the sample (e.g., small village) or the method of collection (e.g., interview). In these cases, interaction with the assessment team may expose them to identification. In the most extreme circumstances, participants' interaction with the team may place them in physical danger as well. Again, these are issues which should be meaningfully reviewed and addressed by the Mission when designing an assessment. Considerations should include the possibility of soundproofing of rooms/sessions, the need to anticipate the potential lack of discretion by other research participants, inadequate data security, and the possible risks to subjects being associated with assessment team members (for example, a team conducting a youth assessment related to drug use may be very visible in a community and any youth seen to be conversing with the team in private may be assumed to be drug users, which could have negative consequences for them in the community).

Box 9. USAID Policy on the Research of Human Subjects

USAID makes the safeguarding the rights and welfare of human subjects involved in research supported by USAID the primary responsibility of the organization to which support is awarded. USAID has adopted the Common Federal Policy for Protection of Human Subjects as a USAID regulation.¹³ The policy outlines three pillars of protection that should include human subject research: “(1) Review of the research by a properly constituted ethical committee or Institutional Review Board (IRB); (2) a meaningful assessment of risks and benefits by the IRB; and (3) a meaningful informed consent procedure for research subjects.”¹⁴ However, the “Common Rule” makes most data collection for assessments exempt from the full requirements of human subject research if it does not include individual identifiers or that data collected are not highly sensitive in nature. Contractors should be informed of USAID regulations. For more detail about USAID policies, see ADS 200.

SAFETY

Safety may be an important concern for some assessment team members. In many countries, simply being identified as a Westerner or an American may make a member vulnerable for crime or harassment. In some areas, female team members may have additional safety concerns, and the team should be aware of the precautions they should take. Those methodologies requiring team members to work in remote areas can limit resources that might otherwise be available to them. They also may examine areas that make people wary or sensitive, for example, drug habits and trade or trafficking, in spite of assurances that the respondents' answers are confidential. Safety of the team should be paramount and regular briefings may be necessary to keep the team updated if a country is experiencing civil unrest or isolated conflicts. The team should also have emergency contact information for Mission staff in the event they need to make contact.

¹³ 22 CFR 225

¹⁴ USAID, ADS 200. <http://www.usaid.gov/sites/default/files/documents/1864/200mbe.pdf>

AVOIDING BIAS

The team should be aware that whatever research methods it employs will be subject to some form of bias. Bias can come from the researchers or the respondents or be inherent in the design of the assessment. For example, *researcher-introduced bias* comes from preconceived beliefs or poor listening skills, such as inattentiveness, pseudo-listening, and rehearsing or hearing what is expected, and can bias the information recorded by the interviewer. Training interviewers in effective interviewing skills is one way to mitigate this bias. Another is to conduct interviews where interviewers and respondents will not be distracted. In those instances in which the researcher may not be sufficiently well versed in the current events or history of the country, she or he may take participant comments out of context. The most common type of *respondent-introduced bias* comes from self-selecting to participate in the assessment. In many cases, people are more likely to participate only if they feel strongly (either positively or negatively) about the issue to be discussed or have a vested interest in the area. Mission assistance in obtaining interviews with government officials and incentives for focus group participants (cash or a token gift) can minimize or, in some cases, eliminate self-selection bias. Another major challenge to keep in mind is that interviewees may respond with those answers they feel are expected or appropriate, as opposed to answering honestly. Ensuring that questions are carefully constructed – not leading or judgmental – and that the data collector has established a good rapport and some trust with the respondent are the best ways to minimize this type of bias.

Other forms of bias can be introduced into the data collection process during translation. Regional cultural or linguistic differences may cause inaccurate or over/understated translations, either in the data collection tools or in the collected responses. In addition to these unintentional biases, translators may intentionally introduce others. Untrained translators may ask why the researcher is asking a question to which s/he already knows the answer or may tell the researcher her/his answer in lieu of the respondent's. Other problems may arise when a translator particularly likes or dislikes the individual being interviewed, either on a personal basis or because of some group membership. Having well-trained, professional translators with sectoral knowledge is one solution. Another is to have trained local researchers conduct as many interviews as possible to minimize the interaction through translators.

Sampling biases are many and varied, and may occur when one demographic group is over-represented, under-represented, or excluded. Cluster sampling can result in too many people from one place or of one profile being recruited and thus skew the results. A thorough stakeholder analysis that helps the team understand the intended population should minimize most misunderstandings and sampling errors.

A final note of caution for the team is to remain focused on the objectives of the assessment. Many of the areas that can be explored with an assessment are fascinating at the micro-level, but this will not be useful for the Mission in its strategic planning and programming. A common challenge is ensuring that the research methodology chosen will in fact be able to successfully produce the types of data needed. Table 6 summarizes types of data each methodological approach produces, as well their advantages and limitations.

Table 6. Common Assessment Research Methods/Tools

Methods	Data Provided	Advantages	Limitations
Literature review (Preliminary Review)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Data previously collected and analyzed. • May be from a wide variety of sources 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Immediate access to relevant information • Inexpensive • Provides overview of what is already known about key issues 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Quality of data not always assured • May not exactly address questions or issues • May be out of date

Interviews (Individual)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • General, descriptive data • Understanding of attitudes and behaviors • Suggestions and recommendations 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provides in-depth, inside information • Flexibility permits exploring unanticipated topics • Easy to administer • Relatively inexpensive 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Does not generally yield quantitative data • Susceptible to interviewer and selection bias • May be difficult to generalize
Interviews (Community)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Village/community level data • Views on activities and suggestions for improvements 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Permits direct interactions between researcher and large numbers of individuals • Can generate some quantitative data on community characteristics, behaviors, opinions • Participants tend to correct each other, providing more accurate information • Relatively inexpensive 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Can be manipulated by elites or monopolized by vocal individuals • Cultural taboos or norms may inhibit discussion of certain topics • Susceptible to interviewer and selection bias • May be difficult to generalize
Focus Groups	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Beneficiary views on services, products, benefits • Information on implementation problems • Recommendations for improving activities 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Can be completed rapidly • Often very economical • Group discussion may reduce inhibitions, allowing free exchange of ideas 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Does not yield quantitative data • Discussion may be dominated by a few individuals • Susceptible to moderator biases • Requires trained facilitator (matched to population) • May be difficult to analyze • Cannot be generalized
Surveys	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Quantitative data on narrowly focused questions • Data on attitudes, beliefs, behaviors of customers or partners 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Can generate quantitative data • Reduces non-random errors if sampled correctly with good response rate • Requires limited personnel and can be done quickly 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Susceptible to sampling bias and nonresponse error • May not be able to explain anomalies in the data • Requires statistical analysis skills • Inappropriate for gathering in-depth, qualitative information
Structured Observation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Data on physical infrastructure, supplies, activities • Information about an agency's delivery systems, services • Insights into behaviors or events 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Direct information about behavior of individuals and groups • Permits observer to enter into and understand situation/context • Good opportunities for identifying unanticipated outcomes • Natural, unstructured, and flexible setting 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Time consuming • Need well-qualified, highly trained observers; may need to be content experts • May affect behavior of participants • Selective perception of observer may distort data • Investigator has little control over situation • Behavior or set of behaviors observed may be atypical

Source: USAID, *Using Rapid Appraisal Procedures*, p. 4.

4.3 METHODOLOGIES FOR YOUTH ASSESSMENTS

The discussions below are intended to provide Missions with a brief overview of the most common data collection methodologies and highlight key considerations relevant to designing a youth assessment. It is expected that most assessments will use a combination of methodologies to address their specific assessment questions. In general, Missions tend to collect more qualitative data because the purpose of these assessments is to gain insights and an overall understanding of youth issues, rather than to measure a program's effectiveness, determine cause-and-effect relationships, or to conduct generalizable research.

INTERVIEWS

Interviews are an indispensable method for any assessment, including a rapid appraisal. The most common forms of interviews are those conducted in-person, over the telephone, or by mail. Depending on the research needs and on the feasibility, the team could also conduct interviews via the Internet (Skype, Facetime, etc.), or through video-conferencing. It is important to consider access to the Internet and the availability of computers and telephones when deciding on the best methods of outreach. For example, it may be difficult to contact a representative sample of the target population if the contact strategy relies solely on phone calls in a region where land-lines and cell phones are not common. Individuals may be less likely to provide honest feedback when interviews are conducted over the phone because they cannot confirm the identity of the person on the other end. This section reviews the most common interview approaches. Appendix F, Interview Protocols for Stakeholders and Informants, includes sample interview protocols (questionnaires) and instructions to local researchers (such as youth) who may not have experience or training as interviewers.

In sum, interviews are most appropriate to use for a youth assessment when:

- Descriptive and detailed information is needed for decision-making.
- There is a need to understand motivation, behavior, and perspectives of a specific target population. Information from potential beneficiaries concerning their attitudes and behaviors can help in designing a successful intervention.
- A main purpose of the assessment is to generate recommendations. Key informants such as program planners and service providers can help formulate recommendations for an effective program.
- Data collected through other methods need to be interpreted (e.g., survey results, other studies). Interviews can provide the how and why of what happened or more details about opinions or events.

What are the different approaches to interviewing?

Structured Interviews. Structured interviews use carefully scripted questions that often ask for standardized responses across all interviewees. Although this approach generally plays a relatively small role in assessments that are exploring a range of issues and opinions (rather than collecting detailed data from individuals about a specific topic), a structured interview approach may be useful, for example, when an assessment includes interviewing youth regarding their views on a specific issue or an event. Structured interviews may also be particularly appropriate for involving local youth researchers because they can help prevent interviewer bias by ensuring the wording of the questions is neutral (e.g., “Wouldn’t a radio campaign be better than newspapers?” vs. “How frequently do you listen to the radio and/or read local newspapers?”).

It may also be more valuable to use structured interviews to gather data from certain key subgroups (age, urban, rural, ethnic/religious identity), if there is a need to collect standardized information on specific issues. With appropriate interviewer training, the structured interview format ensures that the

interviews will be focused and comparable across different interviewees, allowing for increased flexibility for analysis.

Box 10. A Structured Interview Example: Political Party Membership

An assessment team decided to conduct face-to-face interviews of youth who are active members of political parties. They asked the following questions:

- Are you currently affiliated with a political party? If so, which party?
- Do you have any interest in running for a political office some day? If so, at what level?
- On a scale of 5 (highest) to 1 (lowest), how would you rate the interest of youth in your country in terms of political issues?
- Do you participate in any kind of volunteer or community work connected to a political party? If so, please list the organizations that you volunteer with.

Semi-Structured Interviews. Semi-structured interviews, or guided interviews, use lists of questions, issues, and follow-up probes to frame a one-on-one conversation. In contrast to the structured interviews in which each question is pre-determined in its order and phrasing, the interviewers have a list of topics to be covered, but they have considerable freedom in the sequence of questions, how they are phrased, and how much time they spend. Semi-structured interviews are important for collecting information from individuals on their perspective and experience while allowing areas of emphasis to be covered and new issues to arise naturally. Since specific questions develop as a result of the conversation, each semi-structured interview may bring to light different, yet related, issues to the topic being assessed. A composite picture is built up over the course of a number of interviews.

Semi-structured interviews require interviewers to be fairly skilled at focusing on the overarching information needs of the assessment and the topics covered so far, while gauging the time left for the interview. Interviewers also need to be adept at probing to get the kind of information desired and recognize opportunities to elicit unexpected information that wasn't anticipated in the protocol, but is relevant for the assessment. Few inexperienced interviewers will be able to manage all of those tasks simultaneously. Some youth researchers may have the appropriate skills to conduct good semi-structured interviews, but it is more likely that more experienced team members will lead this type of interview.

Unstructured Interviews. Unstructured or informal interviews are basically opportunistic conversations with a variety of people about specific issues. The purpose of the informal interview is to gain an adequate understanding of the situation in order to begin to formulate ideas about the overall nature of the phenomenon and to test out hypotheses and ideas. Unstructured interviewing is most effective when there is little or no information available on the issue to be investigated. In terms of assessing youth issues, these are best used for exploratory assessments. Information from unstructured interviews must be used cautiously particularly if the only documentation is what the researcher was able to remember after the interview ended (which is sometimes the case with opportunistic interviews). Therefore, these interviews may be an assignment best suited to a local researcher trained in ethnography who may be more likely to understand the perspectives of the interviewees than an outsider and who is experienced in generating reliable field notes after an interaction with others.

Joint interviews are another tool that researchers may want to use. Two people are interviewed together to allow for greater exploration of the issues or, reconciliation of differing viewpoints This

approach is used when interviewing officials or administrators within the same organization and only when the topics are not sensitive or personal.

A summary of the advantages and limitations of the different interview approaches are provided in Table 7 below.

Table 7. Advantages and Limitations of Interviews Approaches

	Structured Interviews	Semi-Structured Interviews	Unstructured Interviews ¹⁵
ADVANTAGES	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Can provide quantitative data that can be easily compared across individuals • Can be extrapolated to the entire cohort, if the sample is large enough • Interviews can be conducted by multiple people with a greater degree of consistency 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Allows a trained interviewer to guide the discussion • Interviews can track the interviewee’s interests and may capture unexpected responses • Allows interviewer to explain or help clarify questions, increasing the likelihood of useful responses • Allows interviewer to be flexible in administering interview to particular individuals or circumstances 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • With a trained interviewer, may yield richest exploratory data, details, new insights • Provides opportunity to explore topics in depth • Affords ability to experience the affective as well as cognitive aspects of responses • Allows interviewer to explain or help clarify questions, increasing the likelihood of useful response • Allows interviewer to be flexible in administering interview to particular individuals or circumstances
LIMITATIONS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Limits ability to follow up on provocative or unexpected responses • Requires more focus and understanding of the situation to construct meaningful and relevant questions • Requires more extensive pilot testing to ensure that phrasing of questions are correct and understandable across different groups. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Need well-qualified, trained interviewers • Interviewers may probe different topics and get different answers • Data may require more analysis or may not be comparable at all 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Need well-qualified, highly trained interviewers • Flexibility can result in inconsistencies across interviews • Volume and diversity of information may be too unwieldy to analyze. Often recorded by interviewer summaries, rather than transcripts.

What kinds of questions should be asked?

One of the team’s primary tasks in preparing for the assessment is to draw up the questions that will be asked in key informant interviews. The resulting *protocol* will be structured depending on the team’s goals for the interviews, the key assessment questions, the informants being interviewed, and the capabilities of the interviewers. For example, less experienced team members may be more comfortable with a more structured, scripted protocol.

In general, questions should be focused on the assessment objectives and research questions while also providing any background information that is needed to bring context to the respondents’ answers. For

15. Frechtling, Joy and Laure Sharp (eds)., National Science Foundation, Directorate for Education and Human Resources, Division of Research, Evaluation and Communications, User Friendly Handbook for Mixed Method Evaluations, http://www.ehr.nsf.gov/EHR/REC/pubs/NSF97-153/CHAP_3.HTM#Exhibit%203

example, when interviewing a government official, it is important to understand how long they have been in their position and what types of professional experience they may have in order to understand their perspective on a specific policy or issue. It is also important to ask only those questions that are absolutely necessary to insure that the respondent is providing useful information and that the interview is not too lengthy. Another general rule is to ask the more sensitive questions later in the interview, in order to first build rapport and trust with the respondent.

Who should the team interview?

Key informants and stakeholders should have been identified in the preliminary review and stakeholder analysis. It is expected that through the process of interviewing, new informants and relevant groups will be identified. General guidelines for selecting interviews in youth assessments include:

- Interview a range of informants within different groups (i.e., government officials, NGO officials, and diverse youth), giving a more complete view of the issue;
- Be careful to interview a range of stakeholders whose opinions will help the team understand the breadth of views or attitudes toward the issue(s) in question;
- Try to have interviews arranged as early as possible in the process, in some cases (where sufficient information is available on the part of the Mission and the local team members) even in advance of the assessment team's arrival in-country;
- Work with local researchers to conduct some or most of the interviews, taking the target population's concerns and sensitivities into account as well as interview purpose; and
- Translate, if necessary, the interview questionnaires into the local language(s) and/or responses into English as necessary.

Depending on the information sought, interviews may be conducted with a small subset of stakeholders (see Chapter 3) or large numbers of primary and secondary stakeholders. Table 8 provides a snapshot of various groups of youth assessment informants.

Table 8. Sample Groups for Key Informant Interviews

Youth	Individuals who Interact with Youth	Community Members	Officials
Youth	Parents	Representatives of Relevant NGOs	USAID Mission Staff
Youth Opinion Leaders	Teachers/Professors	Business Owners/ Potential Employers	Host Country National Government Officials
University Students	School/University Administrators	Representatives of Religious Institutions	Local Government Officials
Secondary School Students	Employers		Law Enforcement Officials
Out-of-School Youth	Direct Service Providers		Representatives of Other Donors

Who should conduct the interviews?

The quality of data from interviews is only as good as the people administering them, so care should be given to selecting, training, and supervising interviewers. Professional researchers, university students, health workers, teachers, government officials, community workers, and youth recruited through youth-serving NGOs may be considered depending on the target population for the assessment. The interviewers should have a technical background that qualifies them to address the survey population. They should speak the local language fluently and have good listening and writing skills. Diversity in the interview team in terms of sex, ethnicity, and any other important characteristics/markers for the particular country should also be considered. At times it may be critical to match the interviewer and

interviewee in terms of their demographic backgrounds to ensure that best rapport and responses from the interview.

Because the team is conducting a *youth* assessment, the question of who will conduct the interviews is more important than it might be otherwise. Youth may be distrustful of adults or authority figures, or they may be afraid of criticizing the government or what is perceived as a government-sponsored program or activity. They may also have limited experience with foreigners or with speaking freely with adults.

The team may, therefore, want to use youth interviewers. Youth may be more likely than adults to establish rapport quickly with their peers. They may have knowledge and experience that allow them to probe in ways adults would not consider. In most cases, using youth interviewers would mean that interviewers must be trained – in interview techniques, the purpose of the assessment, consent procedures, confidentiality requirements, and how to write up the interview – prior to beginning the assessment. In addition, the team must ensure that all interviewers have a thorough understanding of the interview protocols to be used, the types of information to be elicited by each question, appropriate probes that are not leading, and how interview responses should be recorded.

Box 11. Former State Department Fellows as Potential Interviewees and Collaborators

The U.S. Department of State has, since the early 1990s, implemented a series of fellowship and exchange programs throughout the E&E region. In these programs, young people apply to be selected to spend an entire year in the United States, studying at a U.S. institution of secondary or higher education. To be selected, they demonstrate leadership qualities, have a good academic record, and have gained proficiency in English. The individuals selected to go (as well as those who achieved “semifinalist” status but who were not awarded the fellowship) are bright, motivated, and generally well informed. Those who spend a year abroad return to their home countries with a heightened understanding of the United States and, typically, an interest in maintaining some relationship with Americans. They are often superb cultural brokers, able to look at their own society and to translate what is happening there for outsiders. Many of the thousands of participants in these programs are in the prime age group targeted by the assessment. The following list describes several of these programs.

Future Leaders Exchange (FLEX) Program is targeted at high school students throughout Eurasia and has been in existence since 1992. It provides an opportunity for high school students from these countries to experience life in the United States and learn firsthand about the civic responsibilities of a democratic society. Students are selected after an open, merit-based competition. Approximately 11,000 students from Eurasia have spent one academic year attending schools and living with host families throughout the United States.

Kennedy-Lugar Youth Exchange and Scholarship is targeted at high school students around the globe. It provides an opportunity for high school students to live with American families and attend high school in the United States for a year. Participants learn firsthand about the civic responsibilities of a democratic society. Students are selected after an open, merit-based competition.

American Serbia and Montenegro Youth Leadership Exchange (A-SMYLE) participants spend an academic year in the United States, living with American host families and attending high school. See more at: <http://exchanges.state.gov/non-us/program/youth-leadership-programs>

Global Undergraduate Exchange Program offers scholarships for one year of undergraduate study in the U.S. to students from across the region. Students are placed at community colleges and universities throughout the country. The students' academic studies are enhanced by community service activities, a practical internship and a midyear workshop.

The Fulbright Foreign Student Program enables graduate students, young professionals, and artists from abroad to research and study in the United States for one year or longer at U.S. universities or other appropriate institutions. -See more at: <http://exchanges.state.gov/non-us/program/fulbright-foreign-student-program>

Edmund S. Muskie Ph.D. Fellowship Program selects citizens from Eurasia to study on the doctoral level in

the U.S. in the fields of business administration, economics, public administration, and public policy. As a condition of participation in the Muskie Ph.D. Program, fellows must perform one year of service in their home countries for every year their study is supported by the program.

The alumni of these programs may be excellent informants for the assessment team, both in articulating the situation of various groupings of youth as well as being resources on *local knowledge*. Information on the current addresses of the participants can be obtained from the in-country offices of the implementers of these programs – the International Research and Exchanges Board (IREX), the American Councils for International Education (ACTR/ACCELS), the Institute of International Education (IIE), and the Fulbright Program.

Source: U.S. Department of State Bureau of Education and Cultural Affairs

FOCUS GROUPS

Focus groups are small group discussions usually involving about seven to ten participants and lasting between one and two hours. They are well-suited to gathering information by asking the participants a pre-determined set of questions that will encourage them to share their opinions and perspectives relevant to the topic and goals of the assessment. Focus groups have become well known in product marketing, but they are also excellent tools for researching social issues, such as evaluating a program's impact or the attitudes different stakeholders hold about selected issues. Focus groups tend to provide a "public" view on issues, although the dynamics between the participants can also often reveal the lines of debate and conflict within groups.

Appendix E provides focus group guidelines tailored to USAID's requirements for assessing youth and to the conditions commonly found in Europe and Eurasia. These guidelines include timelines, samples, and checklists that can be further adapted to each Mission's circumstances.

Who are the participants in focus groups?

Anyone can participate in a focus group although, typically, focus groups are held with actual or proposed beneficiaries of a project or members of the general public or local community. Focus groups with government ministers are typically not appropriate because (1) the ministers' schedules will not coincide; (2) the team will usually prefer to have more in-depth conversations with each minister; and (3) the dynamics of having government officials speak in groups may impede reliable data collection (i.e., Will they speak honestly in front of other officials? Is there a hierarchy so that more junior officials will be less likely to voice an opinion?).

Conducting focus groups among various youth cohorts can be very productive in the assessment context. Two or three focus groups can yield a considerable amount of data and can be conducted in a relatively short timeframe. Participants within a focus group are typically homogeneous because most focus groups will not be successful if participants' backgrounds and experiences are too disparate. For example, depending on the culture of the host country, the team may have to arrange focus groups based on ethnicity (and language), educational background, region, etc. Age is another factor: youth is generally defined as persons ages 15-24, but a mixed group drawing participants from the entire age-range may mean that younger participants are less likely to be heard or their perspectives, experiences and needs may be different. There are times, however, when a heterogeneous group is appropriate, such as when trying to tease out the differences between two cohorts.

What kinds of information can focus groups provide?

Focus groups are particularly useful for:

- Understanding the family and community context, beliefs, perceptions, and customs;
- Securing background information for planning;

- Generating ideas and hypotheses for the design of services or programs;
- Getting feedback from potential beneficiaries to inform future program design;
- Assessing responses to recommended innovations; and
- Interpreting available qualitative and quantitative data.¹⁶

The value of focus groups, as opposed to interviews, is in capturing what comes out in the interaction among the group members. Although the data cannot be generalized to other youth who did not participate, the focus group will provide qualitative information about the youth in the group and can lead to real insights. For example, the team may explore the individual reasons behind why youth leave school early. A youth in an interview may provide one answer, but in a focus group setting, others may confirm or contradict the initial response and provide more detailed descriptions and explanations of the issue.

Who should conduct focus groups?

Focus groups are most effective when led by a talented focus group moderator. Because the conversation among the participants can move very quickly, a strong focus group moderator must be able (and willing) to jump into a conversation and redirect the group to the salient issue or move them along to the next question. The moderator should speak the local language fluently and have good listening and time management skills. Focus groups are typically recorded and transcribed, so the moderator may only need to prepare a short summary report. Depending on the sensitivity of the topics to be discussed, it may be critical to match the focus group moderator and participants in terms of their demographic backgrounds to ensure that best rapport and responses from the group. If no youth with strong moderator skills is available, it may be useful to have a youth as a co-moderator or assistant who can sit next to the moderator, take notes, keep time, write notes to the moderator (for example, to explain a slang word used by a participant), and assist with asking questions when appropriate.

When should focus groups or interviews be conducted?

While focus groups and interviews often provide the same types of data, choosing one or the other, or both, will depend on several factors, including the circumstances and types of information the researchers wish to elicit. Table 9 suggests factors to consider in deciding between using a focus group or interview to gather information from a particular group.

Table 9. Factors to Consider when Choosing Focus Groups or Interviews¹⁷

Factors to consider	Use focus groups when...	Use in-depth interviews when...
Group interaction	Interaction of respondents may stimulate a richer response or new and valuable thought.	Group interaction is likely to be limited or nonproductive.
Group/peer pressure	Group/peer pressure will be valuable in challenging the thinking of respondents and illuminating conflicting opinions.	Group/peer pressure would inhibit responses and cloud the meaning of results.
Sensitivity of subject matter	Subject matter is not so sensitive that respondents will temper responses or withhold information.	Subject matter is so sensitive that respondents would be unwilling to talk openly in a group.

16. Kumar, 1987.

17. Frechtling, Joy and Laure Sharp (eds.), National Science Foundation, Directorate for Education and Human Resources, Division of Research, Evaluation and Communications, User Friendly Handbook for Mixed Method Evaluations, http://www.ehr.nsf.gov/EHR/REC/pubs/NSF97-153/CHAP_3.HTM#Exhibit%203

Depth of individual responses	The topic is such that most respondents can say all that is relevant or all that they know in less than 10 minutes.	The topic is such that a greater depth of response per individual is desirable, as with complex subject matter and very knowledgeable respondents.
Data collector fatigue	It is desirable to have one individual conduct the data collection; a few groups will not create fatigue or boredom for one person.	It is possible to use numerous individuals on the project; one interviewer would become fatigued or bored conducting all interviews (which is likely to introduce bias).
Extent of issues to be covered	The volume of issues to cover is not extensive.	A greater volume of issues needs to be covered.
Continuity of information	A single subject area is being examined in depth and strings of behaviors are less relevant.	It is necessary to understand how attitudes and behaviors link together on an individual basis.
Experimentation with interview guide	Enough is known to establish a meaningful topic guide.	It may be necessary to develop the interview guide by altering it after each of the initial interviews.
Observation by stakeholders	It is desirable for stakeholders to hear what participants have to say.	Stakeholders do not need to hear firsthand the opinions of participants.
Logistics geographically	An acceptable number of target respondents can be assembled in one location.	Respondents are dispersed or not easily assembled for other reasons.
Cost and training	Quick turnaround is critical, and funds are limited.	Quick turnaround is not critical, and budget will permit higher cost.
Availability of qualified staff	Focus group facilitators need to be able to control and manage groups	Interviewers need to be supportive and skilled listeners.

SURVEYS

Conducting a large-scale survey is not a practical method for most youth assessments because of the time required to implement. At times, administering surveys on a limited scale may be appropriate when specific information is needed from a large group of individuals.

Surveys are typically structured questionnaires that are administered in a systematic way. They can be completed by the respondent or conducted as a one-on-one interview. For example, respondents might receive the questionnaire online or through the mail to complete on their own. They may also receive the survey in person; for example, an NGO providing direct services to youth under a USAID grant may distribute the survey to respondents. They might complete the survey as an in-person or telephone interview, where an interviewer reads the survey questions and the respondent provides the answers.

Interview vs. self-administrated surveys

There are distinct advantages and disadvantages to administering the survey as an interview, or having the respondent complete the survey on their own, and these are presented in Table 10.

Table 10. Advantages and Limitations of Conducting the Survey as an Interview vs. Self-Completed

	Conducted as an Interview	Self-Completed
Advantages	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Can be used to reach low-literacy populations • Allows for observation • Interviewer can get consent, assure respondent of confidentiality, and answer any questions about the survey • Interviewer can complete the survey on the spot, which may result in higher response rates • Interviewer can ask follow up questions to clarify responses 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Can be anonymous, which may encourage frank answers to questions. • Respondent can have the option to complete the survey privately, and at a time that is convenient • If the survey is given out in person, the administrator can get consent, assure respondent of confidentiality, and answer questions. Administrator can collect surveys on the spot, which may result in higher response rates.
Limitations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Interviewer must be trained to read questions in neutral manner, establish trust with respondent, protect confidentiality, maintain records, etc. • More time and labor intensive (requires interviewer time, travel, training; may require time to set up interviews in advance) • Respondent may be reluctant to discuss private topics with a stranger 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cannot be used with low-literacy populations • If the survey is not given out in person, need to allow time for survey returns, and may require time, labor, and recordkeeping to follow-up with non-respondents • Possible selection bias (those who return the surveys may not be representative of the group as a whole) • Ambiguous responses and non-response items cannot be clarified, resulting in missing data

Encouraging Youth to Respond to Sensitive Questions

The assessment team should be creative in order to get answers to sensitive questions (such as questions about sex or drug use). The Census Bureau tested a structured questionnaire administered by tape recorder; some youth in the pilot study reported they would be more comfortable answering sensitive questions using the tape recorder rather than speaking with an interviewer.

Uses and limitations

There are ways in which surveys can be used as part of the youth assessment to provide a “snapshot” of opinions, attitudes, knowledge, and self-reported behaviors in a fairly short period of time. Responses can be tabulated quickly if the survey is short and collects primarily quantitative data. Also, online surveys greatly expedite the distribution, tabulations, and analysis of surveys.

Note that results of small-scale, non-random surveys *cannot be generalized* to the larger population. However, some basic steps can be taken to improve the likelihood that survey data will give Missions an accurate picture of what is happening in the community. In addition to the stakeholder analysis conducted to determine who should complete a survey, it is important to prepare data collectors and pilot your instrument and procedures.

- Whether the survey is conducted as an interview or distributed to respondents to complete on their own, survey administrators must be trained to explain the survey’s purpose consistently,

answer questions and obtain consent from respondents, uphold the confidentiality policy, and complete any necessary recordkeeping. For more on training data collectors, see Appendix F.

- The survey and data collection procedures should also be tested with a small number of respondents who are similar to the people you will survey. This will help to uncover survey items that are unclear or inappropriate, and barriers you may not have considered so they can be addressed before resources are used to distribute the survey more widely. For more information on pilot testing, see Appendices E and F.

Survey development

Missions may have access to previously developed surveys or a survey may need to be designed from scratch. The type of questions included will depend on the assessment questions, as well as the time and tools available to conduct the analysis. Questions with “closed” (predetermined) response options are easier and less ambiguous to analyze than “open-ended” questions that allow the respondent to write in their answers. (These questions are also easier for respondents to answer and for answers to be translated.) However, open-ended questions allow for potentially richer data that is especially important when investigating a little-known area. Most questionnaires have a mix of both. (Note that interviews are often used in conjunction with surveys to glean more of these open-ended type answers.)

The following are good practices for developing survey instruments.

Cover letter or on the survey itself:

- Explain the purpose of the survey and why it is important that the respondent complete it.
- Note how confidentiality will be protected.
- Include the name and contact information of the organization conducting the survey.
- Provide instructions on when, where, and how to return the survey.

Survey format:

- Break up the page so it is easy to navigate. Separate sections of the survey with spacing and bold headings.
- Do not crowd questions together and use an appropriate font size so it is easily read.
- Give instructions on how to answer questions as needed (e.g., “Check all that apply”, “Circle one answer”).
- Provide enough space to write when asking open-ended questions.

Survey questions:

- Do not ask unnecessary questions; limit the survey to needed information only.
- In general, try to keep questions short and to the point.
- Avoid biased and value-laden words or phrases.
- Write questions at a literacy level appropriate for the intended respondents. For example, avoid acronyms and terms that are not commonly used.
- Be sure questions are not “double barreled,” meaning they could have two conflicting answers (e.g., “How satisfied are you with the instructor and the program?”).
- Be sure a question’s response options include all possible choices. If there may be other types of answers, include an “other” option that allows the respondent to write in an alternative answer.

STRUCTURED OBSERVATION

Structured observation involves systematically recording what is seen and heard during a site or program visit. The observation may be of physical surroundings or of on-going activities, processes, or

discussions. Observation may employ photography and videotaping to share the observations with fellow team members or to be used as a basis for discussion later.

Although the assessment process is usually time-limited, observation may be used to supplement data collection from other sources and to add another dimension to its information-gathering. People often have beliefs about their values and activities that do not correspond with their behavior and circumstances. Therefore, observing first-hand what is actually occurring can be an essential component of assessment.

Box 12. Observation Example – Health Sector

The assessment team conducts focus groups at several polyclinics in neighborhoods where the prevalence of HIV/AIDS among young women has been increasing. At the first clinic, one of the team members notices potentially dangerous practices by the attending nurse. While waiting outside the room for the assessment team to complete its focus group with young women who were at the clinic to receive check-ups, the team member observes the nurse taking blood from other patients. She sees that the nurse, although she is aware that all patients coming through her door are infected with HIV/AIDS, does not wear gloves while removing the sample. She sees the nurse place used needles in a tray next to, and identical to, a tray with clean needles. After this visit, the team decides that an observation component should be integrated into the data collection strategy. The team develops an observation form and sends one of the team members to each of the polyclinics to observe nurse practices. The observation data leads the team to re-consider other ways that HIV/AIDS was being transmitted to youths in the region – namely the health facilities themselves.

Observations provide additional context for interpreting statements made by individuals. For example, teachers, parents, and school officials may all report that there are enough textbooks for secondary students. However, during a school visit the assessment team notes that each student is sharing a book in the classroom with his neighbor. Observational information can either confirm or contradict the reported situation and can lead team members to further questions and insight.

Observation form

The observation form is used to systematically record observations, to focus field notes, and to ensure research questions are addressed. An observation form should be designed to measure, on some level, observable behavior and surroundings. The level of detail in the observation form depends on its purpose and the degree to which it is possible to identify what will be observed in advance. When little might be known about an activity or population, the form can be more of an organized guide that undergoes iterations as it is used in the field.

Observation forms can be structured using one or more of the following formats:

- Checklists, which document the presence or absence of a characteristic;
- Scaled ratings to record the degree to which a characteristic or behavior is present or true;
- Interval observations that record the frequency of a behavior or characteristic; and,
- Narrative comments, which might include space after each item to explain the rating and space as well as general comments and impressions.

Observers and the process

In an assessment with a very tight schedule, observers should be people who know something in advance about the population and circumstances (e.g., youth observers collecting data on use of a youth community center). The observers may also need experience/expertise in the specific situation or

content area (e.g., educators observing classroom teaching techniques). Using observers already familiar and knowledgeable about the observation subject allows them to focus quickly on relevant aspects and issues as they arise.

Like all data collectors, observers should be trained in advance. Minimally, they will need to understand the purpose of the assessment, their role in the field (participatory or unobtrusive), and if using multiple observers, each must understand the items on the observation form in the same way. Ideally, the observation form should be piloted in a real situation with all the observers to ensure both that the form efficiently captures the information required and, with multiple observers, that each records the phenomena in a very similar way (i.e., for high “inter-rater reliability”). For more information on training observers for fieldwork, see Appendices E and F.

Depending on the goal of the fieldwork, observation may involve staying in one place (e.g., a clinic waiting room) or following subjects through a process (e.g. youth looking for work). Observers might be nonintrusive (“fly on the wall”, in which case local observers may be less disruptive than expatriates) or active participants who engage with subjects and surroundings. Engagement may improve understanding, but it may also change the behavior of participants. If little is known about the subject, the observation may be quite broad at first, and become more focused as observers begins to better understand the situation, directing their attention to particular people, processes, and behaviors that are most essential to answering the research questions.

It may be more difficult to recruit youth team members with good observation experience and skills than interviewing or focus group moderating skills. It is therefore important to ensure sufficient time for training if observation is to be used. It may also be most efficient to train a small cadre of observers who will do all the observations (which should help the inter-rater reliability) rather than train all team members to be both interviewers and observers, but the logistics of completing the interviews and observations must also be taken into account.

Uses and limitations

Observation data is one of the tools that can help Missions gain insight as to how an activity works in practice, including unanticipated outcomes, and identify potential needs and areas for further investigation. However, because it is largely descriptive data that is open to the observers’ interpretation, it should be used as a supplement to other data and methods. In other words, only limited conclusions can be drawn because the data will have unknown validity (accuracy) and reliability (generalizability).

Validity is unknown because, unavoidably, observers must rely on their own interpretations and inferences as they take notes in the field, especially if the data collection does not include interviews/interactions with participants who can offer explanation. This can be mitigated somewhat by using multiple observers who can crosscheck notes.

Reliability is unknown because observed sites or behaviors may not be representative of the larger population/situation. However, this can be alleviated somewhat by collecting data systematically and repeatedly over varying conditions and reporting whether patterns/findings occur repeatedly.

CHAPTER 5: IMPLEMENTATION AND OVERSIGHT OF THE ASSESSMENT

Once the SOW is completed, the assessment team can be finalized either through contracting or with internal staffing. The Mission should be in constant communication with the team to ensure that project deadlines and deliverables stay on track and to facilitate any issues with locating and contacting of key stakeholders. Other key considerations to keep in mind once the assessment is underway:

- Risk management: The team members must understand that they must inform the Mission in the event of any incidents that might have negative implications for the participants, for the team or for USAID. List here relevant points in implementing/overseeing an assessment
- Compliance: The team members must understand their contractual obligations and restrictions and operate within the bounds of their agreements.
- Technical skill: The team should demonstrate high levels of competence in conducting the assessment.
- Adjustments: The team must relay any concerns or need for adjustments to the data collection plan or timeline to the Mission as early as possible. It is common to need to make adjustments as the team undertakes data collection in response to issues or opportunities on the ground, but these should be done in consultation with the Mission.

Once the assessment team returns from the field with the data, next step is to organize and analyze the results. When a team reports back from its field visits, it typically presents an oral debriefing to the Mission which includes some preliminary findings. If a draft report outline or table of contents was included in the SOW, it is appropriate for the assessment team to review the draft again with the Mission staff in light of new information that may have surfaced.

The team should meet to discuss and share findings and look for patterns or trends in the data. Writing assignments are made to the various team members in the areas of their expertise and/or geographical area of research. Team members will then begin to draft their sections of the report. If the team members have brought back survey instruments, the data must be coded, entered into a database, and tables developed. A local consultant may be able to do the coding, data entry, and produce data tables, after being provided with the appropriate training if needed.

With the results of their field notes, interview notes, focus group reports, observational notes, and the survey data, team members will be ready to analyze the information, confirm findings, triangulate for verification of information and begin to draft their respective sections of the report. The team leader is key to seeing that this is done in an organized, collaborative, and constructive process. If questions arise about the information or data, the team leader should consult with the appropriate Mission staff on the next steps needed to address this, for example, the verification or validation of the information or return to the source of the information for confirmation.

The team is responsible for producing a draft report along with an oral debriefing. In a debriefing with appropriate Mission staff, the data are explained, the findings are presented, and the conclusions and recommendations are discussed. The Mission staff may respond immediately to certain portions of the debriefing, asking questions and suggesting clarifications. However, within a specified period of time following the debriefing (one to two weeks, depending on the length of the report and the number of reviewers), the Mission should provide the team leader with written comments on the draft report. Within a reasonable amount of time (one to two weeks), the team leader and such team members as are needed will draft the final report incorporating the suggestions, clarifications, or ideas of the Mission

staff. When this step has been completed, the report is considered to be final and is published. Frequent dialogue with the relevant Mission staff throughout the process of the assessment should help prevent the assessment team from producing recommendations that may be inconclusive, overly ambitious, or unattainable with the limited funding available to the Mission.

5.1 UNDERSTANDING THE DATA

Analyses should respond to the assessment's key questions. The team describes the situation, compares it to what was expected, explains the reasons for the outcome, and provides recommendations to inform program or policy decisions. For findings to be credible and persuasive, they flow clearly from the data and are backed up by the evidence collected as part of the assessment. The following discussions describe the ways an assessment team might analyze and present its findings.

The preliminary steps in analyzing quantitative data are to 'clean' data (check for consistency and errors) in order to begin tabulating the results. For example, survey data from youth NGOs will have to be coded and entered into the appropriate computer programs available to help organize, tally, and analyze it. If inconsistencies or errors are found, these data should be substantiated or not be included in the analysis. If appropriate, the tabulations should be done for key variables (e.g., regions, types of organizations, issues of greatest concern, etc.). For open-ended questions, it is helpful to group the responses into discrete categories before counting.

The results from quantitative analyses are typically displayed into tables or figures (i.e., bar or pie graphs). The purpose of organizing the data this way is to:

- Help show the key information quickly;
- Make it easier to show comparisons;
- Illustrate patterns and trends; and
- Take up less space than narrative text.

The team should present data using more commonly understood kinds of statistical analysis, such as averages, frequency distributions (percentages of participants by responses to a question), and cross-tabulations (male vs. female responses or responses by income quintile). Complex statistical analysis is not typically useful for this kind of assessment (and often requires large sample-sizes). Descriptive statistics describe quantities and situations that enable a conclusion to be drawn from the numbers.

Analysis of data collected through qualitative methods can also be organized into categories which can display the results systematically. To compile the qualitative data, the assessment team should review its field notes, observation notes, informant interviews, and focus group findings and select the key points by looking for patterns and relationships. To organize and present information from qualitative methods, it is often helpful to create matrices and categories, including a checklist matrix, a conceptual matrix, and subcategories. It is also possible to gather quantitative data from what are typically qualitative research methods (i.e., interviews, focus groups, and observations), for example summarizing the kinds of services offered by NGOs. Table II is an example of a checklist matrix.

Table 11. NGO Program Offerings for Unemployed Youth

Youth NGO	Resume Training	Interviewing Skills	Individual Counseling	Life Skills Training	Technical Training	Certification Possible
Youth for Freedom	✓	✓			✓	✓
Concerned Mothers		✓	✓	✓		
Helping Youth			✓	✓	✓	
Children and Youth Organization		✓	✓	✓		
Youth Opportunity	✓		✓		✓	
Health and Home			✓		✓	✓
Reach for the Stars	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓

Another type of matrix, the conceptual matrix, can suggest relationships between two dimensions of a problem (e.g., the level of participation of youth in community events – high, medium or low – and their geographical distance from the town). This kind of matrix (see Table 12) helps to explain relationships and reasons for situations.¹⁸

Table 12. Patterns of Youth Participation in Community Events

Distance from Center	Low Participation	Medium Participation	High Participation
0.00 to 0.40 km		Respondent F	Respondent C Respondent E
0.41 to 0.80 km	Respondent J		Respondent L
0.81 to 1.20 km		Respondent A Respondent N	Respondent P
1.21 to 1.40 km		Respondent D	
1.41 to 1.80 km	Respondent M	Respondent G	Respondent K
1.81 to 2.20 km	Respondent B Respondent I		
2.21 to 2.60 km	Respondent H Respondent O		

By organizing the qualitative data into subcategories of the most important variables and the factors that exert a positive, negative, or neutral influence on the subcategory, the researcher helps to determine the reasons for apparently inconsistent behavior. For example, the reasons that parents do or do not want their daughters to attend school can be listed in order of importance or frequency mentioned, and compared to a similar list of reasons given for their son's attendance or absence from school. Using a nine-point scale (-4 to +4), Table 13 shows the factors (both positive and negative) that influence whether youth may seek an HIV/AIDS tests. Those with higher scores on the positive end of the scale were factors that encouraged youth to take the test, while those with negative scores were those that inhibited youth from taking the test. Factors with a score of 0 did not influence their decision to take the test one way or the other.

18. UNICEF (refers to White 1986).

Table 13. Factors Influencing Youth Taking an HIV/AIDS Test

Reason	Girls	Boys
Stigmatism if someone found out	-4	-4
Parental notification required	-4	-3
Distance to the nearest clinic	-3	-3
Government notification required	-2	-3
Scared to know the results	-2	-1
Cost of the test	-2	-1
Needed for a visa	0	0
Didn't know there was a test	0	0
Girlfriend/Boyfriend asked me to	+3	+1
Girlfriend/Boyfriend was diagnosed	+4	+3
Test was free	+2	+1
Test was confidential	+4	+3
Needed to participate in drug rehabilitation program	+3	+4

Other types of information resulting from interviews, focus groups, and observations may not be appropriate to only categorize but to also provide the specific context and details. It may be important for the assessment team to include direct quotes or 'case studies' to provide the level of contextual detail necessary to explain a particular circumstance or issue. For example, quotes from youth about some of the reasons listed in Table 13 for avoiding HIV/AIDS would greatly strengthen the analysis. Another technique is to relate a story or situation of a youth perhaps unsuccessfully access HIV/AIDS testing, in order to illustrate the complexity of accessing resources, etc.

Successful assessments use a combination of quantitative (i.e., numbers, categories, and scales) and qualitative (i.e., descriptive, specific details) analyses to fully inform the research questions.

5.2 ENSURING ACTIONABLE RECOMMENDATIONS

Recommendations are a critical piece to any assessment. The following points offer some general guidance for evaluating assessment team's recommendations and to help focus and organize the assessment report.

- *Recommendations should be linked directly to assessment findings.* That is, recommendations should be based upon the empirical evidence found in the report's discussion of the assessment results. Recommendations can also be generated from the process of conducting the assessment (as opposed to the findings themselves) but should be directly relevant to the purpose of the assessment and its objectives.
- *Recommendations should make suggestions for action.* Recommendations should provide a rationale and suggested direction for action to be taken. Again, it is important that the recommendations address the assessment's objectives and purpose and not veer outside the parameters and purpose of the assessment.
- *Recommendations should not be vague, general, or impractical.* Recommendations should not restate the obvious (e.g., "The Mission should support more youth programming within the country"). In such a case, the primary suggestion may be general, followed by several concrete recommendations from which the Mission can choose (e.g. "There are currently few resources available in country that address the specific needs of unemployed youth. The Mission should consider expanding its current workforce development program in the capital to include youth transitioning from high school to the labor market.")

- *Recommendations should be directed to different kinds of decision makers (or stakeholders).* For example, the recommendations made to USAID staff itself will be different from Ministers or other youth stakeholders. The recommendations should also specify who is responsible for taking which actions, rather than just recommending generic action. (This often ensures that the recommendations are actually feasible.)
- *Recommendations are generally listed in order of priority and/or logically by theme.* It may also be helpful to identify which recommendations are short-term, mid-term, and long-term.
- *Recommendations should include estimates of the financial and organizational costs to implement (where possible).*

5.3 THE FINAL REPORT

The Mission's scope of work typically requests a final report from the assessment team. An *interim report* may be required as well, but because of the short timeframe involved in most assessments, interim reports are likely to slow down the process (the team will be writing and editing instead of gathering and analyzing information). If there are specific requirements for the interim report, these should be limited and be specified in the scope of work.

Although there can be many variations in format and content based on what the Mission has requested, the *final report* should communicate the assessment team's findings, conclusions, and recommendations, and usually addresses these main points:

- *Title page*, including name of firm and authors.
- *Table of Contents*, that is detailed enough so information can be easily locate.
- *Acknowledgments*, (optional) typically used to thank people and stakeholders.
- *List of Acronyms*, helpful to an unfamiliar reader.
- *Executive Summary*, a brief summary of the report, focused on findings and recommendations.
- *Introduction*, purpose of the assessment and background information on the issue.
- *Assessment Objectives and Methodology*, objectives, key research questions and data collection methods used.
- *Findings*, the assessment data organized and analyzed.
- *Discussion and Recommendations*, the team's conclusions from the assessment and recommendations for Mission programming.
- *Annexes or Appendices*, list of people interviewed, protocols, and extant data reviewed.

During the drafting process, the team leader should provide feedback and review the quality of the assessment results (see Box 13 for common mistakes made in the drafting of the final report). A draft report should be given to the Mission, counterparts, and others as appropriate. The team leader and Mission should discuss the findings, conclusions, and recommendations, and the Mission should provide comments to the team before the report is finalized. Such discussions can bring out new perspectives on the meaning of the assessment results or add information to rectify any factual errors. The report or executive summary, once finalized, may be translated into the official language of the country.

Box 13. Common Mistakes in Drafting a Final Report

- Writing that is not focused on the objectives of the assessment or is not directly relevant.
- Presenting only general or subjective opinions rather than quantifying statements.
- Not organizing data in a structured, intuitive way that facilitates the readers' understanding
- Omitting an explanation of setbacks that are reasons for not accomplishing what was planned.

- Not identifying ways to deal with constraints or new opportunities.
- Leaving out proposed revisions to objectives and activities in light of the above.

An important step that is often underestimated is the editing process. As mentioned earlier, the Mission will want to review a draft of the team's report. The Mission may want to assign a limited number of staff to review the report. The reviewers should include a variety of staff, including those who were involved and those who were not involved in the assessment itself. However, the more reviewers that are included, the longer the process is likely to take. One week is generally an adequate amount of time to review a technical report.

It is important to set deadlines for comments so that the assessment team can incorporate them into the final report. Comments may range from grammatical to technical to organizational. Comments may also include questions for clarification. It is helpful for page numbers to be provided with the comments. Depending on the extent and complexity of the comments, as well as the length of the report, the team should be able to respond to the Mission's comments within one to two weeks.

It is critical, however, that the team maintain its independence at all times during the discussions and be prepared to decide what modifications to introduce to the draft report. Any dissenting views should be properly recorded in the report, either within the discussion or as an annex. In the case of a team with members from outside the country, the main conclusions and recommendations should be finalized within two weeks after the conclusion of the assessment. Appendix H contains the outline of a sample report.

CHAPTER 6: USING ASSESSMENT RESULTS

The findings and recommendations will obviously be determined largely by the purpose of the assessment and its objectives. A strong assessment will use multiple sources of data to triangulate the findings and provide a rich context for the recommendations. Ideally, the assessment will not only provide insight into the current conditions and issues facing youth in the country, but also provide some background and reasons for why these conditions and issues exist.

Once the assessment is complete, the Mission can begin to use the findings and recommendations on multiple levels to help achieve the overarching goals of *strengthening youth programming, participation and partnership* and *mainstreaming and integrating youth issues*.

Table 14. Programming under the USAID Youth Policy

USAID Youth Policy Objectives	Strategy Level (Guiding Principles)	Programmatic Level (Programmatic Examples)
Objective 1: Strengthening youth programming, participation, and partnerships	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Workforce training programs that combine technical & employability skills development with on-the-job training, counseling & job search. • Service learning & volunteerism projects that build leadership, citizenship, & life skills. • Programs that strengthen the capacity of mentors and community youth advisors. • Awareness campaigns and protection programs to prevent and respond to sexual and labor exploitation and gender-based violence in the community.
Objective 2: Mainstreaming and integrating youth issues	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mainstream youth through planning and design; • Leverage procurement tools, financing mechanisms, and strategic partnerships; and • Address gaps in knowledge through monitoring, research, and evaluation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tracking of common youth indicators across sectors. • Coordinating youth-serving organizations for improved efficiency and outreach to under-served youth. • Enabling access to and consolidation of research and new approaches across systems and sectors.

6.1 USING YOUTH ASSESSMENT RESULTS FOR STRATEGIC PLANNING

Strategic planning is one of the main uses of a youth assessment. The approaches used and information gathered during the assessment can be applied at all stages of the strategic planning process: strategy development, strategy implementation, and strategy refinement.

STRATEGY DEVELOPMENT

At the strategy development stage, Missions are considering adding youth-focused assistance objectives or goals to their portfolio. The assessment can provide the Mission with specific knowledge of the issues

facing young people in the country, and help identify those areas which require technical assistance from USAID and what the priorities should be. The results of the assessment can help the Mission designate a new youth programmatic area and mainstream youth programming into existing programming.

For instance, as discussed previously, general unemployment and labor market concerns might have led Mission staff to conduct a youth assessment to determine what employment challenges youth face. The assessment team then reviews the situation that youth confront as they attempt to complete their education, search for job training and employment opportunities, contribute income to their parents' households or their own, and make decisions about emigrating, participating in the underground economy, or perhaps starting their own business. The results should provide sufficient information to assist the Mission in reviewing and possibly reformulating its economic development portfolio to address issues of youth unemployment, to see how and where there may be ways to fine-tune programming to increase the support for youth.

STRATEGY REFINEMENT

Those Missions that already have an active youth component in their program may want to conduct an assessment of their youth-oriented strategy to get a rough idea of its impact or to re-assess its emphases. Missions might also conduct a youth assessment when a strategy has stalled in the implementation process or is being refined due to new priorities but for which there is no anticipated increase in development funding.

Box 14. Youth Assessment for Strategy Refinement

USAID efforts to support democratic reform might provide such an example. An earlier assumption was that youth, who grew up either under a withering socialist system or a newly liberalized state, would be more open to reform and less rigid in their attitudes and approaches than their parents. Yet, considerable evidence suggests that they may have borne significant burdens during the past decade, as their parents struggled under uncertainties and economic privations. Current regimes do not seek the support and approbation of youth as they attempt to ensure their own longevity, and youth often appear disenchanted and uninterested in taking part in the political process. Given these potential needs to determine both where youth stand in terms of their political attitudes and their likelihood to participate in civil society, a Mission might choose to undertake a youth assessment focusing on youth and civil society to determine if it would be appropriate to include this focus as a possible element in a new strategy.

6.2 USING YOUTH ASSESSMENT FOR PROGRAM DEVELOPMENT

In many cases, USAID Missions have been active in addressing the needs of youth. Some Missions are just beginning technical assistance and training programs for youth, while others are at a point where it is necessary to re-evaluate the effectiveness of their current programs. Assessments may assist Missions in these areas and also help them identify technical areas where regional cooperation on programs might be more efficient for programs targeted at youth.

DEVELOPING NEW PROGRAMS

Perhaps the Mission has included youth focused activities in its strategic planning and is now ready to design technical assistance and training programs. Assessments can be very helpful in targeting interventions to effectively address the root problems, rather than the symptoms.

REFINING EXISTING PROGRAMS

Many Missions have programs that include components addressing the needs of youth. In some cases, a project may have successfully completed one activity and the next is just beginning. In others, progress may have halted due to changing social and economic conditions. By applying assessment techniques, Missions can identify areas where they could deepen current programs, determine the continued need for the programs, or find out that the program might require some adjustments to be more effective. For example, a Mission may have a training program targeting 20 to 24 year-olds. The assessment team finds that many younger people who have dropped out of school could benefit from this kind of training as well. So, the Mission might choose to expand the program to include 15 to 19 year-olds.

INFORMING REGIONAL PROGRAMS

In addition to helping Missions develop country-specific programs, assessments can assist in the design of region-wide programs. For example, if each Mission is collecting the same data on youth, then patterns in their needs may emerge by region. Behavioral anomalies by country, ethnic group, or sex may also emerge. In some areas, such as trafficking, HIV/AIDS, and drug abuse, it might be particularly useful to take a regional approach to program development.

For example, several Missions may have found that the preponderance of migrant workers in some areas is contributing to the rise in HIV/AIDS other sexually transmitted diseases in rural youth. The Mission can contract an assessment team to review the situation and make recommendations on how Missions could work together on a cross-border safe sex community.

6.3 CONCLUSION

USAID's Youth Policy identifies three specific goals:

- 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.

These goals will be challenging in many of USAID's partner countries, but conducting effective youth assessments will assist Missions in making progress towards these ends. Although this document could not describe every situation that a Mission might encounter, it and the annexes to this document provide solid steps for Missions to undertake to ensure that they can get the right information at the right time to inform programming and begin to see changes in the involvement of youth in their communities and nations.

APPENDIX A: INTRODUCTION TO RAPID APPRAISAL

WHAT IS RAPID APPRAISAL?

Rapid appraisal (RA) is an approach for quickly developing an action-oriented understanding of a situation, such as the status of youth in a country, in which specific research techniques are chosen from a wide range of options. RA is focused on providing sufficient information for decision-making in program planning, with the aim of compiling a base of information that is “sufficient to meet the need” rather than an exhaustive study.

To conduct a RA, a team of approximately three to five specialists, representing different disciplines, works together to produce answers to specific assessment questions. The goal is either to provide an adequate amount of data for preliminary decisions regarding the design and implementation of development activities or to show that additional research effort is necessary. A participatory RA might gather information and data using local key informants, opinion leaders and experts, stakeholders, and/or the youth themselves.

The RA approach is based on **three basic concepts**,¹⁹ which will guide the follow discussion.

1. **A systems perspective.** A RA assumes that the issues and circumstances being studied are interrelated, and provides a quick way to define key elements and their relationships to each other.
2. **Triangulation of data collection.** Triangulation refers to using several different kinds of data collection (such as focus groups, key informant interviews, and analysis of extant data) in the research. The research team then compares the collected data for continuity and consistency.
3. **Iterative data collection and analysis.** The RA team meets continuously throughout the appraisal process to confer about the findings. The team discusses the significance of information collected to date and decides what additional information they should gather to expand their understanding of the issues and to make their recommendations.

WHEN IS A RAPID APPRAISAL USEFUL?

In order to determine when a RA is the best approach to assess a group or certain conditions, program managers should consider the availability of resources, research roles, subject matter, information currently available, and the complexity of the issue to be investigated.

RA is a useful tool when:

- Qualitative, descriptive information is sufficient for decision-making;
- An understanding of the motivations/attitudes that may affect behavior is required;
- Available quantitative data must be interpreted;
- The primary purpose of the assessment is to generate suggestions and recommendations; and

¹⁹ James Beebe, “Basic Concepts and Techniques of Rapid Appraisal,” *Human Organization*, Vol. 54, No. 1, Spring 1995, pp. 42-51.

- The Mission needs to develop questions, hypotheses and propositions for more elaborate, comprehensive formal studies.

Missions can use a RA assessment of youth for a number of purposes, including to:

- Identify national trends on youth;
- Identify significant institutional constraints to youth fulfilling their potential;
- Identify prevalent attitudes of youth toward their country's transition and attitudes of other relevant stakeholders toward youth;
- Synthesize what USAID and other donors are doing to assist youth; and
- Make recommendations to USAID on how programs could be adapted better to tap youth as a resource for transition and respond to major youth issues.

Uses for Rapid Appraisals

1. Strategic Planning: Conducting strategy reviews or developing a revised country strategy.

2. Program Development: Developing new programs, refining existing programs, or informing regional programs.

2. Monitoring, Reporting, and Bench-marking: Providing assessments of on-going activities funded by USAID to orient programming or funding decisions.

ILLUSTRATIVE EXAMPLES OF YOUTH RAPID APPRAISAL

RA is appropriate for conducting a youth assessment in any program sector (or across multiple sectors). Examples of the ways in which RA can be used are provided below.

Democracy

An early assumption was that youth growing up in either under a withering socialist system or a newly liberalized state would be more open to reform and less rigid in their attitudes and approaches than their parents. Yet, considerable evidence suggests that they may have ended up bearing significant burdens during the past decade, as their parents struggled under uncertainties and economic privations. Current regimes do not often seek the support of youth, and youth often appear disenchanted and disinterested in taking part in the political process. Given these potential needs to determine both where youth stand in terms of their political attitudes and their likelihood to participate in civil society, the Mission chooses to undertake a RA focusing on youth and civil society to determine if it would be appropriate to include this focus as an element in a new strategy.

Employment

A host country's government has determined that youth face particular challenges in finding gainful employment in the evolving market economy. The Mission has no substantial new resources to initiate a new program area. A RA reviews the situation that youth confront as they attempt to complete their education, search for job training and employment opportunities, contribute their income to their parents' household or their own, as well as the challenges of emigration, participating in an underground economy, or starting their own businesses. The RA helps the Mission to review and re-orient its

economic development portfolio and to see how programming might be fine-tuned to address youth's needs.

Health

The Mission finds its earmarked funding increased for activities relating to HIV/AIDS, which leads Mission leadership to revise significantly the country strategy. A new Strategic Objective focusing on HIV/AIDS is required, with the expectation that programming will increase substantially in that area. Public health experts report that the most vulnerable group for contracting AIDS is women under 25, and the Mission decides that a youth assessment highlighting health concerns (and attempts to assess the health risks that youth actually face) would be useful in helping to decide how to design the new strategy and to program the funds most effectively. The RA team focuses on issues of health-related lifestyle choices and examines the infrastructure and services that currently exist to serve the youth population.

WHAT KINDS OF QUESTIONS CAN A RAPID APPRAISAL ANSWER?

A youth RA is not intended to provide a statistically significant data about youth behavior. Instead, the RA method is useful when there is some understanding of the problem and one would like to investigate the reasons driving the behavior or to design (or change) programs focusing on youth. In the text box below are some illustrative questions that might be explored using RA methods to gather information and data in the areas of democracy, employment, and health.

Table A.1: Illustrative Questions for a Youth Rapid Appraisal

Topic	Starting Point	Questions
Democracy	Perception of citizen participation in society (data available from World Development Indicators)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What are the obstacles to youth voting (e.g., transportation, registration, attitudes)? • Are youth involved in the community in other ways (e.g., starting NGOs, working at NGOs, volunteering)? • What kinds of student groups exist in high schools and universities, and what is the level of student involvement in these groups?
Employment	Unemployment rate among youth (available from the ILO for many countries)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In what sectors are youth employed? • Do youth have access to unemployment benefits? What kind of benefits? Are these benefits adequate? • What kinds of higher paying jobs are available to youth? What kinds of training or vocational education are needed to move youth into higher paying jobs? • Are youth dropping out of school (explore for both primary and secondary dropouts)? Are the reasons economic (families need another wage earner), school-related (school is boring, not geared toward employment opportunities in the area), or attitudinal (families do not value education)? • What kinds of intervention would be necessary to keep youth in school longer?
Health	Prevalence of	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Is HIV/AIDS among youth due to intravenous drug

	HIV/AIDS among youth (available from World Development Indicators)	use, sexual activity, or both? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Are condoms available to youth? • What are youth attitudes toward condom use? • What do you believe and know about HIV/AIDS?
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WHAT ARE THE STRENGTHS AND LIMITATIONS OF RAPID APPRAISAL?

It is important to know that the RA approach is neither infallible nor applicable in all circumstances. Below is a list of relevant factors in deciding if a RA approach is appropriate for the purposes of a Mission's youth assessment.

I. STRENGTHS OF RAPID APPRAISAL ASSESSMENTS

- **Rapid appraisals are relatively inexpensive.** RA's tend to cost less than more formal assessments because RAs are purposefully condensed into a short period of time. Since RA gathers only enough information to assist in the development of programs, data collection does not require the large, often open-ended outlays of effort and time required for traditional research. RA does not typically include extensive survey work, which can be expensive, time consuming, and require large investments of labor. RA teams also usually include at least one local consultant, so that the team has substantial "local knowledge" at its disposal in improving logistics, managing the activity and benefiting the local economy.
- **Rapid appraisals are fast.** The short time frame of a RA assessment means that the team should get useful results relatively quickly. The RA, for instance, would be structured usually to complete its work in three to four weeks. The data analysis is ongoing, since the team works to process and analyze its information as it conducts interviews and discusses issues with key informants and sector specialists. A goal of the RA is to provide not only findings but also conclusions and recommendations within a relatively short time span.
- **Rapid appraisals are participatory.** The RA approach strives to be participatory, in that it gathers solid qualitative and quantitative information from a wide range of experts, opinion leaders, and stakeholders, including the youth themselves. Within the two principles of triangulation and carrying out an iterative process, the RA team strives to incorporate the points of view of as many players as possible. Broad participation provides a check against reporting the views of only one interest group and ensures a broader "buy-in" to the goals of the assessment. In sum, RA is designed to provide a series of "shortcuts," recognizing that the approach leads "to tradeoffs between timeliness, accuracy, relevance, and the actual use of the information"—to quote Robert Chambers, the well-known advocate and practitioner of the RA approach.

2. LIMITATIONS OF RAPID APPRAISAL ASSESSMENTS

- **The rapid appraisal team needs to possess the experience and expertise to counter any potential pitfalls of the approaches involved.** The rapid appraisal team, for instance, develops a wide enough web of informants and interviewees to ensure that it is gathering views and experiences that are representative of all social strata and most interest groups – especially of the poor and less powerful – and are not limited to only certain groups with easy access to international donors. Since data collected by the team are largely qualitative, care must be taken to carry out this data collection systematically, so as to avoid bias and one-sided views. If

translators are used, it is important that the translator understands the importance of conveying accurately both the meaning and the context of a person's words and is fully aware of how to avoid leading questions and sugarcoated responses.

- **Assessments using rapid appraisal methodologies have limited reliability and validity.** Information generated by a RA may lack reliability and validity because of informal sampling techniques, individual biases of the evaluators or interviewers, and difficulties in recording, coding, and analyzing qualitative data. Those using RA methods can minimize these problems, for example, by taking steps to reduce bias during data collection and analysis or by using more than one method to cross-check results (i.e., triangulation).

By design, RAs often lack standardized quantitative data from which generalizations can be made across a whole population. Most RA methods generate qualitative information that is descriptive of a specific local or population. Even those that generate some quantitative data (such as mini-surveys and observation) cannot be generalized with precision, because they are almost always based on non-representative samples. While RA methods can give a picture of the prevalence of a situation, behavior, or attitude, it does not indicate the extent or pervasiveness. For example, a RA may find that few youth have savings accounts but not be able to indicate with certainty the percentage.

- **The results generated by rapid appraisals may have little credibility with decision-makers.** Most decision-makers are more impressed with precise figures than qualitative descriptive statements. For example, a sample survey finding that 83 percent of out-of-school youth are unemployed is likely to carry more weight than a conclusion, based on key informant interviews, that most youth are unemployed.²⁰ Therefore RA is appropriate for providing descriptive details rather than providing 'proof' of a specific condition or circumstance.

HOW WOULD AN ASSESSMENT USING RAPID APPRAISAL BE CONDUCTED?

A RA conducted to assess youth would involve a participatory process including youth and stakeholders, in which the Mission is closely involved. A Mission could, of course, delegate the entire RA process, from start to finish, to an outside consultant team that operates on its own and delivers a final report and briefing to interested Mission personnel at the conclusion of its work. Alternatively, the RA could be entirely carried out by Mission staff and other local expertise, or carried out by a mix of contracted expertise and existing staff (the preferred option).

Experience demonstrates that the assessment is of much greater benefit to Missions that take an active role in the design and oversight of process. Given the workloads of most Missions, it is probably unrealistic to suppose that Mission staff will have the time to carry out a RA youth assessment without some outside assistance. Nonetheless, Missions would profit most if at least one or two staff members join the RA team as full members and if others are engaged in an ongoing dialogue with the assessment team as they carry out their work.

²⁰ USAID Center for Development Information and Evaluation, "Using Rapid Appraisal Methods," Performance Monitoring and Evaluation Tips, No. 5, 1996, Washington, DC, p. 2.

Given the workloads of most Missions, it is probably unrealistic to suppose that Mission staff will have the time to carry out a youth assessment without some outside assistance.

The manner and extent to which Missions may become involved in youth RA will vary. Mission staff should recognize that their degree of participation will impact how readily adaptable the results of the assessment are for their programming.

WHAT WOULD A RAPID APPRAISAL LOOK LIKE?

Below are three examples of how a RA assessment of youth issues may look like in the sectors of health, employment, and democracy. These examples are purely illustrative and are not necessarily models for how a Mission should construct its youth assessment.

Employment Example: What Might a Rapid Appraisal Design for Youth Employment Look Like?

Within Mission X, the Economic Growth SO Team assigns the development of a draft scope of work for the RA and subsequent support and backstopping to a Foreign Service National economist, who has taken a special interest in the economic situation of the youth cohort. She accomplishes her first task, a draft scope, by drawing on suggestions within the Youth Manual and through two meetings of the SO Team to discuss the key questions to be reviewed, suggested level of effort, and how the team might be structured.

The draft scope that she produces calls for the “outside” expertise of a labor economist with experience in youth unemployment in Western Europe; a specialist in secondary education and technical training, and a sociologist with expertise in research among youth, especially U.S. or European school-to-work programs. Expertise from within the country includes an educator who has worked with the youth cohort for most of his career and who now directs a small NGO devoted to youth issues, and the Mission FSN economist, who will work largely full-time on the assessment. A researcher will also be identified who can analyze data already available. In discussions with the IQC contractor, appropriate candidates are identified. These decisions on proposed staffing, LOE, key assessment questions, and budget are sufficient for the scope to be completed and the Mission to be able to issue a task order under the IQC.

The specialist in technical training will be the Team Leader, based on experience in the region and with past management of teams. The first step of the Team Leader, working with the Mission economist and with Mission participation and concurrence, is to identify long-distance a local social researcher who can begin to work immediately on collecting information that will support the RA. The researcher is tasked with compiling and summarizing available information and reports from international donors and foundations working in the country, as well as relevant census data. Guiding the initial data collection will be the key youth indicators described in the Youth Manual, especially those relating to labor markets and education, and the review of any reports funded by international donors or the government (such as relevant UNDP, World Bank, or Ministries of Labor, Education, or Youth). The Team Leader completes most of her work in time for the arrival of the team.

The contractor also selects a logistics assistant before the activity begins. The logistics assistant works by e-mail with the Team Leader and the Mission Economist working on the activity to receive guidance for setting up the initial round of meetings and interviews with key informants in the area of labor market, unemployment, technical and vocational education, and non-profit advocacy groups. The logistical person will also begin to work with the Team Leader to develop a strategy to ensure participation by youth representatives.

On arrival, the team will meet with the Economic Growth SO Team to understand its perspective and program. The team will have prepared a short workshop which it will propose to conduct with the SO Team to examine the youth issues through the lens of the Mission strategy and current programming, to ensure that the team is able to focus on the issues that will be most relevant for the Mission in the future. The objective of the workshop is to present the general approach to be taken in the RA, sharpen the specifics of the terms of reference of the assessment so that the RA team can hear any special Mission interests or concerns, present the initial findings of the local social researcher, and to seek additional guidance from SO Team members about important contacts, context, and priorities.

The team then carries out interviews, focus groups, and other data collection activities over the next two and a half to three weeks. Ideally, the team meets every evening to discuss its evolving understanding of the dynamic of youth unemployment and labor market conditions in the country, and it develops a series of findings and recommendations related to potential programming. These are presented in semi-final form in a report and at a final workshop or briefing before the team departs the country. The Team Leader then works with other team members to incorporate comments and discussions into a final report. Recommendations are further discussed with the SO Team as they propose future programming.

With respect to the level of effort involved to carry out this RA on youth, such an assessment would have the three international and two host country team members (one of whom is USAID staff) working about 20 to 25 days. Other Mission staff would have the bulk of their time commitment in the initial workshop, in some meetings, and in a final debriefing. The in-country social researcher would be contracted for up to 30 days, and the logistics person would work 20 or fewer days.

**Democracy Example:
What Might a Rapid Appraisal Design for Democracy and Youth Look Like?**

Mission Y decided it would be useful to obtain information on youth's views of democracy and civil society and their development, as its Strategic Objective Team considers a new democratic initiatives program.

The Mission requests that a grantee conduct the appraisal under an existing grant agreement. According to the manual's guidelines, the Mission finds it needs a team of two international experts, two local experts, and two local assistants for a three-week activity. The international experts are social scientists specializing in sociological research, particularly focus groups, and political analysis; the local experts are a sociologist and a political scientist, and the two assistants are logistics specialists. No Mission staff person is available to be a member of the team.

The political scientist collects data that are available about the country's political situation, structure of government, current and past administrations, and intra-governmental relations. S/he also provides comprehensive information about the country's political parties, their platforms, geographic strongholds, and membership. This work is completed and sent to the team before it meets in-country.

The assistants arrange initial meetings with Ministry of Youth officials, Ministry of Education officials, and international donors, in coordination with USAID Mission staff. They also begin planning for visits to eight cities of varying size where focus groups and interviews will be conducted. When the team arrives in-country, the international and local experts brief the Mission on the chosen methodology and discuss any potential problems that might arise during the course of the appraisal and what the potential solutions might be.

The team conducts a stakeholder analysis with the Mission staff and agrees upon contact strategies for each type of stakeholder. The Mission staff briefs the team on the relationships the Mission has with any stakeholders, particularly with government partners and potential grantees.

The team conducts visits to two of the cities, the largest ones, together. They then split and a team comprised of an international expert, a local expert and an assistant visits four cities each. The assistant contacts the major organizations with which the team will meet in advance to schedule interviews. In each city, the experts meet with representatives of the major political parties and social movements, elected officials, NGOs (particularly those working with youth), teachers, university staff (if there is one), and other identified stakeholders to conduct structured interviews. As they learn of major attractions, special events, or common gathering places for youth, they will go and observe the youth's behavior and areas of interest.

While the experts are meeting those people listed above, the assistant organizes focus groups of university students, high school students, recent graduates, early school leavers, and parents. These groups would be asked what they perceived to be the biggest problems youth face, the most important assets youth have in meeting future challenges, the state of democracy and their political system, the state of civil society, and whether and how they might get involved in politics and civil society. They may also be asked to write postcards to political party or civil society leaders and elected officials to suggest how they might get youth more involved in meeting the needs of the community.

Each evening, the team regroups to review what they learned.

These visits may require four to five days in the capital or a large city, but will require significantly less time, usually two days, in smaller towns. After completing the assessment in the three towns, the team regroups in the capital to review what was learned in those sites. The experts write the report and debrief the Mission with their findings and recommendations.

**Health Example:
What Might a Rapid Appraisal Design for HIV/AIDS and Youth Look Like?**

Mission Z decides to meet rising earmarks for combating the HIV/AIDS problem by shifting its programming emphasis to reach youth, since it concluded that women under age 25 are the highest risk group. The Mission chooses to conduct the youth assessment by issuing a task order under an available IQC. Using the Youth Manual guidelines for developing an RA scope of work, the Mission determines that it needs a team of four international consultants for the four-week activity. The team to be recruited will consist of a health policy expert as team leader, a specialist in social services for young adults, and a specialist in HIV/AIDS who is also a health social marketing specialist. The Mission decides as well to permit its primary public health program officer, an FSN, to dedicate her time to the activity as the fourth full-time team member. The Health SO Team will work closely with the team during the three weeks of in-country field research.

The Team Leader and IQC contractor, with Mission participation and concurrence, contract a local social researcher and a logistics assistant before the activity begins. The researcher is tasked with compiling and summarizing available information and reports from international donors and foundations working in the country, as well as relevant census data. She completes most of her work in time for the arrival of the team. The logistics assistant works by e-mail with the Team Leader and the Mission Health Officer to receive guidance for setting up the initial round of meetings and interviews with key informants in the public health arena, especially those who have worked on HIV/AIDS topics.

The team begins with initial Mission meetings and conducts a one-day workshop for the Health SO Team and other interested Mission personnel. The objective of the workshop is to present the general approach to be taken in the RA, sharpen the specifics of the terms of reference of the assessment so that the RA team can hear any special Mission interests or concerns, present the initial findings of the local social researcher, and to seek additional guidance from SO Team members about important contacts, context, and priorities.

The team then carries out interviews, focus groups, and other data collection activities over the next two and half to three weeks. The team meets every evening, if possible, to discuss its evolving understanding of the dynamic of HIV/AIDS in the country, and it develops a series of findings and recommendations related to potential programming. These are presented in semi-final form in a report and at a final workshop or briefing before the team departs the country. The Team Leader then works with other team members to incorporate comments and discussions into a final report. Recommendations are further discussed with the SO Team as they propose future programming.

Such an assessment would have the three core team members working about 20 to 25 days. The Mission's Health Officer would provide a similar time commitment, and Mission staff would have the bulk of their time commitment in the initial workshop, in some meetings, and in a final debriefing. The in-country researcher would be contracted for up to 30 days, and the logistics person would work 20 or fewer days.

This example provides one possible scenario for conducting a youth assessment. If the USAID staff person could not participate, a second in-country professional consultant could assume her role. Adding yet another consultant with appropriate skills might reduce the period of fieldwork somewhat. The deliverables would consist of the initial and final workshops and the assessment document itself, as well as any other memoranda or documents (such as focus group summaries) that the Mission may request.

APPENDIX B: THE STAKEHOLDER ANALYSIS

HOW IS A STAKEHOLDER ANALYSIS CONDUCTED?²¹

The stakeholder analysis (introduced in Chapter 2) becomes one of the first phases in carrying out a youth assessment. The five steps to conducting a stakeholder analysis (SA) are described below and it is expected that these steps will provide provisional results. In fact, the SA will likely raise more questions than it answers, and much of the data collection of the assessment will be based on the effort to fill in the gaps that the SA suggests. The SA becomes a means and first step to going out to the stakeholder groups to ask the right kinds of questions about their views, their interests, and what they see as the strengths and weaknesses of alternative proposals to improve the situation of youth.

There are as many prescriptions of how to do a SA as authors writing on the subject. However, given the exploratory nature of the youth assessment, the following simple model that focuses on the relative power of different groups will help the assessment move quickly forward.

Step 1: Be clear about the purpose of the assessment, proposed analysis, and initial understanding of the system.

The purpose of the youth assessment should already be developed before undertaking a SA. It can be further articulated and expanded in the initial meetings between USAID staff and the team, with an increased focus on one or more of the critical issues that involve youth in the region: employment and career opportunities, education, crime and quality of life, generational health issues, access to public goods, etc. For the purposes of the youth SA, it will be important to work with USAID staff – both staff that form part of the assessment team as well as other USAID experts – to delineate a number of possible programmatic options that can be used to orient the stakeholder analysis exercise. These options may be actual initiatives that the Mission is considering and wishes to test the receptivity of different groups during the assessment, or options that the Mission might advocate to other donors or to the host country government. They may even be preliminary ideas that need to be “floated” to see if they are even feasible.

Step 2: Identify key stakeholders.

The team will start with the preliminary list of stakeholders in the scope of work and the understanding gained in Step 1. It will then conduct a general brainstorming session to discuss who are the people, groups and institutions that are most involved in current conditions and who would be affected by or who would have an impact on new initiatives in youth. The social categories should be grouped according to the objectives and purposes of Step 1. A matrix, such as that in Table B.1, may be useful here to make the review systematic.

²¹ This discussion draws upon guidance on stakeholder analysis developed by the International Institute for Environment and Development (IIED), the International Center for Development-oriented Research in Agriculture (ICRA), and the Social Assessment team of the World Bank.

Table B.1: Identifying the Stakeholders

Stakeholder (Group)	Primary/Secondary Stakeholder?
1.	
2.	
3.	
4.	

The idea of primary and secondary stakeholders is introduced in Table B.1. *Primary stakeholders* are those people and groups who are ultimately affected by the situation or by new initiatives that may be introduced, as beneficiaries or as a group negatively affected. In the case of youth assessments, primary stakeholders are the subgroups of youth themselves, as well as their families and other closely affiliated social groups that would be affected by initiatives undertaken by governments or funders. *Secondary stakeholders* are those entities that serve as intermediaries in the process of initiating change or delivering aid to the primary stakeholders. They may be categorized as funding, implementing, monitoring, and advocacy groups; or they may governmental, NGO and private sector organizations.²²

The following types of questions can help complete Table B.1:

1. Who are the actors in the youth-related arena under discussion (e.g., youth unemployment)?
2. Who is adversely affected by the current situation?
3. Who benefits from current conditions?
4. Who would benefit from the various programmatic initiatives under consideration?
5. Who has a decision-making or policy role to change current practices?
6. What groups might oppose changes in the current conditions?
7. What organizations or groups have taken the lead to highlight, denounce, support, or challenge the current conditions?

It is worth noting that to answer the fourth question, “Who would benefit from the various policy initiatives under consideration?” it may be necessary to develop parallel stakeholder tables as different alternatives are developed.

Step 3: Investigate stakeholders’ interests, characteristics, and circumstances.

Stakeholder groups will stand in a particular perspective in relation to the situation of youth and the specific issues highlighted in the assessment. The identification of the stakeholder groups goes hand-in-hand with examining the each group’s principle interests.

The interests of some groups will be clearer and easier to identify than others. In some cases, interests are obvious and easy to articulate. In many cases, the interests of a group may be mixed and internally contradictory. The interests may be difficult to define and even covert, especially if they are seen to be prejudiced or to run counter to broadly held values. SA can be sensitive and political, since certain interests will not reflect well on the groups who hold them. The groups’ characteristics and current circumstances also shape where they stand in relation to the youth target groups.

The following questions can guide the inquiry into the interests of each stakeholder group:

²² These distinctions are suggested by the Overseas Development Department’s “Guidance Notes on How to Do Stakeholder Analysis of Aid Projects and Programmes,” 1995, <http://www.euforic.org/gb/stake1.htm>.

- What are the stakeholders' understanding of the situation and their expectations about the role that they can play?
- What benefits are there for the stakeholder under different action alternatives?
- What stakeholder interests conflict with other groups and with possible alternative actions or initiatives?
- What resources might the stakeholder be willing and able to mobilize in favor of different alternatives?
- What constraints circumscribe the stakeholder in pursuing his/her interests?

Table B.2: Educational Sector Example of Stakeholder Interests

Stakeholder (Group)	Group Interest
Secondary Stakeholders	
1. Ministry of Education Technical Education Unit	Controlling budgetary expenditures Ensuring minimal coverage for target population Expanding influence in Ministry Developing revised curricula for technical schools
2. Technical School Teachers Association	Maintaining high attendance levels Ensuring ongoing funding for teacher salaries Resisting move towards curriculum reform
3. Jobs for Youth NGO	Training selected youth in job-relevant skills Expanding programs to new regions beyond capital Broadening funding sources
Primary Stakeholders	
1. Current Technical School Students	Receiving relevant training that will result in jobs Mentorship or apprenticeship programs Assurance that institutes will function efficiently
2. Unemployed, out of school youth (15-20)	Job training and jobs

Step 4: Determine stakeholders' power and potential roles.

Beyond their stated interests, the power and influence of stakeholder groups can shape which initiatives have the possibility of success and which will encounter strong obstacles. An understanding of stakeholder power also helps the team understand fully what conditions need to be in place to achieve their proposed recommendations in the short and/or long run. Power and influence are by definition relational so it is important to think of the dynamics between the various key stakeholder groups. These types of questions may be most helpful:

- Among the identified stakeholder groups, who has power over whom? Who is dependent on whom?
- Which stakeholder groups are organized to articulate or defend their interests? How can that organization be influenced or built upon?
- Who has control over resources – human, financial, and physical? Who controls the flow of information?

The analysis of the relative power and influence of stakeholder groups will give the team a greater understanding of the kind of support that would be needed for alternative actions and where potential opposition and obstacles may lie. A consideration of the stakeholder's interest and of the group's perceived power and influence allows the team to consider also its *significance* to the issue at hand. That is, relatively powerful groups may not be of particular interest in the specific arena under consideration.

On the other hand, groups with very little real influence or power will be of significant interest to the analysis, since those groups typically receive benefits from any program choices made.

By this point, it will be possible to expand the matrix to include the relative power and interest of groups and their importance to the rapid assessment (see Table B.3).

Table B.3: Sample Assessment of Influence and Priority

Stakeholder (Group)	Interests	Influence: Potential Impact on alternatives (scale of 1-5)	Relative Interest Priority - Youth (scale of 1-5)
Secondary Stakeholders			
1. Ministry of Education Technical Education Unit	Controlling budgetary expenditures Ensuring minimal coverage for target population Expanding influence in Ministry Developing revised curricula for technical schools	3	4
2. Technical School Teachers Association	Maintaining high attendance levels Ensuring ongoing funding for teacher salaries Resisting move towards curriculum reform	3	3
3. Jobs for Youth NGO	Training selected youth in job-relevant skills Expanding programs to new regions beyond capital Broadening funding sources	4	5
Primary Stakeholders			
1. Current Technical School Students	Receiving relevant training that will result in job Mentorship or apprenticeship programs Assurance that institutes will function efficiently	2	5
2. Unemployed, out of school youth (15-20)	Job training and jobs	1	5

Step 5: Assess options and use the conclusions to make progress.

The initial SA will elicit a range of currently important and potential actors in the youth sector. By examining the groups who are taking part and their roles and power, the team can set priorities for the data collection that follows. The SA carried out at the beginning of the assessment should be considered provisional and preliminary. The issues raised by the SA will provide considerable fodder for the assessment team to consider – who to contact first, which groups are most likely to be interested in change (and which will most resist it), and who best can provide information and insight into the current situation of different segments of the youth population. The team will need to then return to their initial conclusions to revise and update them as more information becomes available. The tables of the SA then become “living documents” that help the team to conceptualize the social complexities they encounter.

APPENDIX C: CONSIDERATIONS IN RECRUITING, ORGANIZING AND TRAINING AN ASSESSMENT TEAM

RECRUITING AN ASSESSMENT TEAM

The purposes and methods of the youth assessment determine who should be recruited to conduct the study. The intensity and scope of the assessment is an obvious factor in the number of people needed for the team. Likewise, the composition, organization, and preparation of the team are other serious considerations given the success of the assessment often depend upon the qualifications of the team.

In addition, assessments of this kind can be conducted by internal or external teams or - as is often the case - by a combination of staffing. A well-balanced combination of internal and external assessors may be preferable for many reasons. Mission staff should carefully consider the extent of their participation on the team itself. In addition, it may be useful for the Mission to create a skills matrix to determine the final composition of the team in order to maximize the qualifications and strengths of the potential candidates.

I. COMPOSITION OF THE ASSESSMENT TEAM

The goal in assembling a team should be to select a diverse group of professionals so that each member can gather different aspects of the assessment and is able to focus on specific stakeholder groups. This is especially critical when doing a rapid appraisal and the goal of the assessment is to gather a broad range of information. Diversity within the assessment team is intended to result in a richer set of responses because they will have the ability to gain greater access and trust within specific stakeholder groups. Whenever possible, the team should also include local people and a mix of male and female members. It is also helpful to have at least one team member who has conducted a youth assessment before. In selecting the team, consideration should be given to what each member will contribute to the assessment not only in terms of their expertise and experience, but also their ability to function as a member of the proposed assessment work plan.

Knowledge and Skills Diversity

Having a team with diverse backgrounds and knowledge bases is particularly well-suited to assessing the needs of youth, which often include a variety of interconnected issues. Educational backgrounds that might be useful to include in a youth assessment are (note that this list is not exhaustive):

- anthropology,
- education administration,
- curriculum development,
- labor economics,
- vocational education or skills training,
- public health,
- social work;
- sociology,
- training of trainers, and
- social marketing.

What Should Missions Look for in Assembling an Assessment Team?

- Assessment and rapid appraisal skills (e.g., knowledge and practical application of rapid appraisal methodologies)
- Knowledge of the subject, region, or country
- Subject matter expertise in the relevant area of the Mission’s mandate (or SOs)
- Analytical skills
- Facilitation skills (if a facilitator is needed)
- Familiarity with the Mission and USAID
- Team leadership skills
- Language proficiency
- Good drafting skills
- Demonstrated performance levels (i.e., check professional references)

Recruiting team members who speak the local language and have experience in the country or region will significantly strengthen the team. Including at least one team member with assessment experience is important for managing the project, but also for providing guidance in implementing these methodologies.

Age Diversity

In the case of a youth assessment, it will obviously be important to incorporate the insights and perspectives of the youth cohort from the beginning. It may be possible to recruit at least one person in the youth age cohort with relevant skills for the team, such as a young social scientist who recently completed a Master’s degree or a *kandidatski*, who can guide the team as a knowledgeable informant as well as take part as a researcher.

Gender Diversity

For the same reasons that diversity of knowledge and skills is desirable, the Mission will want a gender-diverse team. Having team members with different backgrounds and experiences helps ensure that the team’s analysis is broad and deep. Having team members of only one gender unnecessarily constrains the team.

There may be some circumstances for which a one-gender team may be necessary. For example, if the assessment is intended to investigate safe-sex practices among female youths, it would not be appropriate to use a male interviewer. It may also be culturally inappropriate to have men interview women alone or to have a team of only women traveling through some rural areas.

National and Ethnic Diversity

Due to the high levels of education in the E&E region, many countries may have highly regarded specialists in various technical fields. Inclusion of in-country experts in the assessment is often useful and can enrich the exercise. In addition to local technical experts, the team may include local cultural experts who understand the context of the assessment and know the local language, the customs, the taboos, and the hangouts for youth of which no outsider could be aware. Moreover, inclusion of national consultants on the rapid appraisal team can act as a catalyst for greater local “buy-in” into the assessment results.

For assessments focusing on minority youth (an assessment of services for Roma children) or involving youth of different ethnic backgrounds (a school drop-out assessment that includes interviews with youth from the Bulgarian majority as well as Turkish and Roma minorities), the team should include local cultural experts.

National consultants can be full team members (technical experts, for example). However, inclusion of national consultants on the assessment team does not necessarily mean that the person participates in exactly the same way as the rest of the team. For example, the team could:

- Employ the assistance of local students to collect information already publicly available;
- Hire youth from ethnic minority groups to assist with arranging interviews and focus groups with minority group members;
- Hire a local researcher to schedule initial interviews and arrange focus groups; or
- Contract with a local survey firm to conduct structured interviews by telephone or mail (for a longer, more comprehensive appraisal).

Illustrative Team Requirements for an Assessment Focusing on Labor Market Issues

In addition to a Program Officer, Contract Officer or Procurement Specialist, a strong Team Leader, and a Logistics Assistant, the following skills would contribute significantly to the effectiveness of a rapid appraisal of youth around labor market issues.

- Labor Market Specialist – have the analytical and research skills to understand the changing conditions of the labor market;
- Local Sociologist – able to draw upon, synthesize, and contextualize any research already carried out on youth and especially youth unemployment;
- Youth Specialist – have practical experience in working with “at risk” youth or young people attempting to move into the labor force;
- Anthropologist/Sociologist – provide experience and perspective on approaches to conducting research on key youth segments, including ethnic minorities, women, economically disadvantaged, etc.
- Specialist in Vocational Ed or Technical Training– contribute special expertise on the appropriateness of current technical training and recommendations for reform.

Table C.I lists some of the advantages and disadvantages of using firms versus individual consultants to conduct youth assessments.

Table C.I: Advantages and Disadvantages of Hiring Firms versus Individual Consultants

	Firms	Individuals
Advantages	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fees are normally fixed, unless the SOW is changed • May be able to use a single award IQC/LWA or a purchase order • Hiring procedures are usually easier • Firm is responsible for quality control 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • May be less expensive than a firm • Allows the Mission to handpick the team members • May be able to use a purchase order

Disadvantages	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Firms are often more expensive than individuals • May have to bid a contract or compete a task order for a multiple award IQC/LWA 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Schedule changes usually require additional costs • Bringing together a new team requires more time dedicated to team-building
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2. ORGANIZATION OF THE ASSESSMENT TEAM

The team should ideally be comprised of three to five specialists, depending on the scope of the assessment. Flexibility in the team organization is a particular strength of rapid appraisal methodology; however, it at times makes it more difficult for the Mission to prescribe a predetermined team.

It is not feasible for only one or two individuals to fulfill all of the responsibilities of the team. For example, it does not make economic sense for a senior evaluation specialist to schedule appointments and arrange for travel when a local hire could more effectively and efficiently provide administrative and logistical support to the team at a much lower cost.

Team members can participate in the assessment in various capacities – as managers, as evaluators, or as providers of information. It is essential to clearly delineate the roles and responsibilities among the various parties and to understand what kinds of skills each team member should have (see Table C.2).

Table C.2: Roles, Responsibilities, and Skills of the Rapid Appraisal Team Members

Team Position	Roles of Specialists	Skills
Team Leader	To manage the Team and assessment process, lead relations with the Mission, conduct briefings, and provide overall technical guidance.	Communications, human resource management, organization. May also have technical expertise.
Rapid Appraisal Specialist	To help select appropriate data collection methodologies for the RA and lead team discussions on data analysis and data gaps.	Experience conducting RAs, research skills. May also have technical expertise.
Technical Area Specialist (e.g., education, health, labor)	To provide guidance to the team on appropriate research questions and data collection, and the types of data already available.	Technical knowledge of a specific subject area such as education, health, or labor. Knowledge may be gained through education or experience.
Researcher	To gather already-collected data from government Ministries, other donors, NGOs; assist team with interviews and focus groups. May also serve as translator, if local staff.	Research skills, local knowledge.
Administrative/Logistical Support	To make logistical arrangements and schedule meetings.	Organizational skills, local knowledge.
<i>Note that the specialists and the team leader will all collect data, conduct data analysis, and participate in briefings and report writing.</i>		

MISSION INVOLVEMENT WITH THE ASSESSMENT TEAM

Mission staff may choose to use internal team members, to hire a team comprised completely of outside consultants, or to have a mix of Mission staff and consultants. There are advantages and challenges to each of these configurations, as shown in Table C.3.

Table C.3: Advantages and Disadvantages of Using Internal and External Team Members²³

	Internal Team Members	External Team Members
Advantages	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Know the organization • Understand organizational behavior and attitudes • Are known to staff • Are less threatening • Often a greater chance of adopting recommendations • Are less expensive • Build internal evaluation capability • Contribute to program capacity 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Objective • No organizational bias • Fresh perspectives • Broader experience • More easily hired for longer periods of time • Have technical expertise • Not part of the power structure • Can bring in additional resources • Trained in assessments or evaluation • Experienced in other assessments or evaluations
Disadvantages	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Objectivity may be questioned • Structure may constrain participation • Personal gain may be questioned • Accept the assumptions of the organization • Full participation may be constrained by usual workload • May not be trained in assessment or evaluation methods • May lack special technical expertise • May lead to the assessment not having outside credibility • May have difficulty avoiding bias 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • May not know the organization • May not know of constraints affecting recommendations • May be perceived as an adversary • Expensive • Contract negotiations may take time • Follow-up on recommendations is not always there • Unfamiliar with environment

I. MISSION MANAGEMENT OF THE ASSESSMENT TEAM

If the Mission decides to hire an outside firm or consultant for the assessment, a Mission program manager must oversee the assessment. Some of the responsibilities that a program manager might undertake are listed in Table C.4.

Table C.4: Mission Program Manager's Typical Assessment Tasks

Assessment Stage	Tasks
Preparation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Determine the purpose and users of the assessment results • Determine who needs to be involved in the assessment process • Define assessment concerns and questions • Draft the scope of work for the assessment • Identify the mix of skills and experiences required for the rapid appraisal team • Oversee the collection of existing information/data • Supervise the preparation of any background materials and ensure their timely delivery • Select, recruit and brief the rapid appraisal team • Decide whose views should be sought

²³ ALNAP, Training Modules: Evaluation of Humanitarian Action. http://www.alnap.org/modules/m1/pdfs/3_9.pdf

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop any additional information collection procedures and instruments (unless the team is contracted to do this) • Ensure a variety of data gathering methods to enhance the validity and credibility of the assessment • Propose an assessment field visit plan • Ensure availability of funds to carry out the assessment • Brief the team on the purpose of the assessment and review work plan
Implementation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure the team has full access to files, reports, publication and other relevant information • Ensure adequate administrative and logistical support • Follow the progress of the assessment • Arrange for a meeting with the rapid appraisal team to discuss the draft report • Approve the end product
Follow-Up	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Evaluate the performance of the rapid appraisal team • Disseminate the youth assessment results • Promote the implementation of the recommendations and use the results in present and future programming • Monitor regularly to make sure the recommendations are acted upon

2. MISSION INVOLVEMENT AS PART OF THE TEAM

Even if the team is composed primarily of contractors, it is ideal for one or more Mission staff to be actively involved in the assessment process because the Mission will ultimately need to use the results. Mission staff can take on any of the roles of the team members, from Team Leader to facilitator or resource person to be called on as necessary.

The following are some questions to consider regarding who should manage the Youth Assessment:

- Who will be available during the proposed timing of the youth assessment?
- Who has a program management background?
- Who has evaluation experience to apply in managing the youth assessment?
- Who can access stakeholders for the assessment team?
- Who is responsible for any existing youth programs, and who will be responsible for future programs for youth?
- What organizations and experts are involved with youth?
- What organizations might have staff to assist in the youth assessment?

As one would expect, there are both advantages and challenges to Mission staff participation in each of these roles. When determining whether a Mission staff person will participate on the team and in what position she or he should serve, the program manager might consider the following characteristics.

- **Perceptions and Realities: Bias.** If the team leader is a Mission staff person, the assessment may not be perceived by stakeholders or participants as objective. The Team Leader may also subtly guide the assessment to particular research questions, data collection methodologies, or informants – giving the team the answers or recommendations the team leader wants.
- **Guiding the Assessment: Control.** Having an internal team member will allow the Mission more immediate control over the assessment. It will also assist the team. The Mission staff person can answer questions about Mission needs and interests, help get appointments with interested stakeholders or donors, and serve as a expert on the team (particularly as a technical, subject-matter expert).

- Getting accurate information: Participation.** It is also important to take into consideration the effect Mission staff may have on assessment participants. Depending on the interviewees and the questions being asked, participants may not feel comfortable criticizing USAID programs or suggesting new areas of emphasis with Mission staff present.

Who Will Manage the Youth and Democracy Assessment?	Who Will Manage the Youth and Health Assessment?
<p><i>Who will be available during the proposed timing of the youth assessment?</i> The program manager and assistants will be in-country for the duration of the implementation period. Although they will not travel with the team, they will be available to respond to questions or situations as they arise.</p> <p><i>Who has a program management background?</i> The program manager has significant experience in managing teams of consultants and the program assistants have some experience in that area.</p> <p><i>Who can access stakeholders for the team?</i> The program manager makes many of the initial contacts. Some Mission colleagues may also be called upon to make initial contacts if they have closer working relationships with the stakeholders. Many stakeholders will also be contacted by USAID contractors or grantees on the ground working in youth areas. Some contacts the team will have to make cold, such as pulling in random members of a community or university students.</p> <p><i>Who is or will be responsible for any existing and future youth programs?</i> There are currently no youth programs, but the DG program manager will be responsible for any future programs for youth in the civil society area.</p> <p><i>What organizations/experts are involved with youth?</i> Other international donors have taken on health issues among youth. The program manager at the Mission will contact them out of courtesy, but since the areas are not closely related, there will be little involvement from them. The Mission will contact Ministry of Youth and keep them apprised of the team's progress. The Ministry has been asked for input on local experts who might be appropriate for the team. The Ministry recommended four people, one of whom the Mission approved for the team.</p> <p><i>What organizations might have the staff to assist in the youth assessment?</i> Universities have staff that work with youth regularly and have the skills required for conducting research and focus groups. Community-based, youth-serving organizations are also useful in setting up, recruiting participants for and hosting focus groups. Any political parties that have youth branches or activities are also important sources.</p>	<p><i>Who will be available during the proposed timing of the youth assessment?</i> The Mission in this example is fortunate enough to have a dedicated Health team, comprised of the Deputy Director for Programs who has over 20 years of USAID experience, a full-time expatriate health reform expert, and a public health program officer who is a foreign service national. All will be available for the period of the assessment.</p> <p><i>Who has a program management background?</i> The Deputy Director's dedication to building the qualifications of her local hire staff leads to the decision to permit the primary public health program officer to dedicate his time to the activity as the fourth full-time team member. The expatriate health officer will work with the FSN to manage the assessment. In addition, the Mission has a highly-qualified contract specialist who is familiar with issuing task orders through IQCs. Therefore, the Mission has the staff and the resources to prepare for the rapid appraisal and manage the contractor during the rapid appraisal.</p> <p><i>Who can access stakeholders for the team?</i> The long-term work in health means that the SO Team can call on in-country cooperators to assist the assessment team in identifying and contacting the principal stakeholders in the arena.</p> <p><i>Who is or will be responsible for any existing and future youth programs?</i> The Mission has no current programs for youth. If an initiative is undertaken in health, it would be the Health SO Team's primary responsibility.</p> <p><i>What organizations/experts are involved with youth?</i> The same cooperators are prime sources of information on organizations and experts. Likewise, other donors will make suggestions. UNAIDS staff may contribute staff time, and the Ministries of Health and of Education, Youth and Sports will be involved in providing background information and articulating their interests. During the three weeks of in-country field research, the Health SO Team will work closely with the team. Simultaneously, the contractor is responsible for the internal functioning of the team, ensuring that they meet their deadlines and provide high quality deliverables.</p>

HIRING THE ASSESSMENT TEAM

Having provided information on the ideal organization and composition of the assessment team, in reality the final selection of the team members is often determined and limited by the methodologies selected and the resources available to the Missions.

Assistance with recruitment of consultants can be sought from USAID colleagues, including the E&E bureau, universities (American and local), international donors, international NGOs, and local institutions. There are also a number of different types of organizations that can provide the services requested, including international consulting firms, international consultants, local research firms, local consultants. Each of these is discussed in more detail below.

1. INTERNATIONAL CONSULTING FIRMS

International consulting firms are frequently selected for this type of activity because they often have regional expertise or comparable experience in other countries. Firms have access to teams of experts that can be mobilized quickly and will work well together. Such firms should be accustomed to working with USAID Missions and familiar with the challenges of working in-country. A Mission would want to brief the team and monitor the assessment process, but should not have to provide any training or more than minimal logistical support. The Mission should be prepared, however, to assist the consultants with meeting government officials and providing background documents when appropriate.

2. INTERNATIONAL CONSULTANTS

In the event that an assessment is being undertaken in an area that requires highly specialized or technical knowledge, an international consultant or a team of independent international consultants may be the appropriate choice. In this case, the Mission, has to take on the responsibility of contracting with each consultant, coordinating consultants' schedules, organizing logistical support, and allowing time for team-building.

3. LOCAL RESEARCH FIRMS

Hiring a local research firm to implement or assist in the assessment is an option for Missions to consider. Highly-qualified research firms are located in most Europe and Eurasian countries, but they often require frequent interaction and reminders about the implementation process. In some cases, it might be necessary to conduct a brief training of local evaluation companies hired to implement the assessment or local staff hired to assist on the assessment.

4. LOCAL CONSULTANTS

Missions may decide that local consultants with technical competence and local knowledge are the best fit for conducting the assessment. As with international consultants, the Mission should expect to contract with each consultant, coordinate consultants' schedules, and allow time for team building. Logistical support should be minimal for a local expert.

INITIAL TEAM BRIEFING

Once the has been assembled and is ready to begin the youth assessment, it is important to ensure that all team members understand the objectives of the assessment and agree on the approaches to be used. Missions are encouraged to hold an initial team briefing, sometimes called a team building meeting, at the beginning of the assessment, probably the first working day the team is in-country.

Because the members of the team are most likely from a variety of academic and professional backgrounds and bring a variety perspectives and viewpoints to the assessment, it is very important to

achieve agreement – early in the process – on the objectives of the assessment and how the team will accomplish its goals.

Initial briefings, or meetings, usually include some or all of the following discussion points:

- Understanding the program context and the assessment purpose and approach;
- Reaching final agreement on the assessment design (data collection methodologies to be used, persons to be interviewed);
- Reviewing the data collection instruments and the schedule of activities;
- Answering questions;
- Reviewing final arrangements for administrative and logistical support and making any necessary adjustments;
- Discussing the format and content of interim and final reports (and any other required deliverables); and
- Planning for any Mission debriefing following the assessment.

TRAINING YOUTH ASSESSMENT TEAM MEMBERS

In cases where a local firm or individuals are hired to work on the assessment, it is advisable to conduct a brief training. This training covers an introduction to the project, the methodology, the protocols to be used, roles and responsibilities, and Mission requirements for deliverables. If the local firm or individuals are hired directly by the Mission, financial reporting and invoicing should also be discussed.

The following section is an illustrative example of training given to researchers undertaking a rapid assessment of opportunities for out-of-school youth in Bulgaria. It contains many excellent suggestions and forms that might be useful to the team members.

EXAMPLE TRAINING FOR RAPID APPRAISAL RESEARCHERS²⁴

USAID/BULGARIA

Introduction

Welcome to USAID/Bulgaria's Rapid Assessment (RA) of Opportunities for Out-of-School Youth. We are pleased to have you as part of our team in collecting data on views and needs of youth in Bulgaria. This primer contains several useful pieces of information: descriptions of the Rapid Assessment Team Members involved in this project, the contact strategy for interviewees, instructions for administering the questionnaires, and preparing questionnaires for data entry and analysis.

Privacy

The information you collect is not to be distributed to any other person or organization for any reason. Protecting the participants' privacy also means that notes and questionnaires are not left unattended where other people might see them. Notes should be returned to the team leader as soon as possible after completing the interview.

Contact Information for Team Members

1. Team Leader (cell phone, hotel telephone and room number, email address)
2. Technical Expert (cell phone, hotel telephone and room number, email address)
3. Technical Expert (cell phone, hotel telephone and room number, email address)
4. Mission (contact person, telephone number at office, email address)

Background/Description of Rapid Assessment

Despite recent economic growth, unemployment in Bulgaria remains high – even for those with advanced degrees. Youth who do not complete secondary school face serious obstacles to finding a job and are unlikely to be employed in jobs with advancement potential or paying salaries large enough to support a family.

USAID/Bulgaria has requested this rapid assessment to learn what obstacles youth face regarding staying in school, what kinds of jobs they find after leaving school, what kinds of training employers that hire these youth would like the youth to have, and what kinds of training employers that do not hire these youth (employers requiring a secondary diploma) would like their employees to have. A major focus of this RA is to determine whether secondary schools meet the needs of these youth or whether vocational training outside of school would better prepare them for available jobs. The information gathered in this assessment will be used to design a project funded by USAID to assist youth to stay in school or to acquire skills outside of school (depending on the results of the assessment).

The RA team, therefore, will interview youth, employers, teachers, parents, and government officials.

As a local researcher, you have been hired to help the team recruit youth to participate in interviews. You will also conduct interviews with these youth in Bulgarian and provide English translations of your interviews to the Team Leader. The team leader and other members of the team are available to answer any questions you may have.

Step I: Recruitment

²⁴ These instructions assume that the local researcher is experienced in conducting interviews. If inexperienced researchers or youth are employed to conduct interviews, a more regimented survey-type questionnaire should be used to help guide the interviewer in asking questions.

Because this study focuses on out-of-school youth, interviewees should be youth – ages 15 to 24 – who did not complete secondary school.

We suggest you begin searching for youth by contacting secondary schools in your assigned area (Sofia, Varna, or Dimitrovgrad) and asking for names and contact information for school drop-outs. We will provide you with a letter from the Ministry of Education and USAID explaining the study and requesting this assistance from the school administrator.

The number of completed interviews varies by city:

- If you are responsible for Sofia, please complete 30 interviews
- Varna, 20
- Dimitrovgrad, 15

Contact these youth by telephone or through personal visits to their homes.

Once you have established contact with a youth and obtained his consent to participate in the interview, we suggest you use a *snowballing* recruitment technique: ask the youth to suggest friends who are also drop-outs who may be interested in participating.

Step 2: Administering the Surveys

First, introduce yourself and the purpose of the questionnaire. Tell the interviewee how long the questionnaire will take. Assure him that his name will not be used or reported to the government in any way.

Find a quiet place to talk where you will not be interrupted for at least 30 minutes. We prefer that you conduct the interviews in your office, not in cafes or restaurants. Try to establish a rapport with each interviewee and make him comfortable. We will provide funds so that you may offer your interviewees refreshment, such as juice, soda, water, coffee, tea, or cookies.

The questionnaire should take approximately 30 minutes to administer. Be sure to ask all the questions of each interviewee and to collect the demographic information on the Interviewee Data Sheet (the Data Sheet is provided below). Follow the probes on the questionnaire if your interviewee is not very talkative.

In the questions that require opinions from the participant, please avoid commenting or explaining with examples that may influence the opinion. This may cause the participant to respond in a way that they think you would like to hear. Try to capture the essence of those opinions as much as possible in the exact words of the participant. Remember to write the answers immediately so as not to lose any data. One effective way of not losing control of the interview (and to verify the response) is to repeat the answer as you are writing it down.

You may hand-write or type the interviewee's responses during the interview.

Once more, at the end of the interview, thank the participant for his/her cooperation. Ask the participant if she/he has any questions about the study.

All interviews must be complete by _____.

Step 3: Reviewing the Completed Questionnaires

Read over what you have written as if you were not at the interview. Write or type any explanation or clarification that would be necessary for the team to understand the information that you wrote as a whole. Clarify all the responses so that comments are precise, taking into account the other persons that have to read and understand them afterwards.

Step 4: Analysis

Your written report to the team leader should include:

- Originals of your completed interviews.
- English translations of interviews.
- English analysis of your interviews, summarizing interviewee responses to each question and identifying areas of agreement and disagreement between interviewees.
- Interviewee Data Sheets for all interviewees.

Your report is due to the team leader no later than _____.

Step 5: Billing

We have included an itinerary and expense report. For all travel (including local travel), please complete the itinerary. The expense report should be submitted to the team leader no later than _____, with receipts attached. Your individual scope of work contains a description of the types of expenses for which we will reimburse you.

Thank you very much for your assistance with this important research project. Our success in presenting accurate information is dependent on you and we thank you for the time you have taken to read this manual. If you have any questions at any time, please feel free to contact the team leader at 1.202.555.5555 or teamleader@yahoo.com. We wish you the best of luck.

INTERVIEWEE DATA SHEET FOR OUT-OF-SCHOOL YOUTH ASSESSMENT	
a. Date of Interview	
b. Interviewer Name	
c. Interviewee Information	
Age	
Gender	<input type="checkbox"/> Female <input type="checkbox"/> Male
Ethnic group	<input type="checkbox"/> Bulgarian <input type="checkbox"/> Turkish <input type="checkbox"/> Roma <input type="checkbox"/> Other _____
City where interviewee resides	<input type="checkbox"/> Sofia <input type="checkbox"/> Dimitrovgrad <input type="checkbox"/> Varna <input type="checkbox"/> Other _____
Housing	<input type="checkbox"/> At home with parents <input type="checkbox"/> With roommate <input type="checkbox"/> Alone
Employment	<input type="checkbox"/> Employed full-time <input type="checkbox"/> Employed part-time <input type="checkbox"/> Looking for work <input type="checkbox"/> In vocational training <input type="checkbox"/> Receiving government cash benefits (list type) _____
Household Income	Total Amount: _____ Amount youth earns through work: _____ Amount of government cash benefits: _____

Table X: Sample Itinerary Worksheet for Team Training

ITINERARY			
Place	Date	Time	Comments
Departed			
Arrived			
Departed			
Arrived			
Departed			
Arrived			
Departed			
Arrived			
Departed			
Arrived			

Table X: Sample Expense Report Worksheet for Team Training

EXPENSE REPORT				
Location	Date	Comments/Explanation	Receipt #	Amount

APPENDIX D: SCOPE OF WORK COMPONENTS AND AN EXAMPLE FOR THE EDUCATIONAL ASSESSMENT OF MINORITY YOUTH

This Appendix provides a sample scope of work (SOW), describing an illustrative fictional assessment²⁵ of secondary education for minority youth in Macedonia. The table below summarizes the key components typically included in a scope of work, and the sample SOW that follows provides an example of how these components might be addressed. Chapter 3 of the manual describes scope of work development in greater detail.

Table D.1: Key Components in a Typical Scope of Work

I. Background and Purpose	The sample SOW summarizes the topic to be assessed and describes the purpose of the assessment, including who will use the results and how.
II. Assessment Questions or Objectives	The sample SOW lists the major questions the assessment should answer. It also specifies the area and population to be considered and if possible, the kinds of measurement.
III. Assessment Methods	The sample SOW describes the overall assessment approach and data collection methods. The SOW provides some guidance on data collection instruments, procedures, and analysis (e.g., “consultative participatory process with all stakeholders represented”) but leaves the contractor to determine which methods will best accomplish this goal. The SOW also identifies data the Mission will provide to the team (i.e., USAID-produced documents).
IV. Composition of the Assessment Team	The sample SOW identifies the size and composition of the team. It also outlines the skills and experience required to carry out the evaluation, including the education, experience, knowledge of subject area, and language proficiency. Note that the SOW distinguishes between desired and required skills and specifies the roles of the team and client (i.e., Mission participation on the team).
V. Schedule and Major Tasks	In this part of the sample SOW, the specific tasks the team is responsible for are clearly identified. It also provides a preliminary week-by-week schedule.
VI. Deliverables	The sample SOW lists the deliverables, including when they are to be delivered, to whom and when. It also specifies what components should be in the final report.
VII. Financial Requirements and Logistical Support	Usually a SOW gives the budget for the assessment, but the sample SOW does not. This information was included in the contract awarded to the consulting firm hired to do the work. The contract, not the sample SOW, included the reporting requirements about financial matters. Like most scopes, the sample SOW identifies logistical support available from the Mission.

²⁵ The sample does not necessarily reflect a real issue being discussed in Republic of Macedonia.

SAMPLE SCOPE OF WORK
A RAPID ASSESSMENT OF SECONDARY EDUCATIONAL NEEDS OF
MINORITY YOUTH IN REPUBLIC OF MACEDONIA

I. BACKGROUND

A. Country Context

The poorest country of the former Yugoslavia, the Republic of Macedonia, was the only republic to gain independence peacefully. The Kosovo conflict had direct, immediate effects on Macedonia's society and economy. Government expenditures to cover the impact of hosting approximately 350,000 Kosovar refugees threatened the fiscal balance. Many businesses in Macedonia had to scale down operations, creating a situation of "temporary layoffs" and increased unemployment, as a result of Macedonia's dependence on Serbia as a major market and transportation corridor. Commerce disrupted by the conflict constituted 30 percent of the country's GDP (i.e., 70% of the exports were to or through the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia).

Macedonia's democratic institutions and practices are fragile. Civil society organizations (CSOs) are not yet effective mechanisms through which citizens can identify their interests, negotiate conflicts, and influence government policy-making. Public administration is often inefficient, and potentially undermined by the rapidly changing composition of the country's ethnic populations. Addressing ethnic tensions in Macedonia is key to sustaining its evolution as a democracy, and maintaining stability in FYR Macedonia is a key element of U.S. Government efforts in the former Yugoslavia and the Balkans.

Building a critical mass of Macedonia's key government institutions, civil society organizations, and political parties will help reduce ethnic tensions and lead to a stronger, more transparent and responsive democracy by increasing citizens' participation and awareness. Moreover, targeting secondary education will strengthen the capacity of the government institutions that specialize in human resource development and provide a cadre of future leaders and agents (teachers) in the education system. However, both language barriers and tensions caused by ethnic differences and prejudice are critical educational issues that need to be addressed more effectively at an earlier stage in the educational system. Education is not only the shortest route out of poverty; it is the shortest route out of prejudice as well. An active citizenry with increased tolerances for diversity can help resolve ethnic tensions and contribute to a generally more productive society. Assisting civil society groups and NGOs to become better organized and more active in addressing the educational needs of their communities will also help to resolve current ethnic strife.

The Problems and Context

The laws and guidelines governing education, minority rights, and the use of various languages in education are of paramount importance, both real and symbolic, in Macedonia. The current law pertaining to secondary and higher education dates from 1974, and has no allowances for minority rights and languages. The Minister of Education has said that passage of a new Law on Secondary Education is his top priority. Present Macedonian law on secondary education has been debated for more than one year, and will soon be revised to allow for the independent operation and official recognition of minority secondary education. Ratification of the proposed legal revision is expected sometime between now and December 31, 2000, and is expected to contribute to relieving present ethnic tensions. The

adoption of a new Law is the necessary first step toward solving the issue of secondary education in minority languages.

B. Purpose of the Assessment

This task order is designed to provide a rapid assessment of the educational needs of minority youth in secondary schools in Macedonia, emphasizing minority language education. Services require an understanding of education law in the Central and Eastern European region, and particularly that body of law in Macedonia, along with an understanding of the potential impact of pending changes. Knowledge of education policy; education administration; teacher training methodologies; bilingual or minority language training; university partnerships; and the politics of education, including minority rights are also required. Experience in these disciplines within the Europe and Eurasia region is critical. Recommendations will be included for a strategic approach to developing a collaborative program design in conjunction with other donors committed to supporting the education sector in Macedonia, and will take into consideration those needs or activities identified by counterpart organizations as key to institutional strengthening.

II. ASSESSMENT QUESTIONS

The following questions are intended to guide the rapid appraisal team. The list is not exhaustive, and it is anticipated that during the development of instrumentation additional questions will be generated, just as it is anticipated that clarifying questions will arise as experience is gained during the interviews and observations.

1. To what extent are minority language courses or schools available to youth (grades 9-12)?
2. To what extent do minority language youth require courses or schools dedicated to instruction in their native language (to what extent are students bilingual)?
3. What will be the impact of the new education law on bilingual or minority language secondary instruction?
4. To what extent are bilingual or minority language secondary teachers available?
5. What kinds of teacher training are necessary to meet the requirements of the new law?
6. What are the political implications of the new law – which minority groups oppose, support the law?
7. What are the team's recommendations for USAID/Skopje actions in the area of minority language secondary instruction?
8. What NGO or civil society groups are engaged in providing language and ethnicity training?
9. What resources do NGOs or civil society groups need to become more active in this area?

III. ASSESSMENT METHODOLOGY

The methodology to be used in conducting this evaluation will be framed by current thinking and USAID policy. It shall be a consultative participatory process with all stakeholders represented. The evaluation team is requested to submit a detailed plan of the methodology it proposes for the evaluation, bearing in mind the broad strategy and need noted above. The detailed plan of the methodology to be employed, draft instruments developed for information/data collection, the approach to analysis, and the reporting format must be submitted to USAID before the commencement of field work. The team should utilize a mix of rapid appraisal techniques, including focus groups, key informant interviews, observation, and literature review.

Existing Information Sources

USAID/Skopje has the following documents and will provide these to the team:

- Draft secondary education law
- USAID/Skopje strategic objectives related to youth and the Kosovar minority
- Prior education evaluations/assessments commissioned by USAID/Skopje or other donor agencies

IV. TEAM COMPOSITION AND PARTICIPATION

Respondents should propose an appropriate team of short-term personnel to carry out the services described in this Scope of Work.

The evaluation team will comprise a senior evaluation specialist who will act as a **team leader**. This person's qualifications might include:

- a doctorate degree in evaluation/education;
- a minimum of five years' evaluation or related experience in Europe and Eurasia;
- knowledge of overall trends in secondary education in Europe and Eurasia;
- contract administration or project administration/management experience; and
- previous team supervisory experience.

The team leader will be responsible for all deliverables, manage all project personnel, lead the team, and coordinate all activities of the evaluation. The leader will also serve as a point of contact between the evaluation team and USAID.

Four additional specialists with graduate qualifications and extensive experience in content related to program focus areas, including, but not limited to:

- secondary education;
- educational planning and/or policy analysis;
- international development;
- educational evaluation;
- previous or current work in Europe and Eurasia with NGOs, contract organizations, and/or international donors working in Eastern Europe; and
- if not utilizing a local in-country specialist, a language requirement may be necessary for at least one team member.

All team members will have strong interpersonal skills, be proficient in English, have demonstrated excellent report writing skills, and be familiar with USAID-funded projects.

The team members will furnish their own laptop computers and be proficient in the use of Microsoft Word, Excel, and Access.

Because of the participatory and consultative nature of this assessment, an Assessment Reference Group will be selected composed of representatives of the Ministry of Education, USAID/Skopje, and other donors. This group will review drafts of the report and advise the contractor on how to proceed if contentious issues.

V. SCHEDULE AND MAJOR TASKS

Tasks

Specifically, the rapid assessment team will do the following:

- Become familiar with the legislation passed by the Government of Macedonia (GOM) affecting secondary education reform;
- Identify and discuss with key national and international stakeholders and donors their involvement and plans for supporting reform of secondary education in Macedonia;
- Conduct focus groups with minority youth and parents of youth in each oblast of Macedonia to determine their educational needs; and
- Develop an action plan for design and implementation of USAID's support for secondary education in Macedonia.

Illustrative Schedule of Activities	
Week 1	Team arrives – meets with USAID secondary education team and Assessment Reference Committee; reviews reference documents; develops assignments/work plan for the team based on review of respective competencies; develops plans, methodology, and instruments; contacts and appointments and logistical arrangements commence. Roles and responsibilities are defined.
Weeks 2, 3	Field work is carried out.
Week 4	Interviews with appropriate officials and personnel with Ministry of Education, USAID, and NGOs. Work on the final report commences.
Week 5	Draft of final report is completed and disseminated for comment. Workshop is prepared and presented; all but team leader depart by week's end.
Week 6	Team leader finalizes report.

VI. DELIVERABLES

The assessment team will be responsible for the following deliverables:

- **Work plan** detailing the methodology to be utilized, the data collection instruments, the approach to the analysis of the data, and the format of reporting documents. This plan will also include reference to all major activities required by the assessment.
- **Schedule** of all fieldwork and appointments insofar as possible, noting that the schedule is a fluid document.
- **Draft report** to be presented to USAID. Once approved by USAID the contractor will send copies of the revised draft report to the Ministry of Education for comments.

- **Workshop** with partners. After USAID has approved the draft report, the contractor will organize and fund a one-day workshop (with the costs charged to the contract) to present key evaluation findings and recommendations.
- **Final report** in the following format:
 - **an executive summary** concisely stating the most critical elements of the larger report;
 - **an introduction** encompassing the purpose, audience, and assessment questions;
 - **findings** pertaining to the assessment questions;
 - **conclusions** stating interpretations and judgments based on the findings;
 - **unresolved issues** addressing what remains to be done and/or unanswered questions;
 - **recommendations** to include proposed actions;
 - **lessons learned** to include broader implications for similar programs in different settings or for future activities.

Appendices to the report should contain supplementary information or more detailed information regarding certain of the evaluation activities (e.g., interview lists, statistical tables).

Ten (10) bound copies of the report should be submitted (5 in English and 5 in Macedonian), as well as the electronic versions of the report in Microsoft Word format (a version in English and a version in Macedonian).

VII. FINANCIAL REQUIREMENTS AND LOGISTICAL SUPPORT

Financial requirements are contained in the contract.

USAID/Skopje will help arrange meetings with Ministry of Education officials and recommend lodging and in-country travel methods to the team while in-country.

APPENDIX E: FOCUS GROUP GUIDELINES

PURPOSE

The following focus group guidelines provide background for Mission staff unfamiliar with the focus group research methodology and help Mission staff evaluate the types of information that focus groups can provide. The guidelines can be used as an outline and reference for training inexperienced youth assessment team members or as a resource for more experienced team members. However, these guidelines are not intended as a manual or to thoroughly prepare inexperienced team members. The following discussion includes:

- The elements involved in the planning stages of focus groups and the specific steps to prepare and organize each session;
- The procedures for moderating and observing focus groups; and
- The process for analyzing and reporting the results.

At the end of this Appendix, the reader will find a number of resources which include planning tips, screening questionnaires, recruitment strategies, and other tips for moderating and managing a focus group. These resources are divided roughly into functional areas of responsibility and may correspond to the division of tasks among the members of the assessment team. It is important for the program manager and the team leader to assign and carefully monitor these tasks. Open and frequent communication among these Mission and the team members will facilitate the completion of these tasks in an efficient and timely manner.

- Resource E.1: Planning a Focus Group
- Resource E.2: Focus Group Participant Screening Questionnaire
- Resource E.3: Recruitment of Focus Group Participants
- Resource E.4: Pilot Testing Focus Group Protocols
- Resource E.5: Sample Confirmation Letter to Recruited Participants
- Resource E.6: Moderating the Focus Group
- Resource E.7: Agenda for Training Local Researchers in Focus Group Techniques
- Resource E.8: Focus Group Note-Taking Tips

These illustrative tasks can be tailored to meet the specific needs of the assessment team.

INTRODUCTION

Focus groups can be extremely useful for researching social issues, such as evaluating a program's impact or the attitudes different stakeholders hold about an organization's policies or functioning. Focus groups are small group discussions usually involving seven to ten participants and lasting between one and two hours. Focus groups are used to gather descriptive and in-depth answers to a pre-determined set of questions chosen to elicit responses relevant to the topic and goals of the assessment. One the other hand, the assessment team would not use focus groups to extrapolate findings to entire populations or report quantitative results. For example, a focus group will tell the team about the specific attitudes toward voting for only those youth participating in the focus group. The methodology will not tell the team how many youth in Ukraine vote or how often.

Focus groups are useful for researching issues involving hard-to-reach populations, including some segments of the youth population. This manual takes into account the specific social, cultural, access and

logistics issues that can be particularly challenging in doing successful research with youth. These guidelines can also be useful for working with more traditional groups of research subjects.

DEVELOPING AN OVERALL PLAN

1. GOALS AND PURPOSES OF FOCUS GROUPS

The first step in planning focus groups is defining and clarifying the specific information in which the Mission is interested and which the assessment will attempt to gather through focus groups. By defining the information the focus groups should elicit early on, the team can design appropriate questionnaires and target groups.

Resource E.1: Planning a Focus Group is intended for the team leader. It is a general guide to the process of planning, conducting, and reporting of the focus groups.

2. COMPOSITION OF THE FOCUS GROUP(S)

Based on the informational objectives of the focus groups, the assessment team will define the target populations and the number of focus group sessions to be held. Each group's composition should also be determined, keeping in mind that homogeneous groups usually allow for a higher comfort level among the participants and increased participation. Groups may be composed based on:

- *Demographic characteristics* (e.g., gender, age, marital status, family composition, income brackets, educational level, occupation, location or residence, ethnicity, etc.).
- *Relevant experiences, participation or membership in some organization or activity* (e.g., beneficiaries or participants in an existing USAID program, sexually active youth, unemployed youth).
- *Attitudes and opinions* (e.g., belief that elections lead to real changes in government, belief in own ability to control events in life).

Focus Group Composition

The assessment team is investigating sexual activity among youth and decides to hold four focus groups with unmarried teens in four cities with high rates of STDs:

- Girls ages 15-20
- Boys ages 15-20
- Girls ages 21-25
- Boys ages 21-25

The groups are segregated by gender and age to ensure that:

- Bravado does not affect responses
- Girls feel comfortable talking
- Responses of younger participants are not influenced by the (probable) greater experience of older participants

3. GEOGRAPHIC AREAS WHERE FOCUS GROUPS WILL BE CONDUCTED

The areas in which focus groups will be held are determined by the objectives of the assessment. Does it include research in both rural and urban areas? Are particular projects or programs being assessed in certain cities or villages?

4. TIMELINE

The focus group sessions may last between one to two hours. Recruiting the participants and writing the focus group reports take significantly longer. Travel to conduct focus groups around the country will also increase the time needed.

Although the timeline will be specific to the assessment, the following guidelines can serve as a starting point for planning the time frame for one or a small number of focus groups to be held at the same location²⁶:

- 1 week for planning,
- 2 weeks for recruiting,
- 1 week for conducting the groups (less if only one group is held), and
- 2 weeks for analyzing and reporting the results.

5. FOCUS GROUP REPORT (TOP LINE REPORT)

Prior to conducting the focus group sessions, the Mission and assessment team should determine whether separate focus group reports for each and what the report should contain. Options to consider are:

- Providing a separate focus group report with an analysis of all the groups conducted.
- Including the analysis of the focus groups in the overall final report, but not providing a separate focus group report.
- Including the focus group analysis in the overall report along with a verbal briefing or transcripts of the focus groups, but not providing a separate focus group report.

Keep in mind that providing a separate focus group report will slow the team's research and completion of the overall report as the team concentrates on preparing the focus group report.

6. MISSION OBSERVATION OF FOCUS GROUPS

Where facilities permit, focus groups may be arranged so that observers can view the group unobtrusively (through the use of one-way mirrors). These facilities may not be available in the country in which the assessment is conducted. If an observation window is not available, the Mission and team should consider whether observers will attend. Observers are persons (other than the participants and focus group facilitator) who sit in the room and observe only.

Advantages of observation include allowing Mission staff or other team members to get a sense of the findings of the rapid appraisal prior to the final report. In addition, an observer may also take notes for the facilitator – crucial if there is no ability to record the session or if the team is working very fast and does not want to listen to the tapes in order to make notes (a good facilitator is very busy during the group and cannot take detailed notes).

On the other hand, observation may distract participants or make them self-conscious. It can also hamper the rapport a facilitator tries to create in the room. If observers will be present, consider:

- **Seating.** Will the observer be seated in view of the participants? If so, the observer should be seated outside of the circle of the participants (or away from the table) though this may not be possible for a note taker (if only one table or writing surface is available).
- **Introduction of the observer.** Generally speaking, introducing the observer is a good idea. Not introducing the observer can be distracting of itself (as participants wonder who the mystery person is). Note takers should be introduced and the note taking explained; otherwise, participants assured of their confidentiality will wonder why a person is writing down everything

¹Focus Groups: When and How to Use Them: A Practical Guide, by Prudence Breitrose, Health Promotion Resource Center (1988), p. 10.

they say.

7. RECRUITING PARTICIPANTS

After the Mission staff and assessment team have determined the composition of the focus groups and agreed that the targeted groups will likely yield in needed information, the next step is the recruitment of the focus group participants.

8. ESTABLISHING SCREENING CRITERIA AND SCREENING QUESTIONNAIRES

Once the composition of each group is decided, potential participants must be screened. A screening questionnaire will help recruiters determine whether a participant meets the profile desired. For example, for a focus group with youth on attitudes towards voting and political participation, the team may want groups of youth with different educational levels and voting experience. The screening questionnaire, then, in addition to questions such as age, gender, or place of residence, would ask questions such as:

- What is your highest level of education?
- Are you registered to vote?
- Did you vote in the last election?

If the team is interested only in youth who completed high school but not university and have never voted, the questionnaire will be used to screen out college graduates who vote.

The following points should be kept in mind:

- Include the minimal number of questions necessary.
- Don't be too restrictive in screening (otherwise it will be difficult to recruit enough participants).
- Use two-tiered screening – broader criteria first, followed by narrower criteria (are you registered to vote? Have you ever voted? Have you ever worked on a political campaign?). Two-tiered screening allows for a fallback position in case the more restrictive criteria yield too few participants.

Resource E.2: Focus Group Participant Screening Questionnaire contains a sample screening questionnaire that the assessment team could modify for its use in determining appropriate participants for the focus group.

9. MODERATOR'S GUIDE/FOCUS GROUP PROTOCOLS

The moderator's guide (or protocol) contains the questions that will be asked of the participants during the focus group meeting. An example can be found in the Resources.

In drafting the Moderator's Guide, the team should consider the sequencing of the questions can be an important factor affecting the flow and effectiveness of the focus group discussion and can affect research bias. Bias can occur, for instance, whenever the placement of a question affects the response to a subsequent question. Pilot testing, if possible, is a great aid here. Problems of this nature can usually be detected during pilot testing by research team staff and by participants, who may also point out possible improvements.

LOGISTICS

I. LOCATION

Focus groups can be held in *informal* locations, such as community meeting places, churches, schools, hotels, or a home, or at *formal* facilities designed specifically for this activity, complete with one-way

mirrors for observation and professional audio and video taping capabilities. The most important consideration is: Will the chosen location be convenient and comfortable for the participants and feasible for the research team? Considerations include child care availability for participants, disability access, access to public transportation, and cost.

Location

For youth, location of the focus group is very important, and participation is likely to be higher if the location is informal and familiar. Try schools, offices of youth-oriented NGOs, community buildings, even cafes or restaurants – if a private room is available.

2. SCHEDULING

Scheduling of the focus group meeting times will depend on the convenience and availability of the targeted participants. For employed participants or students, weekday evenings may be most convenient. Scheduling during or very near to a meal time can be very convenient for persons with tight schedules will require that a meal be served.

3. PILOT TESTING THE FOCUS GROUP PROTOCOLS

Pilot testing helps ensure that the focus group protocols (including set-up, seating, introduction, asking the questions, and probing) are appropriate and effective for gathering the needed information. To the extent possible, the pilot test should be conducted under conditions closely approximating the research protocol, allowing both the moderator's guide and the other aspects of the protocols to be evaluated.

Full pilot testing may not be feasible in a assessment due to the time constraints inherent in the research. However, it is strongly recommended that the focus group protocol be piloted with several individuals that are representative of the focus group participants to ensure that the questions are understandable and relevant to their situations.

PLANNING AND PREPARATION: SECONDARY STAGE

I. DEVELOP A CONTINGENCY PLAN

It is always wise to have contingency plans for some of the difficulties that can be encountered in conducting focus groups, such as:

1. Inadequate attendance due to:
 - Recruiting targets not being met
 - Inclement weather
 - Excessive no-shows.
2. A wrong mix of participants, due to lack of sufficient homogeneity or personality or style clashes.
3. Behavioral problems by participants (e.g., substance abuse, confrontations between rival groups or gangs).
4. Last minute unavailability of the chosen facility.

Possible solutions include rescheduling, reorganizing the composition of the groups to separate some persons into different focus groups, moving the location or even canceling the meeting. The note taker should be prepared to take over as the moderator in an emergency. Anticipating some of these potential problems can prepare the team to deal with them in the most effective manner.

2. MATERIALS FOR FOCUS GROUP

Materials generally needed for a focus group include:

- Name tags or name tents
- Tape recorder (especially if not using a note taker), along with any batteries or extension cords and blank tapes.
- Extra audio tapes
- Extra batteries
- Forms or other items, if any, to be examined by and discussed by the focus group (e.g., draft posters for an anti-drug campaign for youth)
- Refreshments

Materials that might be needed include:

- Duct tape, to cover electrical cords of the taping equipment
- Easel and flip chart paper
- Markers, permanent and white board
- Masking tape for posting flip chart papers or other items

3. MATERIALS FOR RECRUITMENT

The recruiter will need the following materials:

1. Contact log – to keep track of contacts and follow-ups to each potential participant.
2. Confirmation letters (refer to example in Appendices) – to be sent to persons who agree to participate. May not be appropriate for some focus groups (youth in general).
3. Map and directions to the focus group site (if needed) – printed directions can be included in the confirmation letter or given to in-person contacts.
4. Recruiting screening script – a questionnaire the recruiter can follow to ensure the right type of participant is invited (e.g., boys who have been in jail or juvenile detention in the past 12 months).

RECRUITMENT

The recruitment strategy to find adult participants for focus groups will probably be different than a youth strategy.

1. ADULTS

For adults, the following strategy might work best (this time line may vary according to the needs of the RA):

1. Two weeks before focus group, contact potential participants by telephone or in person (depending on the group).
2. One week before event, participants receive confirmation letters (or follow-up telephone calls, if the mail is unreliable).
3. One day before event, follow-up calls made to every participant.

2. YOUTH AND/OR OTHER HARD-TO-REACH POPULATIONS

For hard-to-reach populations such as youth, the recruiting is usually done face-to-face and not by telephone. Consider the following recommendations:

- Use youth recruiters who have similar backgrounds or experiences as those youth you are trying to recruit.
- Use a snowballing technique: once a young person with the right profile agrees to participate, ask him to suggest friends who have similar attributes (ideas, opinions, experiences).

- Describe the research project and the focus group that is being organized, using wording that conveys why it is an *interesting* study (key to encouraging participation).
- Convey a message of respect and honor.
- Focus on the value of their contribution, not the randomness of their inclusion. Invited participants will have an opportunity to share their insight and wisdom for the benefit of others, the community, or the study.
- Choose a communication style that will be effective with the targeted population.
- Accept only solid commitments; if unsure, follow-up with a telephone call 2 days later (if possible). Take into account cultural considerations about commitments and communication. Don't make it too difficult or uncomfortable for a person to say "no" or you may get verbal confirmations from persons who have no intention of attending.

3. EXCHANGE OF INFORMATION

Be sure to provide the participants with all of the information they need and to get all of the information you need from the participants. However, *it is equally important avoid providing information that could affect the results of the focus group discussion*. Sharing too much information could make the results of the focus group inaccurate or even useless since the participants' motivations could be affected and questioned. Here are suggestions for information that should be exchanged:

1. Information to provide to potential participants:
 - The subject of the research (limit information to avoid influencing participants).
 - Who will participate.
 - What you need from them (commitment, attendance, participation).
 - Incentives offered: honoraria, meals, refreshments, etc.
 - Date, day, time, duration and location of focus group discussion.
 - Why they were selected and invited.
 - Who the client is, in some cases only.
 - Future contacts prior to meeting.
2. Information to gather from persons contacted:
 - Information on the screening questionnaire.
 - Contact information, day and/or evening, best time to call, mailing address.
 - Any special needs, such as child care or disabled access

4. FOLLOW-UP

Follow-up with the initial contact is crucial to ensuring good participation in the focus group. Follow-up can include telephone calls, confirmation letters, or even personal visits, depending on the participant. Confirmation letters will work best with adults with stable home lives; telephone calls and visits will work best with youth, hard-to-reach populations, and persons whose literacy skills are low or unknown. The team should discuss who will sign the letters and whose letterhead will be used. Letters on USAID letterhead are more likely to encourage participation in the focus groups than those on letterhead from an unknown (to the participant) American company.

5. OVER-RECRUITING

For hard-to-reach populations, such as youth, over-recruiting by about 50 percent helps guarantee adequate participation. For less hard-to-reach populations, over-recruiting by 10-20 percent may be

enough. Although 50 percent over-recruitment could result in too many participants, it is always easier to turn persons away than to do last minute recruiting. Anyone turned away from the focus group should also receive any incentives promised.²⁷

Tips for Successful Recruiting

1. Convey a sense that the research will be interesting and worthwhile.
2. Make the contacts personal.
3. Build on existing relationships whenever possible.
4. Use appropriate screening criteria.
 - Try to avoid mismatched participants.
 - Avoid being too restrictive.
5. Offer incentives.
6. Make participation as convenient as possible.
7. Follow up.
8. At every stage, let them know that their participation is important.

See *Resource E.3* for a series of steps that might be followed in developing strategies for recruiting focus group participants.

MODERATING FOCUS GROUPS

Moderating a focus group discussion requires an excellent facilitator who is capable of quickly establishing rapport with the participants. The moderator should be skilled at drawing out the insights and perspectives of the participants in a nonjudgmental way and withholding his own personal opinions. Group dynamics need to be managed to foster discussion instead of hindering it. Dealing successfully with disruptive or dominating participants requires being firm and focused – and diplomatic. Further study and training are recommended for an inexperienced moderator.

Language: Focus groups should be conducted in the participants' native language, if possible. Translation – either consecutive or simultaneous – will slow the discussion and make free exchange of ideas impossible (as participants wait for everything to be translated).

Greeting Participants: The moderator or someone else who is friendly and congenial should greet the participants as they arrive and have them complete name tags. Participants can be invited to have refreshments, if these are being provided. Creating a comfortable atmosphere is important to the focus group discussion, so, if possible, the greeter should make small talk and make participants feel relaxed.

Introduction: When all (or enough) participants have arrived, begin the focus group.

1. Begin tape recording (if using).
2. Welcome and introduce moderator and any observer or note taker.
3. Explain that the discussion is being taped and why.
4. Explain confidentiality of the discussion.
5. Give a brief description of research project and focus group topic.

²⁷Focus Group Kit, Vol. 2: Planning Focus Groups, by David L. Morgan, Sage Publications (1998), p. 110.

6. Tell them why they were selected.
7. Explain the guidelines for the discussion.
 - Participation by all; allow others to talk; all opinions welcome.
 - Mutual respect.
 - Moderator will facilitate the discussion, but not express his/her own opinions.
 - In order to end on time, the time for discussing some questions may be limited.
8. Request brief self-introductions by the participants.

Facilitating the discussion: Following the sequence of the moderator's guide, the research questions are asked of the participants, with the moderator facilitating the discussion. Some tips:

- Use a posture that expresses interest, such as leaning forward and not crossing your arms or legs.
- Eye contact and body language: focus on the person speaking.
- Use good listening skills.
- Use affirmations of active nonjudgmental listening, see, okay, uh-huh, repeating a word or phrase that a participant says, slight nodding of your head but being careful not to indicate approval or agreement).
- Request clarification when needed.
- Paraphrase to confirm understanding.
- Listen for thoughts (beliefs, opinions, attitudes, ideas), not just the words that are verbalized.
- Listen for feelings (desires, hopes, wishes, fears, anger, etc.), not just content.
- Avoid sharing personal opinions.
- Encourage candid dialogue by avoiding affirmative/negative verbal and nonverbal responses (e.g., some facial expressions, excessive nodding of the head).
- Probe for more information, such as:
 - Tell me more about that.
 - What do you mean?
 - Can you explain?
- Monitor the recording equipment, changing tapes or batteries when necessary.
- Manage the group dynamics.
- Minimize dominance from excessive talkers by focusing eye contact on other participants.
- Call on quieter persons.
- Poll group on specific items or questions if there isn't a balanced participation.
- Do not allow participants to ramble.
- When the discussion gets off on a tangent, bring the group back to the topic of the question, making a smooth transition.
- Manage the time and the flow of the discussion.
- Ease the transition between questions.
- Assure that all questions are included.
- End on time.

Conclusion: At the end of the discussion make sure that the facilitator provides some closure to the session and provides information about the next steps of the assessment.

- Ask for and respond to any questions or needs for clarifications about any aspects of the discussion or the research project.
- Ask for feedback - this could be helpful for future focus groups.

- Express sincere appreciation for their attendance and participation.
- Explain once again how the information gathered will be used.
- Be careful not to make any commitments that can't be followed through, such as providing results of the study, unless this can and will be done.
- Thank each participant individually as they leave.

REPORTS

I. INITIAL REFLECTIONS

The moderator should – as soon as possible after each focus group – write down her initial impressions of the discussion, including:

- The most widely held views, opinions, ideas and themes.
- Any surprises or differences from expectations or from previous focus groups.
- Particular quotes that are revealing or should be used in the assessment report.
- Interpretations of the group's responses.
- Any ideas for changes or improvements for subsequent focus groups.

2. TOP LINE REPORTS

Typically, the moderator or note taker will prepare a report (called a top line report) for each focus group. This top line report summarizes the focus group discussion and analyzes responses in terms of the major questions being investigated in the assessment. However, individual top line reports will likely be too time-consuming for the team. Instead, the moderator should write her initial impressions, and, as with all data collection methods used in the assessment, the team should meet regularly to discuss the information being gathered.

When top line reports are prepared, they typically include these components:

1. Background, goals and purpose of using focus group(s) for the assessment
2. Methodology
 - Profile/composition of the group(s), recruitment specifications
 - How participants were recruited
3. Findings
 - The key points raised and opinions expressed, and what portion of the group felt this way
 - Use of quotes, as appropriate
 - Summary of the results
4. Observations
 - Group dynamics and how it may have affected the outcome
 - Personal observations
5. Recommendations, if appropriate

RESOURCE E.1: PLANNING A FOCUS GROUP

What are the Steps Involved in Organizing Focus Groups?

Generally speaking, there are six main steps to organizing a focus group:

- **STEP 1 - Developing a plan.** The assessment team should prepare a focus group plan first that outlines the topics to be discussed in the group, the types of participants, how the participants will be recruited, suggestions for places to hold the focus group, and suggested arrangements for incentives and refreshments.
- **STEP 2 - Writing the focus group protocol.** Based on the focus group plan, the team will prepare focus group protocols. There may be different protocols for different groups (say, if participants in Group One are beneficiaries of a program and participants in Group Two are youth who are not beneficiaries).

Incentives for Focus Group Participants

Recruiting participants for a focus group is time-consuming. People are more likely to participate in a focus group if they have a connection to a program, activity, or agency. Still, finding participants for focus groups is often difficult: people work, there are child care arrangements to be made, and transportation can be problematic.

To increase participation, incentives are usually offered. Cash payments (the amount will vary based on what is appropriate in the host country) are one type of incentive. If cash is culturally inappropriate, some other token may serve as an incentive.

- **STEP 3 - Developing the focus group screener.** Particularly when drawing from the population at large, it is important to develop a screening questionnaire (or screener) that will identify the desirable and undesirable characteristics for the focus group. For example, at times it will be appropriate to screen by gender, age, ethnicity and years of schooling. The screener must identify those factors and state the desired parameters for those contacting potential participants.
- **STEP 4 - Organizing the focus group.** Organizing the focus group and recruiting participants are often the most time-consuming tasks. The team (specifically, the local administrative/logistics staff person) must:
 - Find a place to hold the focus group. There should be a round or rectangular table, not classroom-style chairs.
 - Recruit participants and follow-up with them to remind them to attend.
 - Arrange for translation, as necessary.
 - Arrange for tape-recording or note-taking.
 - Provide honorarium.
 - Provide refreshments.

The rapid appraisal team may use youth to recruit their peers for focus groups (and interviews). Once a youth has been interviewed, he or she can suggest friends to participate in interviews or can help invite friends to a focus group. This method of recruitment is particularly useful when the assessment focuses on behavior (such as risky sexual behavior) since friends may have

similar behaviors. Because RAs do not provide statistically significant results that can be generalized to an entire population, this method of recruitment works well.

- **STEP 5 - Conducting the focus group.** A team member, or another trained specialist, will conduct the focus groups. Focus groups are discussions and are generally conducted in the native language (unless the participants are fluent in English). Using a translator during the focus group slows the discussion and is not recommended.

The time required to complete all focus groups varies depending on the number of focus groups, distances between the focus groups, and the size of the focus groups. Focus groups may incorporate some of the tools described in the preceding sections – mapping, using diaries, correspondence analysis, etc. They may also require use of visual props, such as photographs or videos, to stimulate a discussion. Another technique that is particularly effective with youth is the use of *realistic vignettes* or scenarios, which allows for some abstraction and perhaps less embarrassment when discussing sensitive issues. A skilled focus group moderator may be able to use these tools to elicit beliefs, opinions and attitudes.

Each of these tools has a drawback as well. Discussions may be less focused than desired if the moderator is unable to use the tool effectively. If the stimuli are not realistic, the participants will feel disconnected and will be less forthcoming than desired. The drawback to the use of vignettes is that responses may center on what the participants think the hypothetical individual should do rather than what they would do.

- **STEP 6 - Analyzing the results and reporting.** The focus group leader should prepare a summary of the focus group, analyzing the topics of discussion. You may want to request a transcript of the focus group or a copy of the tape recording if any is made. The focus group results will, of course, feed into the overall data-gathering process by the team.

Briefing and Training of Personnel

(This may not be necessary if the rapid appraisal team conducts the focus groups itself without hiring additional local staff.)

- Analyze the needs for meetings, briefings and/or training
- Develop a meeting or training plans
 - identify the participants
 - identify facilitator(s) for the training
 - decide on location, dates, times, and duration
 - decide on content and materials needed
 - prepare a detailed agenda, specifying the activities and how they will be carried out
- Prepare for meetings or training
 - contact all persons to be involved
 - confirm location
 - prepare, develop and assemble needed materials
- Conduct the meeting or training

Composition of the Group(s)/Profiles

- Develop profiles, recruitment specifications and screening criteria
 - for full set of focus groups
 - for each group
- Instrumentation

- Profiles (refer to examples provided)
- Screening questionnaires (refer to examples provided)
- Moderator's guide (refer to examples provided)

Logistics

- Select the facility to be used
- Make arrangements for food and drinks
- Establish incentives
- Establish focus group meeting dates and times
- Assess child care needs and availability
- Make lists and check availability of the materials and equipment needed for recruitment and conducting the focus groups (refer to Appendices #4 and #6 for more detailed lists of required materials and equipment).

Pilot Testing Questions

- Use separate checklists for planning and conducting a pilot test
 - Develop plan (location, timing, recruitment specifications, etc.)
 - Recruit participants
 - Conduct pilot focus group
- Analyze the appropriateness, effectiveness, sequencing and timing of the questions
- Make any adjustments necessary to moderator's guide

Contingency Planning

- Develop a plan "B" to address potential challenges, such as:
 - The need to replace staff
 - Recruitment difficulties and delays
 - Low turnout for the focus groups
 - The "wrong" mix of participants
 - Behavioral problems by participants
 - Last minute unavailability of the chosen facility
 - Weather-related delays

Confirmation of Logistics/Final Preparations

- Confirmation of participant attendance
- Confirmation of logistical arrangements confirmed
- Necessary materials and equipment acquired

RESOURCE E.2: FOCUS GROUP PARTICIPANT SCREENING QUESTIONNAIRE

Interviewer Name: _____
Date: _____
Location: _____
Group Location: _____
Group Number: _____

SAMPLE SCREENING QUESTIONNAIRE

Good morning (afternoon, evening). My name is _____. I am a consultant for USAID, the U.S. government agency that provides funds for programs that assist children, youth, and families around the world. We are conducting a series of discussions with young people in the community. In these discussions, we informally talk about employment opportunities for youth in this community. All the information shared in the discussions is strictly confidential. If we determine that you are eligible to participate, we will pay you \$____ for your participation. The group discussions last approximately 90 minutes. May I ask you a few questions to determine your eligibility?

INSTRUCTIONS: *If the person accepts, ask question #1.*

1. How old are you? ____ (enter age and complete check box)
 under 15 (TERMINATE)
 15-24
 25+ (TERMINATE)

2. GENDER:
 Female
 Male

3. Are you employed?
 Yes – full time (TERMINATE)
 Yes – part time (TERMINATE)
 No – in school, not looking for work (TERMINATE)
 No – in school and looking for work
 No – looking for work
 No – not looking
 No – cannot work (disability) (TERMINATE)

4. Did you complete secondary school?
 Did not complete secondary school
 Completed secondary school (TERMINATE)

5. Have you ever attended one of the Ministry of Education’s vocational training institutes?
 Yes (OK for Group 1)
 No (OK for Group 2)

May I have your phone number so that I can contact you to confirm your participation?

Home phone:

Work phone:

Best time to reach you by phone:

Local street address:

Any other phone /address (reference) where we can reach you?

SCREENER NOTES (i.e., Assessment of qualifications for participation)

DISPOSITION

Qualified for FG

Qualified For In-Depth Interview

Disqualified

MADE CONTACT TO CONFIRM ON (DATE) _____ / _____ / _____

RESOURCE E.3: CHECK LIST FOR RECRUITMENT OF FOCUS GROUP PARTICIPANTS

Developing a Recruitment Strategy

- Review the goals and purpose of the RA
- Review recruitment specifications
 - Profiles
 - Screening questionnaires
- Select source(s) for locating focus group participants
 - Contact key persons in the community to:
 - inform them of the research study and enlist their support
 - discuss social and cultural issues of recruiting target group
 - discuss the political arena as it may affect recruiting or conducting the focus groups
 - request referrals, leads or suggestions for recruiting
 - request permission to contact member of their organizations
 - Be sure that all persons nominating or recruiting candidates are clear about the recruitment specifications and exactly what information can be shared with the participants, to avoid any bias
 - Attend community events, such as fairs and open meetings
 - Become familiar with the community, walk the streets, talk to people you meet
 - Network (follow-up leads, get more, inform key persons in the community of your progress)
- Decide on the contact plan (face-to-face, phone and/or mail communication)
- Review decisions on logistics of the focus group plan to be able to communicate this to potential participants
 - Dates, times and locations for the focus group(s)
 - Incentives offered (honoraria, food, etc.)
 - Child care availability and disability access
- Schedule recruiting activities and decide on locations

Preparing for Recruitment Activities

- Prepare recruiting scripts (what you will say to potential participants)
 - be clear about what information needs to be included
 - be sure that no extra information is given that could bias the study
- Discuss resources needed for recruiting activities or any other concerns with the lead fieldworker or office liaison
- Prepare or acquire needed materials
 - contact log
 - confirmation letters
 - map and directions to focus group site

Securing Participation

- Make initial contacts and invitations
 - use agreed upon recruiting script as a guide
 - convey relevance of the study
 - focus on the value of their contribution
 - choose a communication style that will be effective with the targeted population
 - use screening questionnaires
 - use contact log
 - be sure that all persons are clear that all participants must be confirmed (screened) by the

- lead fieldworker or lead recruiter to avoid having uninvited guests who haven't been adequately screened and to avoid excessive attendance
- if recruiting is done face-to-face, immediately deliver a confirmation letter to those screened persons that accept the invitation
 - Follow-up on undecided persons
 - Contact additional persons to complete recruitment targets
 - Follow-up to confirm participation
 - send confirmation letter (if using) one week in advance of focus group to those who haven't already received one
 - make reminder calls to confirmed participants (day/night before)

RESOURCE E.4: PILOT TESTING OF FOCUS GROUP PROTOCOLS

Since pilot testing parallels most of the steps for planning and conducting the focus groups, this Appendix is simply a composite of the other Appendices. An effective and recommended alternative to using this list would be to make copies of the other Appendices and use them exclusively for this phase of the study. Then, validate or revise the moderator's guide, as included in this Appendix.

Planning and Preparation

- Choose geographic area for pilot testing
- Make personnel decisions
 - fieldwork coordinator
 - planning/preparation/logistics
 - recruitment of participants
 - moderator
 - observer/note taker
- Decide on incentives to be offered
- Decide on recruitment specifications
- Select date, time and location
- Determine need for and availability of child care and disability access

Recruiting of Participants

- Develop a plan
 - Review the goals and purpose of the research project
 - Review recruitment specifications
 - Select source(s) for locating focus group participants
 - decide on appropriate and effective access to target population(s)
 - contact key persons in the community
 - if lists are used, decide on how names will be selected from the list in an unbiased manner
 - Decide on the contact plan (phone, mail and/or face-to-face communication)
 - Schedule recruiting activities and decide on locations for this
- Prepare for Recruitment Activities
 - Prepare invitation scripts as guides for recruiters
 - Discuss resources needed for recruiting activities with lead fieldworker or office liaison
 - Prepare or acquire needed materials, including confirmation letters
- Securing participation
 - Make initial contacts and invitations
 - Follow-up on undecided persons
 - Contact additional persons to complete recruitment targets
 - Follow-up to confirm participation
 - Send confirmation letters or make telephone calls

Conducting Pilot Focus Group

- Set up and preparation
- Moderating
- Observing/note taking
- Debriefing

Analyzing Appropriateness of Moderator's Guide

- Validate the questions that functioned well
- Correct language, as needed
- Validate or correct the sequencing of the questions
- Revise the approximate time needed for each question
- Develop further probing cues, as necessary
- Make any other necessary adjustments of the moderator's guide or any other facet of the protocols (seating, receiving the participants, etc.)
- Make notes for briefing other members of the research team on the results of the pilot testing and the lessons learned

RESOURCE E.5: SAMPLE CONFIRMATION LETTER TO RECRUITED PARTICIPANTS

Date _____

Dear _____

Thank you for agreeing to participate in our focus group discussion on _____ dd/mm/yy at am/pm. The group discussion will take place at the offices of the Institute for Social Research, B. Dmitrovka 18/6.

As we mentioned earlier, you will receive \$20.00 for participating. We also invite you to join us for some refreshments, as it is our own way of thanking you for participating.

We would like to clarify again that the purpose of this focus group discussion is only to obtain your opinions. You will not be sold anything, nor will you be contacted in any way as a result of this meeting. You will be one of about twelve people participating in this discussion.

While these small group discussions are informal, enjoyable and interesting to people like you, they make up a very important part of our research. We depend upon your attendance for the success of our study. We invite only a limited number of people to this group, so we urge you to attend, and we request that you please arrive at our office 15 minutes before the discussion is scheduled to begin. We look forward to meeting with you. If not able to attend, please call the Institute for Social Research at (095) 555-55-60 (ask for Oleg).

Sincerely,

USAID Project Manager

Enclosure: map (if necessary)

(Note: If confirmation letters are sent to the recruited participants, they should be translated into the native language.)

RESOURCE E.6: CHECKLIST FOR MODERATING THE FOCUS GROUP

Prior Preparation

- Review the goals and purpose of the research study
- Review the recruitment specifications and the profile of the group
- Review the moderator's guide thoroughly
 - understand the purpose and objective of each question
 - think of issues that might come up or might need probing
 - estimate/allocate amount of time for each question
- Become familiar with any written materials to be used during the focus group, such as examples of forms that will be examined and discussed by the focus group
- Identify and acquire any additional technical knowledge needed to successfully guide the discussion
- Discuss resources needed or any other concerns with the RA team leader
- Discuss procedures and assignment of tasks and responsibilities with the observer, to include items on the checklists and also
 - maximum and minimum # of participants
 - at what point latecomers will not be allowed to join the group
 - how to handle persons that cannot be included (latecomers, alternates, uninvited or disruptive persons, others)
 - Prepare or acquire needed materials, coordinating these efforts with the observer or other team members (refer to Appendix #6 for note takers for a detailed list)

Set-up and Preparation of the Focus Group Facility

- Verify or assist with:
 - set up of audio or video taping equipment
 - arrange seating
 - food and drink arrangements and set-up
 - set up materials
 - become familiar with the facility and address any pending issues: heating, cooling or ventilation, noise interference, access to phones or emergency services, bathrooms, availability of a trash container
- Confirm that the note taker is using the detailed checklist for set-up tasks and address any areas of concern
- Greet and welcome participants as they arrive
- If necessary, rearrange the seating pattern of the participants to permit optimal group dynamics

Moderating

- Operate and monitor recording equipment (this task may be done by the note taker)
- Introduction- welcome and overview of the event, to include:
 - introduce moderator and note taker
 - explain that the discussion is being taped and why
 - discuss confidentiality
 - give a brief description of research project and focus group topic
 - tell them why they were selected
 - provide guidelines for the discussion
 - participation by all, all opinions welcome
 - mutual respect
 - moderator will facilitate the discussion, but not share his/her opinions
- Brief self-introductions by the participants

- Focus group discussion
 - using the moderator’s guide, ask the questions
 - use good listening skills (affirmations, paraphrase, request clarification, probe, etc.)
 - manage group dynamics, encouraging participation by all
 - manage the time and flow
 - assure that all questions are included
 - end on time
- Conclude the meeting, thanking the participants
 - Respond to any questions
 - Don’t make any commitments that can’t be followed through
 - Individually thank each participant
 - Distribute incentives

Analysis and Reporting

- Debrief with the note taker
- Write up initial impressions, with the assistance of the note taker

RESOURCE E.7: SAMPLE AGENDA FOR TRAINING LOCAL RESEARCHERS IN FOCUS GROUP RECRUITMENT TECHNIQUES

This sample agenda is for a training session to train local researchers in focus group recruitment techniques. The training can be condensed to about two hours for more experienced staff who may only need a review or a briefing on the procedures and instrumentation for the rapid appraisal. For staff with less experience, it can be lengthened to allow for a more experiential and thorough treatment of each of the elements of recruiting.

Agenda for Focus Group Training

Location: _____
 Facilitator: _____
 Date/time: 8:30 AM - 12:30 PM

Objectives

At the end of this session the participants will:

- 1) Be able to briefly describe the rapid appraisal.
- 2) Be able to describe and outline the purpose and procedures for focus groups.
- 3) Be able to define recruitment specifications, quota data charts, screening criteria, and screening questionnaires.
- 4) Be able to name at least 3 kinds of sources to locate potential participants.
- 5) Have developed preliminary screening questionnaires.
- 6) Be able to name and describe at least three different contact strategies.
- 7) Have practiced recruitment screening interviews.
- 8) Have established group norms for training and recruiting as a team.

Handouts

- 1) Preliminary screening questionnaires
- 2) Screening scripts
- 3) List of research team norms

Flow of Activities

8:35 - 8:40 AM Greetings and presentation of objectives

8:40 - 9:05 AM Introductions and team building

9:05 - 9:10 AM Research team norms (how team works together, responsibility of recruiters, which team member to contact with questions and completed screening questionnaires)

9:10 - 9:15 AM Overview of the RA

9:15 - 9:30 AM Description of focus groups (purpose, procedures, and staffing)

9:30 - 9:40 AM Composition of the groups (target participants for each group, why these participants, link to RA purpose)

9:40 - 10:25 AM	Locating potential participants. Participatory exercise: Give examples of target groups and have the group suggest possible strategies for locating these participants.
10:25 - 10:45 AM	Break
10:45 - 11:10 AM	Discussion of screening questionnaires and how to use them. Participatory exercise: Practice in teams.
11:10 - 11:55 AM	Contact strategy and screening scripts (where to locate potential participants and how to explain the screening questionnaire to participants)
11:55 - 12:15 PM	Checklists and Review (provide checklists and discuss them)
12:15 - 12:25 PM	Other issues (scheduling and other questions)
12:25 - 12:30 PM	Wrap-up

RESOURCE E.8: FOCUS GROUP NOTE-TAKING CHECKLIST

Prior Preparation

- Review the goals and purpose of the research study
- Review the recruitment specifications and the profile of the group
- Review moderator's guide thoroughly
 - understand the purpose and objective of each question
 - discuss with the moderator approximate time allocated for each question
- Identify and acquire any additional technical knowledge needed to follow the discussion
- Discuss procedures and assignment of tasks and responsibilities with the moderator, to include items on the checklists and also
 - maximum and minimum # of participants
 - at what point latecomers will not be allowed to join the group
 - how to handle persons that cannot be included (latecomers, alternates, uninvited persons, others)
- Assure recording equipment will be available (often done by moderator)
 - confirm source and availability for dates and times needed
 - decide whether back-up taping equipment will be included
 - investigate need for extension cords at the facility
 - pick up and/or pack
 - get familiar with its operation and test it
- Acquire or prepare needed materials - guarantee availability on time
 - honoraria envelopes ready for disbursements (if providing cash incentives)
 - honoraria receipts prepared (if necessary)
 - name tags or name tents
 - audio tapes, and extras
 - batteries, and extras
 - forms or other items or materials to be examined by and discussed by the focus group
 - refreshments or food
 - depending on need:
 - duct tape, to cover electrical cords, if necessary
 - easel and flip chart paper
 - markers, permanent and white board
 - masking tape for display of any item that is part of the discussion or for posting flip chart papers

Set-up and Preparation of the Facility

- Coordinate preparation work with the moderator and address any areas of concern
- Get familiar with the facility and address any pending issues
 - check location of bathrooms and be sure that they are unlocked
 - check access to phones or emergency services
 - address physical space considerations, such as heating or ventilation, noise interference, availability of a trash container
- Arrange seating in a circle or around a table
 - assure the best eye contact between participants and between participants and the moderator
 - place chair for note taker outside of circle, if possible
- Set up audio taping equipment (often done by the moderator)

- be sure the location is easily accessible and to the observer
 - cover extension cords with duct tape, if necessary
 - test the equipment, be sure tape is rewound completely
 - place extra tapes and spare batteries in convenient location
- Confirm arrangements and set-up for food, drinks and serving needs
- Materials ready
 - place name tags or name tents nearby for easy access
 - check that honoraria envelopes are ready for distribution
 - place note-taking materials at observer's chair/desk
 - set up other materials, (markers, flip charts, handouts, etc.)
 - Greet and welcome participants as they arrive

Note-taking

- Greet and brief latecomers
- Follow agreed-upon strategy regarding latecomers, alternates, others
- Operate and monitor recording equipment (this task is often done by the moderator)
- Distribute to the participants any materials needed for the discussion (e.g., examples of publicity)
- Take notes (sample note taking form provided)
 - key points
 - complementary and contrasting views
 - summary of discussion
 - indicate for each of the above what portion of the group expressed similar opinions
 - clearly expressed or notable quotes
 - nonverbal activity
- Take note of any question or subject that is in the moderator's guide but may have not been addressed and inform the moderator at an appropriate time
- Distribute incentives, if any, at the end
- Debrief with the moderator

SAMPLE NOTE-TAKING/REPORTING FORM FOR FOCUS GROUPS

Location (city/community) _____ Date _____

Moderator _____ Observer _____

Composition of the group _____ Number of participants ___ F ___ M

Additional notes:

<p>Question #1: Content of the question should be filled in here.</p> <p><u>Key Points/Summary of the Discussion</u> <u>Key Quotes</u></p>	<p><u>Comments/Observations/ Non-verbal Communication</u></p>
<p>Question #2: Content of the question should be filled in here.</p> <p><u>Key Points/Summary of the Discussion</u> <u>Key Quotes</u></p>	<p><u>Comments/Observations/ Non-verbal Communication</u></p>
<p>Question #3: Content of the question should be filled in here.</p> <p><u>Key Points/Summary of the Discussion</u> <u>Key Quotes</u></p>	<p><u>Comments/Observations/ Non-verbal Communication</u></p>

APPENDIX F: GUIDELINES FOR EFFECTIVE STAKEHOLDER INTERVIEWING IN THE FIELD

Effective interviewing is critical in youth assessments. Much of the information needed will be obtained through individual interviews, and the number of interviews may be smaller or larger depending on the scope of the assessment. If larger in scope, and particularly if hiring local interviewers who are not highly experienced, it may be necessary to assign a team member to supervise the interviewers. The section below provides excerpts from a fieldwork training manual for supervisors that may serve as a resource for Missions and partners conducting youth assessments. Although the supervisor would likely be a consultant or contractor staff, and the contractor would be responsible for ensuring the quality of the interviews, Mission staff may find it valuable to refer to the following. Some elements of the manual and training will need to be customized for the specific focus of the youth assessment, but the information below provides good guidelines on what information should be included.

I. Introduction

This document provides a set of training and supervisor procedures to be used in preparing a team of fieldworkers to collect data for a youth assessment funded by USAID. As a field supervisor you will be expected to train fieldworkers and coordinate their activities in the field to ensure that reliable and valid data are obtained.

II. The Youth Assessment

[Provide assessment background, including goals of the assessment, the specific program aspects that are most relevant to the fieldworkers and supervisors (those which are the primary focus of the evaluation, given its goals), and a short description of the evaluation design, if applicable.]

III. The Role and Responsibilities of the Field Supervisor

It is important to remember that the information from the field will be dealt with by individuals who may not have had direct contact with the reality of organizations and communities where data were collected. This means that the information must be complete, clear and reliable. The most important responsibilities of the field supervisor are: (1) to ensure that information is reliable by carefully training the team of field workers and by monitoring data collection in the field; and (2) to ensure the quality of the information through a detailed review of all instruments submitted.

Specifically the Field Supervisor will have the following responsibilities

Training

1. Assist in the organization of training for the field team
2. Carry out training activities such as role play and simulated data collection through videos of class interactions
3. Develop field logistics for assignment of fieldworkers to organizations and communities

Supervision

1. Ensure the cooperation of the local organizations
2. Monitor the work of each fieldwork in sites and communities
3. Monitor and facilitate the collection of data by each member of your field team
4. Review the reliability and quality of the information of each completed instrument
5. Prepare a package of instruments that is organized and complete for each organization/community under your charge

IV. Training

A. Assist in Organization of Training. Training will be designed, to the extent possible as a simulation of the actual field experience. As shown in Exhibit 1, training will take place over a 3-day period.²⁸ Ideally it will include a visit to a nearby school where fieldworkers can apply the skills they learned in training in a controlled field environment.

Table F.1: Field Staff Training Agenda

Day	Morning	Afternoon
1	Introduction to the evaluation The value of integration of qualitative and quantitative techniques in research Sampling (Site selection and paired sites, within site selection of teachers/ classrooms, students, community members).	Introduction to Instruments Field Work Strategies: - Managing the role of researcher/observer - Sources of data
2	Interviews: - Format - Questions/Probes - Note-taking - Neutrality and harmony - Quality Control Scheduling of interviews Practice with interview protocols and peer feedback	Fieldwork practice in a local school and community Review of fieldwork experience Quality Control - Triangulation - Data review editing - Communication - Feedback Ethics
3	Fieldwork procedures for data reduction and quality control. -data legibility, coding, data entry, reliability checks, packaging	Field team responsibilities, school assignment and travel logistics

As a Supervisor you will work with trainees in small groups using videos, prototype instruments, trainee exercises, readings, and field manuals. You will assist trainees to understand the evaluation questions

²⁸ Timing ultimately depends on the number and complexity of instruments to be used.

and practice using the prototype instruments through simulations. It is extremely important that trainees become very familiar with the instruments and learn to use them in a consistent way.

An important tool in training and in quality of the data collected is the Fieldwork Manual. This manual describes how to introduce oneself in a school and techniques for managing the role of field worker, provides a detailed description of each instrument and the appropriate procedures for using the instruments, and offers orientation for dealing with ethical questions that may arise in carrying out the fieldwork. **Use the Fieldwork Manual to answer questions raised by trainees during training exercises. This will demonstrate the utility of the field manual in resolving fieldwork questions.**

B. Carry Out Training Activities. Initial training activities will be undertaken by the international specialists. This will consist of providing background on the interventions being evaluated and the design of the evaluation effort. The trainers will introduce the entire battery of instruments to be used in schools and communities. These are:

[Identify each interview protocol. Other types of data collection instruments should also be listed here.]

Interviews/Survey Instruments

You will train fieldworkers to use a battery of [XX] instruments in the community. These instruments are interview guides which permit the researcher to enter the respondent's world and thereby examine outward behavior from that person's perspective. Basically, interviews are conducted for two primary reasons:

1. To learn about things we cannot observe (feelings, thoughts intentions, attitudes); and
2. To learn about behavior that we did not observe because it might have taken place at some previous time.

The interview strategy to be used in this evaluation consists of a set of preconstructed questions. Each interview instrument specifies questions that are carefully worded and grouped by categories. The instruments also specify transition statements to assist the respondent in making mind shifts from one category to the next. The interview guides take all respondents through the same procedures in the same way by having the fieldwork ask the same questions in the same order of all respondents.

[List each interview instrument, its audience, its purpose, and the type of information each question should elicit.]

- ...
- ...
- ...

Training. Review each instrument with the trainees. After trainees have read through all the instruments briefly discuss the organization of the instruments. Issues that might be considered are:

- Begin the interview with non-controversial questions;
- Start with questions that are straightforward descriptions and easy to answer;
- Follow with questions about interpretations, opinions, feelings about behaviors/actions;
- Knowledge questions can be threatening as a person may feel like he or she is being tested - place them in the context of program activities and experiences;

- Background and demographic questions are usually asked last.

Once the trainees understand the basic construction of the interview guides, begin a discussion of good interviewing strategies. This might be done by eliciting ideas from the trainees and listing then discussing those ideas that emerge. The list can be augmented with the considerations below as needed.

- ! Arrange a time prior to arriving at the scene for an interview time, if possible.
- ! Have nothing with you except the materials needed for the interview.
- ! Establish rapport as quickly as possible with the interviewee.
 - Explain your research goals
 - Explain your role
 - Explain about the confidentiality of the information
 - Obtain consent to conduct the interview
 - Ask permission to tape the interview prior to doing so
- ! Think about the interview from your informant's point of view.
 - Make him/her comfortable
 - Make the interview as pleasant an experience as possible
 - Show interest in your informant. You are asking for help and information.
- ! Do not interview when you feel you are becoming stale (tired, bored, frustrated, irritated). Avoid getting into a debate with the person.
- ! Allow the person time to think, then listen carefully. Be objective.
 - Do not answer for the respondent
 - Do not rush into the next question
 - Note other concerns raised by the person
- ! Use content neutral probes to explore issues in-depth, e.g., "Tell me more about that". Keep the purpose of the interview in mind.
- ! End the interview by asking if there are any other issues relevant and important that were not covered in the interview or if there is anything that they want to ask you.
- ! Be sure to write the date, place, time, and respondent's identity on the first page of your interview notes. Number the pages.
- ! Review your notes.
 - Make sure they are legible
 - Make sure that every question that should be answered has a response.
- ! Do not share previously collected data with the interviewee.

V. Fieldworker Role Management

An important part of fieldwork training will be to help the trainees define their roles vis-à-vis the stakeholders they will interview. It is important to remember that stakeholders will have questions and certainly preconceptions about the observer's role. Researchers will be "on the spot" since their role

management is critical particularly during the initial contact with any stakeholder. The following are several role management strategies that have proved effective for helping fieldworkers to define their role. These should be practiced through discussion and role playing with the trainees.

Obtain permission and set up visits prior to arriving on site. This will largely be the responsibility of the field supervisor but could fall to a fieldworker. When necessary, contact “gatekeepers” such as inspectors or subject advisors to inform them of the study and obtain their permission. Arrange a visit to a community institution like a school or health clinic through the principal or clinic director and meet with that individual to explain the research upon arrival.

Have a clear picture ahead of time of how you are going to explain your role as a field researcher. This should be discussed, agreed upon and piloted during preparation for data collection. Emphasize should be placed on having been trained in studying programmatic aspects and that this is the principle concern.

Emphasize the role of stakeholders as experts in what happens within an organization or a community. Since much of the success of the research depends on the quality of information provided by stakeholders, it is important to involve them in the study by emphasizing their role in describing what they consider important about the project, its beneficiaries and relevant reforms.

Be careful not to be insensitive, rude, inconsiderate, or unhelpful. Stakeholders are sometimes busy and preoccupied when an interview is scheduled. It is best during the first contact, to ask general questions and to try to make positive comments, whenever possible, about the institution or community. If conducting observations, choose an unobtrusive place from which to observe.

Avoid giving any presentations related to the project or your work during the course of the evaluation. Reassure participants that the confidentiality of all individuals must be protected and therefore no names will be used in any reports of the research results. Share your instruments with the stakeholder if asked to do so.

Keep a diary to record personal feelings and impressions. Pay special attention to changes in the field researcher role, particularly rapport: interpersonal relations between project staff, stakeholders, and yourself as observer.

Indicate how the information you collect will be used. Offer and provide copies of the results to the teachers when requested.

VI. Sequencing of Data Collection Activities

You will train fieldworkers in the procedures to be used in the field.

[Provide information on how fieldwork teams will be structured and the time allocated for site visits.]

[Describe the overall structure of the site visit and sequence in which different stakeholders should be interviewed.]

A typical day of fieldwork would be:

[Insert a description of the typical daily schedule.]

These steps should be put on one page and included as a tear-out in the fieldworker manual so that it can be referred to during data collection.

VII. Supervision

1. Ensure the cooperation of the organizations to be visited. The organizations will know that the fieldwork is taking place and that the team has authorization to carry out the study through official communication from the Ministry or the NGO with which they are working. The job of the supervisor is to promote cordial relations between the field team and each organization. You should take the time necessary to present the team to the organization's director (or designee), study the distribution of interviewees/data collection points and assign the team members their data collection roles. It is the responsibility of the supervisor to explain the purpose of the study to interested parties in an organization.

2. Monitor the Work of each Fieldworker in the Sites and Communities. The stakeholders will have questions and preconceived ideas about the role of the fieldworker. They may be very visible in the organization and the management of their role will be critical to the success of the study. It is important to help the fieldworkers understand that those providing information are, and should be treated as experts in the implementation of the interventions under study. Their understanding of the reality of the organization should be emphasized throughout data collection.

The supervisor should emphasize that the fieldworkers should become part of the context in which they are involved and look for opportunities to carry out their work that minimize interference with normal activities. It is important that the fieldworkers demonstrate their role as observers and not as evaluators.

3. Monitor and Facilitate the Collection of Data by Each Member of the Field Team. The collection of much of the data for the study is repetitive. The objective of this type of information is to ensure the consistency of the information collected. However, it can be tiring for the fieldworkers, which can lead to errors. The supervisor should review the completed instruments checking for consistency. If inconsistencies are found, the supervisor should conduct parallel observations with the fieldworker in question or a group exercise to examine the problem if it is general to the whole team.

4. Review the Reliability and Quality of the Information of Each Completed Instrument. If information is incomplete or the information cannot be connected to that of other instruments, it is useless and a lost case. Given the small number of organizations that are being used to characterize the implementation of the interventions, it is crucial that all the information is complete. The supervisor must review each instrument in the field to ensure that it is legible, complete, and has data for all items or an explanation of why data are missing. The supervisor should also ensure that all identification data are complete on all instruments.

5. Prepare a Package of Instruments that is Organized and Complete for Each Organization/Community under your Charge. If pages of an instrument separate or the instruments become mixed with those from other schools or other grades, it is very difficult for the data entry people to fix the situation. The supervisor has the responsibility to check that all information is present and in order.

VIII. Quality Control

Data analysis and interpretation can only be meaningful if the information obtained is valid and reliable. Standard procedures can be implemented to ensure that there is some degree of control over the quality of the data. Data that are of high quality refer information that accurately describes the phenomenon under examination. Among the important procedures for ensuring quality control of the data collected are training and re-training of field workers and establishing an administrative system for managing the data collection process.

- ! The training of field researchers increases the probability of obtaining higher quality data. All field workers must be trained in the use of the instruments and have practical sessions where they observe use in instruments in true-life situations. That is, if the evaluation involves data collection through interviews of stakeholders, then the field workers will practice using the instruments in similar organizations and conduct practice interviews with those holding the same roles in those pilot sites.

- ! Establishment of an administrative system for project management also contributes to quality control of the data. A supervisor or project director ensures that data collection, editing and processing procedures are implemented in the same way by each member of the team of field workers. Additionally, project supervisors can undertake periodic audits to measure quality of data collection. The audits can include computerized checks on data responses outside of expected range or random checks of data for accuracy & completeness. Data audits of this type, when carried out during evaluation, enable supervisors to redirect field researchers to appropriate topics in line with the evaluation goals and purposes. The audits can be followed-up with regularly scheduled phone calls to provide data collectors with feedback on problems and to correct data collection errors.

- ! Another strategy for ensuring quality control of data is to have appropriate authorities sign forms stating that the researcher was at that site. Having appropriate personnel, e.g. school directors, sign the documents, ensures that field researchers visit the site and collect data.

- ! Supervision of the team in the field is of utmost importance for ensuring quality control of the data. A number of strategies for providing adequate supervision in the field are available including the following:
 - a. Appoint a leader and make sure that local team knows who is in charge;
 - b. Have the field team turn in the instruments at end of day to supervisor;
 - c. Check each for omissions and discuss problems in field work;
 - d. Make spot checks in the field, re-interviewing certain respondents;
 - e. Secure local field supervisors to provide close supervision; and
 - f. Implement ways to have cross-site communication to ensure consistency in data collection and to provide emotional and logistical support for members of the evaluation team.

Other quality control strategies include: (1) additional training sessions prior to each phase of fieldwork; (2) the use of standardized formats for data recording; and (3) the development of a field manual to supplement training sessions by providing operational definitions of the phenomena under study, delineating role relationships, and specifying ethical and confidentiality considerations.

RESOURCE F.1: ILLUSTRATIVE INTERVIEW PROTOCOL FOR GOVERNMENT OFFICIALS

(Please note that these are sample questions centered on HIV/AIDS issues and are not intended to be exhaustive).

- A. What kinds of programs/initiatives does the Ministry currently have that address HIV/STD prevention for youth? Describe each program.
- Ask for data on:
- Numbers served
 - Areas of country served/targeted
 - Types of interventions
 - Cost of programs
 - Any cost-sharing between Ministries
 - Any donor funds?
 - Which donors?
- B. Why were these programs undertaken? What was the impetus?
- C. How effective do you think these programs have been in reducing HIV/STDs in youth? Have any evaluations been conducted or statistics gathered on the problem?
- D. What are the Ministry's plans for the future regarding HIV/STD prevention programs for youth?
- E. If USAID were to design an HIV/STD prevention program for youth, what do you think the priorities for the program should be? What kind of program is most needed?
- F. Which category youth should the program target? (Probe: age, gender, minority youth, rural or urban.)

RESOURCE F.2: ILLUSTRATIVE INTERVIEW PROTOCOL FOR YOUTH

(Please note that these are sample questions centered on HIV/AIDS issues and are not intended to be exhaustive).

- A. I've heard that there are high rates of HIV/AIDS infection among young people in this area. Do you think that is true?
- B. Why do you think the rate of HIV infection here is high? Or low?
- C. What do you think should be done about the infection rate?
- D. How do you think young people would best receive prevention messages? (Probe: TV or other media advertising, posters in government or community buildings, articles in newspapers about the problem, in-school programs.)
- E. Where do most young people in this area get their health care? (Probe: government-run hospitals or clinics, private hospitals or clinics, local healers or herbal medicine practitioners.)
- F. What do the youth you know who are HIV positive receive health care?
- G. What do you think is the biggest problem facing HIV positive youth?

RESOURCE F.3: ILLUSTRATIVE INTERVIEW PROTOCOL FOR HEALTH CARE PROFESSIONALS

(Please note that these are sample questions centered on HIV/AIDS issues and are not intended to be exhaustive).

- A. What is the situation facing youth ages 15-24 regarding HIV infection in this area?
- B. How many HIV positive youth are treated by your clinic, hospital?
- C. What kinds of services does your clinic/hospital provide? Are these services adequate to meet the needs? What kinds of services would you offer if money, time, etc. were not issues?
- D. Do you have data/statistics on infections (country-wide or area-specific)?
(Get any information available, especially regarding age, gender, geographic locations.)
- E. What kinds of programs or assistance are available to HIV positive youth (sponsored by the government, donors, or NGOs)?
- F. Do youth take advantage of these programs? Why or why not?
- G. How could the programs be improved? Do they serve everyone who needs them?
- H. Are there needs that are not currently being filled by these programs? What are the priority needs for HIV positive youth?

APPENDIX G: SAMPLE REPORT OUTLINE

The rapid appraisal team's final report to the Mission should, at the minimum, follow an outline similar to the illustrative outline presented here.

Title Page

The title page should include:

- Title, date
- Author(s), author(s) affiliation
- Contract name, contract number
- To whom the report will be submitted, from who the report is submitted

Table of Contents

- Including page numbers, list of appendices, and list of tables or figures

List of Acronyms

- Spell out for the reader the full wording represented by the acronym.

Acknowledgments (optional)

- It is customary to thank those who have been helpful during the assessment.

Executive Summary

- Brief (2-3 page) summary of the main findings and recommendations

Introduction

- Background and purpose of the assessment

Assessment Objectives and Methodology

- Objectives of the assessment (key questions answered)
- Methodology(ies), locations visited
- Activities undertaken

Findings

- List significant findings
- List problems and/or principal constraints

Recommendations

- Follow-up action recommended

Annexes or Appendices

- Protocols, instruments used
- Persons, groups interviewed
- Bibliography

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