



USAID
FROM THE AMERICAN PEOPLE

YOUTH INTEGRATION TOOLKIT:

EUROPE & EURASIA

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ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

| | |
|-------|---|
| ABA | American Bar Association |
| AIDS | Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome |
| ALMP | Active labor market programs |
| CDCS | Country Development Cooperation Strategies |
| CISO | Centers of Information, Counseling, and Training (Kosovo) |
| CoE | Council of Europe |
| CSO | Civil society organization |
| DAI | Development Alternatives, Inc. |
| DO | Development objective |
| E&E | Europe and Eurasia |
| ECDC | European Center for Disease Prevention and Control |
| EDC | Education Development Center |
| EHEA | European Higher Education Area |
| EITI | Extractive Industries Transparency Initiative |
| EQUIP | Educational Quality Improvement Programs |
| ETF | European Training Foundation |
| EU | European Union |
| GER | Gross enrollment ratio |
| GIZ | Gesellschaft fuer Internationale Zusammenarbeit |
| HIV | Human Immunodeficiency Virus |
| ICT | Information and communication technologies |
| IFAD | International Fund for Agricultural Development |
| IFES | International Foundation for Electoral Systems |
| ILO | International Labor Organization |
| ISCED | International Standard Classification of Education |
| IYF | International Youth Foundation |
| LGBT | Lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender |
| MSM | Men who have sex with men |
| NDI | National Democratic Institute |
| NEET | Not in education, employment or training |
| NGO | Non-governmental organization |
| OECD | Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development |
| OGP | Open Government Partnership |
| OSCE | Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe |
| PPP | Public-private partnership |

| | |
|---------|---|
| SDC | Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation |
| SEAK II | Strengthening Election Administration in Kosovo |
| SMS | Short message service |
| TIMSS | Trends in International Mathematics and Science Study |
| TVET | Technical and vocational education and training |
| UN | United Nations |
| UNDP | United Nations Development Program |
| UNICEF | United Nations Children's Fund |
| USAID | United States Agency for International Development |
| VET | Vocational education and training |
| YEN | Youth Employment Network |

GLOSSARY

Demand side programs – Demand side programs are comprised of goods and services demanded or wanted by consumers (broadly defined). Broad based activities like national youth employment policies, public works programs, wage subsidies, and tax breaks for employers are encompassed here (USAID, 2013a).

Entrepreneurship - The capacity and willingness to undertake conception, organization, and management of a productive venture with all attendant risks, while seeking profit as a reward (Weidemann Associates, Inc., 2011, 7).

Informal economy - Activities and income that are partially or fully outside government regulation, taxation, and observation (World Bank, 2013).

Matchmaking programs - These are ongoing job referral (i.e., 'help desk') services that bring employers and workers together through print and on-line job postings, job fairs, job shadowing, job placement, resume preparation, and coaching (USAID, 2013a).

Results framework - A graphic representation of a strategy to achieve a specific objective that is grounded in cause-and-effect logic (USAID, 2010).

School-to-work transition - The critical socio-economic life changing period between approximately 15 to 24 years of age – a period when young individuals develop and build skills, based on their initial education and training that helps them become productive members of society (World Bank, 2013c).

Supply side programs - Supply side programs are goods and services offered by service providers These include such activities as basic or vocational technical education, job skills, apprenticeships, and life skills training (USAID, 2013a).

Technical Vocational Education Training (TVET) - TVET is a comprehensive term referring to those aspects of the educational process involving, in addition to general education, the study of technologies and related sciences, and the acquisition of practical skills, attitudes, understanding, and knowledge relating to occupants in various sectors of economic and social life (UNESCO and ILO, 2002).

SECTION I: INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

USAID AND YOUTH INTEGRATION

With the *Youth in Development Policy*, the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) has made a commitment to strengthen youth participation and partnership through integration of youth issues into Mission programming and engagement of young people across Agency initiatives. The policy identifies critical priorities for mainstreaming youth across portfolios and provides guidance to target intentional youth development efforts.¹ The policy supports three expected outcomes for youth: increased economic opportunities, increased participation in democracy and development, and increased space and place in local and national institutions and policies (Box 1).

Box 1: Expected Outcomes of the *Youth in Development Policy*

- 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.

USAID has been funding youth programming for many years. Young people have been a focal point of USAID workforce readiness, global health, democracy, human rights, and governance programs but few of these have used a holistic approach to youth development. The *Youth in Development Policy* emphasizes cross-sectoral, integrated programming supporting the intentional leveraging of resources, networks, and expertise across multiple development sectors.² Since 1994, USAID has implemented five global youth mechanisms, the most recent of which is the YouthPower contract which focuses on positive youth development through an integrated approach.

USAID's *Youth in Development Policy* provides guiding principles (Box 2) to set the stage for more effective integration of youth into USAID programming. These principals are meant to provide consistency and quality across USAID youth development efforts.

Box 2: USAID *Youth in Development* Guiding Principles

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

1. USAID, *Youth in Development Policy: Realizing the Demographic Opportunity* (Washington, D.C.: USAID, 2012).

2. Ibid.

Youth participation is important not only in program design, but also in policy development and research, to ensure that programming reflects youth perceptions and needs. Recognition of the uniqueness of young people in their experiences, desires, and pursuits underscores this approach; building resilience in youth, their families, and communities is also emphasized. Following the policy's directive to mainstream a youth focus into Agency initiatives, identification of opportunities to integrate youth is extremely important. The policy suggests three points in program design which provide either direct engagement or the platform for a youth focus:

- 1) *During planning and design*: “operating units should engage youth in consultations and include youth issues as appropriate in parameter setting, development objectives and results frameworks.”³
- 2) *Through procurement, financing, and strategic partnerships*: increase “support for local grassroots youth-led and youth-serving organizations,” strengthen “the capacity of relevant host-country ministries to provide more effective youth services” and explore “innovative financing and partnerships with public and private institutions and communities at large.”⁴
- 3) *In monitoring, research, and learning activities*: increase research through evaluation and learning activities to fill in gaps in knowledge about youth development and strengthening efforts to “collect age disaggregated data and utilize youth specific indicators.”⁵

Other USAID policies and directives particularly supportive of youth programming are those that promote gender equality and the inclusion of people with disabilities.⁶ USAID's gender policy calls for incorporation of programming strategies to reduce gender disparities and increase abilities of women and girls to “realize their rights, determine their life outcomes, and influence decision-making in households, communities, and societies.”⁷ Following a discussion on the importance of gender norms and their impact on family decisions regarding choices for boys and girls, the policy recommends the identification of root causes of existing gender inequalities as part of any program planning process.

Similarly, USAID policy guidance promotes the active inclusion of people with disabilities in program design and implementation and endorses awareness building and advocacy for equal participation of people with disabilities, making a commitment to work with host governments to promote a climate of non-discrimination. Youth with disabilities are some of the poorest and most marginalized youth in the world.⁸ Full and equal social, civic, and economic participation is beneficial not only for youth with disabilities but also for their families and communities.

PURPOSE OF THE TOOLKIT

The Youth Integration Toolkit⁹ provides a set of guiding questions and resources for USAID Mission staffs in the Europe and Eurasia (E&E) Region to incorporate youth as a target population into program design. In the *Youth in Development Policy*, the Agency has made a commitment to “place a strong emphasis on integrating youth considerations as a crosscutting factor in all our programming.”¹⁰ As such,

3. USAID, *Youth in Development Policy: Realizing the Demographic Opportunity* (Washington, D.C.: USAID, 2012), p 15-17.

4. *Ibid.*, 16.

5. USAID (2012) *Youth in Development Policy: Realizing the Demographic Opportunity*

6. USAID, *Gender Equality and Female Empowerment Policy* (Washington, D.C.: USAID, 2012); USAID, *USAID Disability Policy paper* (Washington, D.C.: USAID, 1997).

7. USAID, *Youth in Development Policy: Realizing the Demographic Opportunity* (Washington, D.C.: USAID, 2012), 1.

8. United Nations, *Factsheet: Youth with Disabilities* (UN: 2011).

9. Youth are defined here as those aged 10-29 years, consistent with the USAID Youth in Development Policy. Where possible, age groupings are broken down based on data and discussion topics.

10. USAID, *Youth in Development Policy: Realizing the Demographic Opportunity* (Washington, D.C.: USAID, 2012), vi.

this document provides guidance for USAID program design team members to conduct effective analysis as the basis for strategic planning of integrated youth programming.

Section 2 provides the lens by which to view youth analysis with a discussion of factors influential in youth development (e.g., age, gender, family structure, cultural factors, etc.). In addition, the USAID Framework for International Youth Development is described along with suggestions for use in project development. Finally, considerations for the incorporation of youth analysis into Country Development Cooperation Strategies (CDCS) and project-level planning processes are offered.

Section 3 presents an outline of important factors for consideration in the program design process. Since young people are not a homogenous group, the discussion focuses on understanding youth needs through various lenses of age, gender, context, ethnicity, and religion as well as other experiential components such as disability and sexual orientation.

Section 4 introduces the current status of youth in the E&E region¹¹ across multiple sectors including education, employment, civic engagement, media, and rule of law. Sociocultural norms for youth in the region are described, including those related to gender roles and domestic violence. Finally recent trends which affect young people, such as the use of cell phones, access to technology and the influence of social networks like Facebook are discussed. This section leads into sector-specific information sheets on topics relevant to holistic youth development (e.g., education, workforce development, agriculture, civic engagement, climate change, etc.), presenting examples of quality youth programs, along with links to key documents and websites. Relevant youth-led organizations are also listed when available. Finally, each sector sheet provides sample questions for consideration when framing youth analysis.

The toolkit concludes with a brief summary of research findings, along with a final statement about the way forward on youth issues in the region. It provides an overview of the use of the toolkit and a discussion of next steps to better integrate and target youth inclusion.

METHODOLOGY

The majority of information included in this toolkit was gathered through a review of extant literature; data were drawn from the UNICEF TransMonEE Database, the World Bank World Development Indicators, UNESCO Institute for Statistics (UIS), the Population Reference Bureau, and the UNICEF progress report on adolescents.

TARGET AUDIENCE

The primary target audience for this toolkit is USAID Mission and USAID/Washington personnel who conduct youth analysis as an initial stage in the development of effective strategies and programs for young people. Although the toolkit focuses on examples from the E&E region, the content has general relevance to other Missions and Bureaus at USAID, U.S. government agencies, youth project implementers, and stakeholders.

11. For the purpose of this paper, the E&E region is defined as those countries with USAID Missions: Albania, Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Georgia, Kosovo, Republic of Macedonia, Moldova, Montenegro, Serbia, and Ukraine.

SECTION 2: UNDERSTANDING YOUTH ANALYSIS

Youth analysis is critical to ensure that knowledge and lessons learned about youth development are intentionally inserted to assistance and donor-funded programming. Although the analysis process does not have to be complicated, youth development issues are complex. Young people are not homogeneous in their goals, aspirations, challenges, and opportunities; therefore no one-size-fits-all approach can be used to address them as a population. In the *Youth in Development Policy*, USAID emphasizes the difficulty in uniformly defining youth:

“Youth is a life stage, one that is not finite or linear. . . . USAID uses the term youth and young people interchangeably and while youth development programs often focus on youth in the 15 to 24 year age range, USAID programs also are likely to engage individuals aged 10-29 as a broader youth cohort...”¹²

A wide range of challenges and opportunities confront young people on a daily basis including sex, gender norms, family structures and expectations, cultural norms, educational expectations and opportunities, employment expectations and opportunities, health and disability status, sexual orientation, and geographic and economic realities. Tradition and ‘elders’ are key factors in the social, educational, and developmental process of young people, relaying cultural information on social change, expectations, and norms. Just as critical is the impact of increased access to the influences and contributions of technology and social media on the expectations and social norms of young people.

The period of adolescence, aged 15 to 19 years old,¹³ is often characterized by:

- Rapid physiological, emotional, and cognitive changes;
- Separation from parents and establishing an independent identity;
- Multiple life transitions and significant events, such as transition from school to work;
- Limited knowledge about the prevention of risk of injury or illness;
- Increased experimentation with risky behaviors such as the use of alcohol and drugs and participation in sexual activity; and
- Unwillingness to access formal health services or use protection during sexual activity.¹⁴

Adolescence, ages 15 to 19, and early adulthood, ages 20 to 24, offer opportunities and potential to influence life-long behaviors. For this reason, youth are important to USAID and others as key drivers, not only of their own development, but also of the development of their communities and countries. Ensuring that youth have the opportunity, space, and knowledge to contribute impacts the following larger social and national goals:

- Increase social stability;
- Reduce radicalization and extremism;
- Decrease violence and crime;
- Boost economic growth through youth workforce readiness and employment;
- Prevent HIV/AIDS;
- Promote maternal and child health; and
- Advance a culture of democracy through youth citizenship.¹⁵

12. USAID, *Youth in Development Policy: Realizing the Demographic Opportunity* (Washington, D.C.: USAID, 2012), 4.

13. Ibid.

14. USAID, *Young People and HIV Prevention* (Washington, D.C.: USAID, 2010).

15. Adapted from Clare Ignatowski, “Youth Development” (presentation, USAID, Washington, D.C., 2011).

As USAID Missions consider efforts to analyze and affect the advancement of young people within and across sectors, an understanding of the knowledge base of youth development is a critical first step. The USAID *Youth in Development policy* acknowledges:

“[Y]oung people are both individuals transitioning through life’s developmental stages and actors in the development of their countries and communities. As young people, they experience physical, cognitive, emotional, and social changes that influence their needs, identities, and behavior as well as their opportunities.”¹⁶

Box 3: The Strategic Foundation of Youth Analysis

- **Young people are individuals and actors in their own lives.** Individual lives can be dramatically influenced by many factors: culture, family economics, local and national political realities, and health and education status. All people, including adolescents and those entering early adulthood, have a vested interest in how their lives unfold.
- **Young people are individuals and actors in the development of their communities and countries.** Youth need to be drawn in, listened to, and respected by adults who are in positions to make decisions and create policies and programs that impact young lives. They also need meaningful opportunities to participate in actively shaping the futures of their communities and countries.
- **Young people go through developmental stages.** What works well for a group of 10-to-12 year-olds will look very different for a group of 18-to-20 year-olds. Understanding the developmental phases of target populations is critical to ensure meaningful design and programming.
- **Adults (including governments and donors) need an astute awareness of the biological, social, and cultural dimensions of youth behavior.** Knowledge is essential. Analysis should include a focus on preparation and ongoing training for adults who work with young people to ensure that all dimensions of youth behavior are recognized, understood, and respected.

Importantly, USAID and others who work with youth need to expand their perceptions of young people from "problems to be fixed" to "assets to be built." The following table, adapted from C. Ignatowski,¹⁷ illustrates this approach.

16. USAID, *Youth in Development Policy: Realizing the Demographic Opportunity* (Washington, D.C.: USAID, 2012), 4.

17. Clare Ignatowski, "Youth Development" (presentation, USAID, Washington, D.C., 2011).

Table 1: Re-framing Perceptions about Youth

| Youth as Problems | Youth as Assets |
|---|--|
| Youth lack skills | Youth are a national resource and the cornerstone of human capital formulation |
| Youth lack initiative | Youth are a source of innovation, new ideas, and perspectives for their families and communities |
| Youth are a drain on society | Youth represent human, social, and economic capital with strengths and skills that need to be mobilized |
| Youth are a threat to civic society | Youth are active partners with adults in building strong and stable communities and countries |
| Youth are terrorists, criminals, child-soldiers, street children, and orphans | Youth are problem-solvers, mentors to younger children, community volunteers, tutors, and a bridge between generations |

FRAMEWORK FOR YOUTH INTEGRATION

In the *Youth in Development Policy*, USAID outlines an approach to systematically identify, understand, and support analysis of the strengths, assets, and needs of young people as they develop from early adolescence through early adulthood.

Box 4: USAID Youth in Development Policy Conceptual Framework

“USAID seeks to strengthen youth programming, participation, and partnership in support of Agency development objectives. Youth in Development at USAID is the intentional, ongoing process of assisting youth in their transition from childhood to adulthood. This process is based on a conceptual framework drawn from best practices in youth-specific programs, comprised of four interacting elements:

1. Support: Meeting basic youth developmental needs and valuing their contributions;
2. Protect: Preventing and responding to violence, exploitation, abuse, and neglect and ensuring young people are safe and receive care;
3. Prepare: Building youth competencies and skills to become informed, healthy, and productive citizens;
4. Engage: Creating channels for dialogue and participation that enable youth to contribute to their own and their communities’ development.”¹⁸

This approach is based on a framework originally created in the United States by Youth Development Strategies, Inc. and adapted by USAID and EDC for the EQUIP3 program. The original goal of the framework was to “integrate basic knowledge about youth development and the community conditions that affect development with hypotheses about what is needed to change communities so youth can reach their fullest potential.”¹⁹ Through review and feedback, USAID has created its Framework for International Youth Development (see Figure 1).

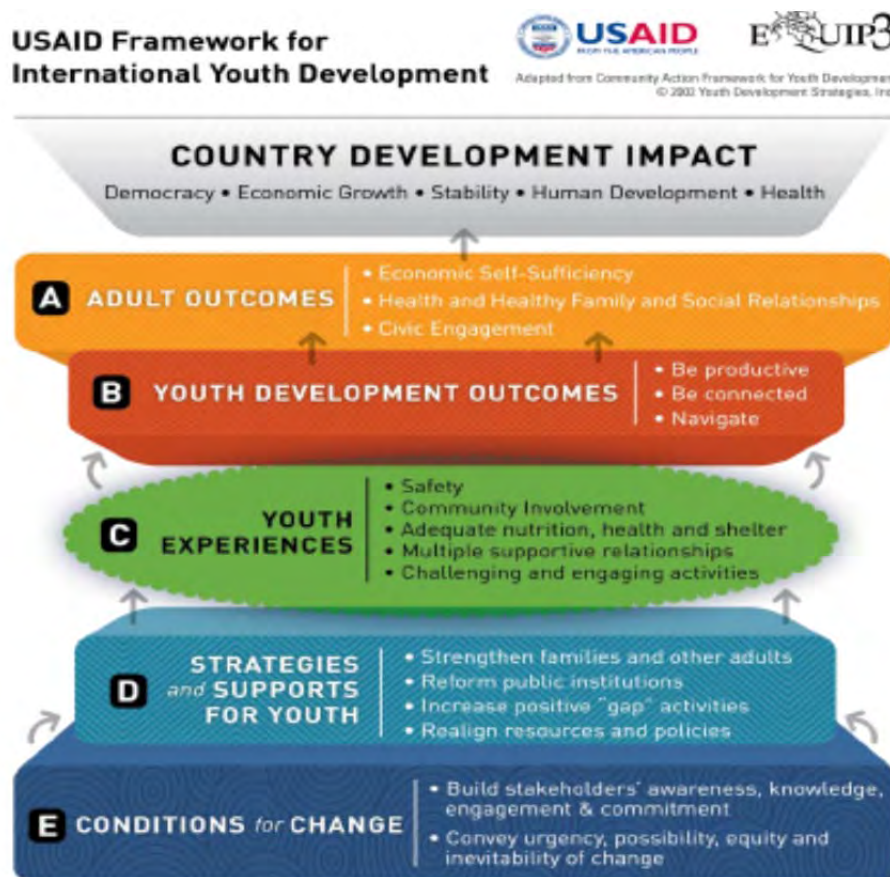
This framework provides a roadmap for analysis by focusing on key elements leading to an environment supportive of youth engagement in social, economic, and political processes: (1) broader environmental conditions (e.g., policy support, community and government awareness of youth issues); (2) strategies and supports (e.g., family stability, capacity of public institutions, involvement of other stakeholders); (3)

18. USAID, *Youth in Development Policy: Realizing the Demographic Opportunity* (Washington, D.C.: USAID, 2012), 11.

19. Michelle Gambone, and James Connell, “The Community Action Framework for Youth Development,” *The Prevention Researcher* 11, no. 2 (2004), 20.

experiences or opportunities (e.g., level of safety, ability to become involved in community, access to education and other services, opportunity for engaging activities); and (4) outcomes (e.g., education rates, literacy rates, employment rates, health indicators, etc.).

Figure 1: USAID Framework for International Youth Development



YOUTH ANALYSIS AND COUNTRY DEVELOPMENT COOPERATION STRATEGIES (CDCS)

Within the USAID Mission structure, the Country Development Cooperation Strategy (CDCS) process ensures that the Agency works in collaboration with host governments, other agencies, and stakeholders to create programs which increase country stability and prosperity.²⁰ The *Youth in Development Policy* reinforces this process: "... Development Objectives (DO) should integrate approaches, principles and resources from various sectors and sources to achieve a common objective, such as community-based stabilization, youth development and empowerment, improved economic governance or effective social service delivery, and endeavor to integrate issues such as gender, youth, and capacity building."²¹ This provides the opportunity for Missions to:

- Engage youth and youth-serving or youth-led organizations in the planning process;
- Bring USAID staff together across sectors to focus on youth;

20. USAID, *ADS Chapter 201 Planning* (Washington, D.C.: USAID: 2013).

21. USAID, *Youth in Development Policy: Realizing the Demographic Opportunity* (Washington, D.C.: USAID, 2012), 16.

- Identify USAID, country government, and partner capacities as they relate to supporting youth;
- Consider youth as part of budgeting requests;
- Increase research, evaluation, and learning activities focusing on youth.²²

The CDCS team can bring staff and stakeholders together regularly to review planning goals and objectives, encouraging them to meet the ideals embedded in the *Youth in Development Policy*. Moreover, the team can facilitate a proactive annual process to review past performance, monitoring and evaluation results, and innovative approaches in sectoral and cross-sectoral youth projects. Even within a uni-sectoral project, the CDCS provides a platform for forging alliances and building bridges across Mission teams to ensure that lessons learned from multiple sectors are used to analyze and frame approaches to successful youth programming.

YOUTH ANALYSIS AND PROJECT PLANNING

After decisions on the dimensions of youth integration into the CDCS have been made, a typical USAID project design process ensues. Youth and other stakeholders interested in youth development should participate in all steps as much as possible. Steps include:

- Defining the problem to be solved with the program;
- Reviewing the current knowledge;
- Defining the project design team;
- Developing a logical framework;
- Identifying strategic partners; and
- Assessing financial risk, governance issues, and technical capacity.²³

Phase Two requires an in-depth analysis of gender issues, environmental impact, sustainability, and fiscal efficiency. While youth analysis is not mandated by the Agency Automated Directives System (ADS), a strong recommendation is made to include youth issues in other analyses and/or to carry out a cross-sectoral youth analysis as well. This allows team members to explore the issues more deeply than at the CDCS level. During a youth analysis, the project design team assesses the ways in which youth might participate in or be affected by the intervention as well as barriers to access, identification of appropriate target population(s), and the capacity of implementing partners to carry out the intervention (in general and to serve youth specifically).

The USAID ADS guidance states that youth analysis will:

1. **Enable a better understanding** of the country's youth profile and gender-specific issues, inform program and project focus (by age cohort for example) and type and method of intervention;
2. **Affirm the Agency's commitment** to and create avenues for meaningful participation of youth in the design process with the potential for longer-term engagement;
3. **Show the impact of Agency programming on youth** and the impact of youth on projects in all sectors and reinforce youth-sensitive design to achieve better overall project outcomes;
4. **Elevate awareness** of and advocate for opportunity and attention to youth among partner countries and development stakeholders at large.²⁴

22. Ibid: USAID 2012

23. USAID, *ADS Chapter 201 Planning* (Washington, D.C.: USAID: 2013).

24. Ibid: USAID 2013, p. 65.

SECTION 3: CONDUCTING YOUTH ANALYSIS

Considerations of the various needs of young people, their families, and their communities are critical components of a youth analysis. Barriers to successful completion of life transitions will differ among youth because of individual experiences and life situations (e.g., gender roles, disability, level of education, marital status, economic status, etc.). Thus, an essential part of the analysis is the creation of a comprehensive view of the diversity of programming that might be necessary to achieve identified needs and desired project outcomes. A helpful document on youth analysis, *The Hope of Tomorrow: Integrating Youth into the Transition of Europe and Eurasia, 2014 Update*,²⁵ provides a step by step guide on how Operating Units should approach youth analysis. A summary of key components follows below.

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.

KEY CONSIDERATIONS

- **Youth needs at various ages**

Engagement of diverse age cohorts of young people and adult allies and inquiries about positive influences in their lives, e.g., school, family, community, workplaces, faith institutions, etc., will assist to pinpoint challenges and opportunities for programming. Programming should demonstrate a clear understanding of differences in development needs based on a young person's age: early adolescence (10-14 years); adolescence (15-19 years); emerging adulthood (20-24 years); and transition into adulthood (25-29 years).²⁶

- **Youth differences and commonalities**

A review of data points across time and location is necessary to get multiple perspectives on the issues youth face. Country-level data may conceal local or regional issues. Information from stakeholders who hold diverse points of view may be needed to reach a nuanced understanding of the issues.

- **Youth voices**

Giving young people an opportunity to input to policy and programming acknowledges their critical roles as stakeholders, problem solvers, and change agents in their own lives, communities, and countries. Analysis needs to include opportunities to 'hear' the voices of youth in expression of their opinions, feedback, and interests. This will ensure that policies and programming specifically reflect the

25. Available on DEC: http://pdf.usaid.gov/pdf_docs/pa00k7jp.pdf

26. The World Bank, *World Development Report 2007 (Development and the Next Generation)* (Washington, D.C.: World Bank, 2007).

needs, aspirations, and participation of young people. Technology-based on-line platforms to collect youth input are common and easily accessed; these allow wide distribution and participation nationally, regionally, and globally on multiple issues which impact youth. For example, the European Commission and other supporters fund the ‘Youth Post 2015,’ which solicits input from young people on their vision and recommendations for the impending Sustainable Development Goals.²⁷ ‘Voices of Youth’ was founded in 1995 by UNICEF as an online place for young people to engage globally, inspire each other, and air their opinions on issues such as gender, education, LGBT, and digital safety and propriety.²⁸ On a regional level, the ‘Youth Voice’ Regional Campaign invites youth from Europe and Central Asia to provide input on issues of education, health, employment, participation and volunteering, and discrimination and equality.²⁹ While on-line access is becoming the norm for young people, youth analysis must also consider the opinions of those who are not able to access or use technology; contact with local youth organizations and structures will be necessary to facilitate face-to-face collection of information and interaction from these individuals.

APPLYING THE YOUTH DEVELOPMENT FRAMEWORK TO YOUTH ANALYSIS

The USAID International Youth Development Framework will guide the process of identifying issues to be addressed and developed within the country to support, protect, prepare, and engage youth.

I. Support

“USAID **support** efforts center on the creation of an enabling environment, envisioned as a youth ‘ecosystem’ that supports youth at the individual, family, community, and national levels. These efforts utilize a systems approach, which shapes the policies, norms, values and beliefs of individuals, communities, local and national institutions towards positive life trajectories for youth through partnerships, coordination, and coalitions across sectors and among diverse youth and adult stakeholders.”³⁰ During the analysis:

- Examine the extent to which partnerships or networks have been established between government, private sector and NGOs in support of youth development;
- Survey the existence and placement of political will, policies, and financing structures that support conditions for positive change in the youth population;
- Investigate the establishment of data systems used to track youth success within and across youth-serving sectors;
- Comprehend ‘what’s working’ to ensure positive youth outcomes, leveraged to ensure scale and sustainability.

2. Protect

“**Protection** efforts focus on preserving young people’s rights, and bolstering and aligning programs in adherence to national and international legal frameworks regarding vulnerable youth, conflict and disaster response.”³¹ It is important to:

- Research the effects of trauma on youth and the results of recent adolescent brain research on resilience;

27. Youth Post 2015, <http://www.youthpost2015.org/>

28. Voices of Youth <http://www.voicesofyouth.org/en/sections/content/pages/about-us>

29. Youth Voice Regional Campaign <http://eecayouthvoice.org/#>

30. USAID, *Youth in Development Policy: Realizing the Demographic Opportunity* (Washington, D.C.: USAID, 2012), 11.

31. Ibid USAID 2012

- Understand the perspective of youth who have experienced gender-based violence, trafficking, or LGBT and disability discrimination.

3. Prepare

“**Preparing** youth for adulthood occurs within and across multiple sectors and domains by strengthening capacities and building assets. Mounting evidence holds that holistic or integrated youth programming can be particularly effective in addressing the complexities of young people’s lives.”³² To advance integrated programming:

- Convene cross-sector groups of implementing partners to extract and share lessons-learned about effective youth practices;
- Cross-walk youth outcomes from a variety of sectors to identify common, effective practices to leverage and strengthen impact on increasing numbers of young people.

4. Engage

“Efforts to **engage** youth involve elevating their voices and ensuring meaningful opportunities to contribute to resolution of issues and promotion of positive change in their communities and nations. Youth engagement also involves preparation of adults to listen to and work with young people.”³³

Engage youth during analysis, design and implementation:

- Bring youth together to engage, listen, and learn about their dreams, aspirations and hopes as well as effective practices that have positively impacted their lives;
- Ask youth their thoughts on adult involvement and understanding to enable better provision of support;
- Build an ongoing relationship with a diverse group of youth and ask for their advice and assistance during all phases of the analysis process and beyond.

Other important questions that build a context for youth planning are presented below (Box 5). These can bring clarity to the youth analysis process by furnishing information on current youth-related projects, potential collaboration opportunities, current country conditions, and funding parameters.

32. Ibid USAID 2012

33. Ibid USAID 2012

Box 5: Youth Analysis Questions for Planning

1. What are the realities of embedding youth development in Mission activities?
2. What are current and planned youth-related projects and expected results?
3. In what phase of the project cycle is each of the current youth-related activities?
4. What are areas of potential collaboration with other sectors for current youth-related projects?
5. What are the country conditions and context that shape a Mission focus on youth?
6. What is the host government's understanding and capacity to support youth programming?
7. How does the Mission foster a cross-sectoral, integrated approach to youth?
8. How are Mission priorities linked to youths' perceptions of issues or challenges and engagement in a country?
9. What knowledge is emerging about what works with youth in a country or region and why?
10. What are the sources (government, donor, NGO, etc.) and conditions of funding (purposes, parameters, amounts, time frames)?

Another factor to incorporate youth analysis into planning is development of a set of indicators reflective of the social, political, and economic contexts that youth operate in. Currently, “there are no internationally recognized youth development indices.... There are, however, many sector indicators that will suggest whether, when and how to program for youth development and engagement.”³⁴ In response, Missions can bring together government officials, non-governmental organizations, public sector, and private sector organizations to identify indicators currently in place that measure and track youth development and outcomes. Such a group could clarify areas of overlap or duplication and decide on a set or sets of youth-related indicators that could be jointly measured and reported.

34. USAID, *ADS Chapter 201 Planning* (Washington, D.C.: USAID: 2013), 46.

SECTION 4: YOUTH IN THE E&E REGION

Indicators of the youth experience in E&E countries show that for the most part, these youth have much the same issues as those in the rest of the world, perhaps differing only in degree or dimension. Data on population, education, employment, and health put many of these youth in fairly good stead with exceptions in particular countries on specific issues. Technology, without exception, is a strong influence on the lifestyles of many young people in the E&E region as it is around the world.

POPULATION

The youth population of the E&E region has declined substantially in the last ten years in direct contrast to many other USAID-assisted countries, which are seeing a "youth bulge" or increase in the percentage of youth.³⁵ In fact, E&E regional percentages of youth aged 10-24 years old (17 to 26% in 2013) are more in line with more advanced countries such as Canada (18%), the United States (20%), Western Europe (17%), and Northern Europe (18%).³⁶

From 2003 to 2013, youth populations have declined slowly; in total numbers the overall decline in youth population ages 15 to 19 in the region was approximately 29 percent (see Table 2). This downward trend is the direct result of declining birth rates, which fell fairly steadily in the region from 2000 to 2011.³⁷ Further, 10 of the countries in the E&E region are predicted to experience additional significant population declines between 2015 and 2050, from 6.4 percent in Albania to 21.7 percent in Ukraine.³⁸ While populations are shrinking overall in many E&E countries and are stable in a few, declining youth populations are problematic for future economic growth because labor markets will have fewer workers available and governments will have fewer citizens contributing more in taxes than they consume in entitlements. In order to provide the same services, those who are working will bear a greater burden than prior age cohorts. Therefore, ensuring that youth have marketable skills and incentives to remain in their home countries are critical for many E&E countries.

35. J. Weeks and D. Fugate, *The Youth Bulge: Challenge or Opportunity?* (New York: IDEBATE Press, 2012).

36. Population Reference Bureau (PRB), *The World's Youth: 2013 Data Sheet* (Washington, D.C.: PRB, 2013). Numbers presented here are the percentage of the country/regional populations that are 10–24 years old.

37. TransMonEE. 2015 Dataset (Geneva: UNICEF, 2015). Notable exceptions include Azerbaijan and Ukraine, which have seen slight increases in live births.

38. United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs, Population Division. *World Population Prospects: The 2015 Revision, Key Findings and Advanced Tables* (New York, NY: United Nations, 2015), 26. http://esa.un.org/unpd/wpp/Publications/Files/Key_Findings_WVPP_2015.pdf

Table 2: Youth Population (15-19 years) for E&E Region³⁹

| Country | 2003 (% of population) | 2013 (% of population) | Percent Change | Trend | 2023 Projection (% of population) |
|---------------------------|-----------------------------|-----------------------------|---------------------------|-------|--------------------------------------|
| Albania | 304,133 (9.9%) | 289,785 (9.6%) | -3.0% | ↓ | 172,240 (5.6%) |
| Armenia | 318,719 (10.3%) | 213,952 (7.0%) | -32.0% | ↓ | 166,845 (5.6%) |
| Azerbaijan | 914,860 (10.6%) | 779,004 (8.1%) | -23.6% | ↓ | 746,119 (7.2%) |
| Belarus | 826,843 (8.3%) | 495,500 (5.1%) | -38.6% | ↓ | 475,874 (5.1%) |
| Bosnia and Herzegovina | 286,396 (7.5%) | 235,327 (6.1%) | -18.7% | ↓ | 168,700 (4.4%) |
| Georgia | 389,064 (8.2%) | 311,599 (6.3%) | -23.2% | ↓ | 263,765 (5.3%) |
| Kosovo | 203,074 (11.6%) | 162,378 (8.8%) | -24.1% | ↓ | 160,664 (8.1%) |
| Republic of Macedonia | 163,132 (8.0%) | 147,543 (7.1%) | -11.3% | ↓ | 119,356 (5.6%) |
| Moldova | 406,957 (10.1%) | 241,289 (6.7%) | -33.7% | ↓ | 190,804 (5.9%) |
| Montenegro | 59,611 (8.4%) | 32,225 (4.9%) | -41.7% | ↓ | 30,486 (4.8%) |
| Serbia | 489,762 (6.5%) | 414,388 (5.7%) | -12.3% | ↓ | 359,925 (5.2%) |
| Ukraine | 3,861,024 (8.1%) | 2,351,622 (5.2%) | -35.8% | ↓ | 2,211,483 (5.1%) |
| Total | 8,223,575 (8.5%) | 5,674,612 (6.0%) | Average -29.4% | ↓ | 5,066,261 (5.5%) |

EDUCATION

Currently compulsory education rates (grades one to eight/nine⁴⁰) are relatively high with combined gross enrollment rates reaching near 90 percent or above for all countries with the exception of Bosnia and Herzegovina (Table 3). Gender parity is nearly equal, showing positive trends in attendance rates across grades for both female and male students. At the upper secondary level (ISCED 3: all programs and vocational education, ISCED 3A as a sub-set), a different story emerges, one that is difficult to generalize. When viewed across all countries, upper secondary enrollment rates are increasing or at least stabilizing; rates vary widely however from relatively high, as in Montenegro (91%) and Serbia (90%) to quite low as in Moldova (59%) and the Ukraine (60%). Azerbaijan exhibits an extremely high and growing upper secondary gross enrollment rate of 127 percent but appears to be an outlier.⁴¹ Only Armenia has a declining rate with fewer students attending the upper secondary level than in past years. Female enrollment in upper secondary education is relatively strong for all countries, with girls capturing at least 47 percent of all student enrollments.

39. U.S. Census Bureau. Dataset. (Washington, DC: U.S. Census Bureau, 2015). <http://www.census.gov/population/international/data/idb/region.php?N=%20Results%20&T=4&A=both&RT=0&Y=2003,2013,2023&R=-1&C=AL,AM,AJ,BO,BK,GG,KV,MK,MD,MJ,RI,UP>

40. In some countries, compulsory education is comprised of grades one to eight and in others, grades one to nine.

41. TransMonee, World Development Indicators, and UNESCO Institute of Statistics Databases. Gross enrollment rates over 100% indicate the enrollment of underage, overage, or repeating students.

Participation rates in vocational education also fluctuate greatly. Outside of Bosnia and Herzegovina, Montenegro, and Serbia, where more than a third of the upper secondary school population participates in vocational education from grade nine onward, other countries exhibit much lower rates; Albania has the lowest vocational education participation rate at 5.5 percent. While vocational education rates are increasing slightly in most countries, the limited participation of young people in vocational preparation may have serious implications on regional and national economic productivity and social cohesion and are the cause of much concern in Europe and the region today.⁴²

Low enrollment rates in upper secondary education and the structure of education systems in some countries which constrains student transitions between 'academic' and 'non-academic' levels at the post-secondary level naturally have adverse effects on tertiary enrollments. Tertiary enrollments vary greatly across the region, ranging from a low of 20 percent in Azerbaijan to almost universal tertiary participation in Belarus with a high of 93 percent.⁴³ In all countries, females have higher rates of tertiary participation than males in an average ratio of 59 to 45 percent across all the countries.

In relation to quality, governments universally report 99 percent literacy rates among youth in their countries. However, an examination of math scores of eighth grade students from participating countries on the 2011 Trends in International Mathematics and Science Study (TIMSS) presents another perspective on the academic rigor of the education they are receiving in school. Participating E&E countries received the following average scale scores in eighth grade math: Republic of Macedonia: 426, Georgia: 431, Armenia: 467, and the Ukraine: 479; only Serbian students, scoring 516 points, achieved above the assessment's central scale score of 500.⁴⁴ Given the similar historical and developmental paths of the countries in the E&E region, similar achievement in math may be a reasonable assumption for the remaining countries.

42. Biavaschi, C. et. al. *Youth Unemployment and Vocational Training*. World Bank: World Development Report, 2013.

43. The World Bank, "World Bank Open Data," Dataset (Washington, D.C.: World Bank, 2013).

44. Mullis, I., M. Martin, P. Foy, and A. Arora *TIMSS 2011 International Results in Mathematics*. Chestnut Hill, MA: TIMSS and PIRLS International Study Center, Boston College. 2012

Table 3: Gross Enrollment Ratios (GER) in the E&E Region

| Country | Grades 1-9 GER ¹ | TVET (9 – 11/12) GER ² | | | Upper Secondary GER all programs ³ | | | Tertiary ⁴ GER | Tertiary GER Female |
|------------------------|-----------------------------|-----------------------------------|------|------|---|--------------------|-------|---------------------------|---------------------|
| | 2012 | 2008 | 2010 | 2012 | 2008 | 2010 | 2012 | 2013 | 2013 |
| Albania | 96.6 | 7.3 | 5.6 | 5.5 | 73.0 | - | 76.0 | 59 | 66 |
| Armenia | 101.5 | 3.8 | 4.7 | 8.0 | 89.3 | 93.4 | 85.8 | 46 | 57 |
| Azerbaijan | 95.7 | 13.6 | 16.6 | 18.3 | 100.0 | 100.0 | 127.0 | 20 | 21 |
| Belarus | 89.7 | | 14.9 | 15.4 | 39.9 | 70.4 | 70.4 | 93 | 107 |
| Bosnia and Herzegovina | 77.3 | 35.0 | 34.0 | 39.0 | 66.6 | 68.1 | 83.2 | - | - |
| Georgia | 91.5 | 0.5 | | | - | - | 73.3 | 33 | 37 |
| Kosovo | - | - | - | - | - | 54.1 ⁴⁵ | - | - | - |
| Republic of Macedonia | 92.2 | | | | 75.8 | 79.7 | 80.8 | 38 | 42 |
| Moldova | 89.7 | | | | 55.5 | 56.6 | 58.9 | 41 | 45.4 |
| Montenegro | 97.0 | | 31.0 | 34.1 | 86.1 | 90.6 | 90.8 | 56 | 62 |
| Serbia | 100.2 | 36.0 | 37.0 | 38.0 | 84.2 | 85.9 | 89.8 | 56 | 65 |
| Ukraine | 98.0 | 8.1 | 7.7 | 8.9 | 57.5 | 50.7 | 59.9 | 79.3 | 86.0 |

¹ TransMonee, Albania: 2010, Montenegro, 2011

² UNESCO Institute for Statistics,

³ TransMonee, Albania: 2010, Belarus: 2011, Montenegro: 2012

⁴ World Development Indicators, 2013, FYR Macedonia: 2012, Montenegro: 2010. Females: Azerbaijan: 2012,

All the countries have populations of marginalized individuals who have difficulty accessing education. Among those least likely to attend (let alone complete) primary and secondary education are the Roma, young girls in rural areas, and children with disabilities. Large populations of ethnic minorities and both externally and internally displaced groups of migrants and refugees pose challenges to universal education access in other countries (for example in Belarus, Georgia, and Montenegro). In most countries, only about 20 percent of Roma children ever complete primary school compared to more than 90 percent of their non-Roma peers; drop-out before the end of basic schooling is high because of discrimination and inability of schools to meet language and culture needs. In Southeastern Europe, only 18 percent of Roma children ever enroll in secondary school and less than one percent attends university.⁴⁶ Roma girls and women appear to be most at risk in terms of access to education.⁴⁷

Despite an increased focus on provision of equal education opportunities for young people with disabilities in policy documents, in reality the actual numbers of children with disabilities reported to be in mainstream (general) schools is very low; as an example, in the Republic of Macedonia, only 102 children with disability attend and in Azerbaijan, 702 children with disability attend ordinary school. Some countries report no children with disabilities in mainstream schools (Albania, Bosnia and

45. Statistical Agency of Kosovo

46. UNICEF. *The Right of Roma Children to Education*. (Geneva, Switzerland: UNICEF, 2011).

47. Ibid UNICEF 2011.

Herzegovina, the Ukraine, and Armenia).⁴⁸ Only Montenegro (1,092 in mainstream schools and 386 in special schools) and Georgia (3,396 in mainstream schools and 614 in special schools) report more children with disabilities attending mainstream school (all levels) than attending special schools.

EMPLOYMENT

Young people in the region were among the losers in the transition of countries to market economies, victims of industrial restructuring, declining quality and responsiveness of training and education systems, and a waning interest in vocational education. Just as with adult rates, youth unemployment rates have been cyclical, affected by global economic forces and the variability of individual country economies; generalizations across all the countries are difficult to make although changes in some individual countries are noteworthy. In 2013, the lowest unemployment rates among the targeted countries in this toolkit were exhibited by Azerbaijan and Moldova which have successfully lowered rates of youth unemployment to 12 and 13 percent respectively. Several other countries have shown good progress to increase youth employment, successfully lowering unemployment rates by as much as 17 (Montenegro) and 13 (Republic of Macedonia) percentage points over the span of ten years although both countries still have exceedingly high rates of 41.6 percent and 52 percent, necessitating continued vigilance to enable youth to find work; Bosnia and Herzegovina has not been so successful at reducing its high unemployment rate of 57.6 percent. Meanwhile rates in Serbia (49%) and Georgia (36%) are high and continue to increase (Table 4).⁴⁹ Globally and regionally young people have continued to be two to three times more likely to be out of work than adult workers.⁵⁰ Also similar to the global trend, young people in these countries are disproportionately concentrated in informal employment, working in unstable and poorly paid jobs. High unemployment and high joblessness rates are exacerbated for certain socio-demographic groups, including young women, young ethnic minority people, such as Roma, youths living in rural areas, low educated youth, and young people with disability.⁵¹











48. All data on children with disabilities from UNICEF TransMonee database, 2012.

49. "TransMonEE 2013," Dataset (Geneva: UNICEF, 2014). No data provided for Kosovo or Belarus.

50. ILO *Global Employment Trends for Youth 2013: A generation at risk*. Geneva, Switzerland: ILO, 2013.

51. Biavaschi, C. et. al. *Youth Unemployment and Vocational Training*. World Bank: World Development Report, 2013.

Table 4: Youth (15-24 years old) Registered Unemployment Rates⁵²

| Country | 2003 (%) | 2013 (%) | Trend |
|-------------------------------------|----------|----------|--|
| Albania (2007) | 20.1 | 31.4 |  |
| Armenia (2008) | 36.5 | 36.1 |  |
| Azerbaijan | 21.8 | 13.7 |  |
| Bosnia and Herzegovina (2006, 2010) | 62.4 | 57.6 |  |
| Georgia | 24.9 | 35.6 |  |
| Kosovo | - | 31.0* | - |
| Republic of Macedonia | 65.7 | 51.9 |  |
| Moldova | 18.1 | 12.2 |  |
| Montenegro (2005) | 58.1 | 41.6 |  |
| Serbia (2004) | 48.1 | 49.4 |  |
| Ukraine | 16.6 | 16.7 |  |

Note: No data are available for Belarus.

*Source for Kosovo: ILOSTAT, ILO. ILO uses a different method to calculate unemployment, which typically yields estimates substantially lower than TransMonEE rates.

HEALTH

Data indicators chosen to represent the health status of youth in the region include mortality rates, suicide rates, live births to women under age 20, and the prevalence of HIV and other sexually transmitted diseases.












- **Mortality rates (per 100,000)**

From 2007 to 2013, most mortality rates for youth ages 15 to 19 years in E&E countries declined (Table 5); exceptions were in Albania, Armenia, and Georgia where rates increased.⁵³ In 2013, the lowest mortality rates for that age group were in Republic of Macedonia (32.3), Bosnia and Herzegovina (32.6), and Serbia (33.2). Ukraine and Albania had the highest rates, 58.3 and 59.6, respectively.

52. TransMonEE 2013 dataset (Geneva: UNICEF, 2014).

53. TransMonEE 2015, Dataset (Geneva: UNICEF, 2015).












Table 5: Youth Mortality Rates (per 100,000), 15-19 Years Old

| Country | Total 2003 | Total 2013 | Overall Trend | Male 2003 | Female 2003 | Male 2013 | Female 2013 |
|------------------------|------------|------------|---|-----------|-------------|-----------|-------------|
| Albania | 55.0 | 59.6 |  | 75.7 | 34.2 | 71.5 | 47.3 |
| Armenia | 30.7 | 36.4 |  | 46.1 | 15.1 | 60.6 | 12.9 |
| Azerbaijan | 51.1 | 47.7 |  | 66.4 | 35.9 | 58.6 | 35.8 |
| Belarus | 74.3 | 47.7 |  | 110.0 | 37.0 | 66.8 | 27.5 |
| Bosnia and Herzegovina | 42.5 | 32.6 |  | 61.2 | 24.8 | 45.8 | 18.6 |
| Georgia | 28.9 | 43.5 |  | 38.6 | 20.8 | 63.7 | 21.7 |
| Republic of Macedonia | 45.9 | 32.3 |  | 55.3 | 36.0 | 38.9 | 25.1 |
| Moldova | 49.5 | 46.3 |  | 68.4 | 29.9 | 59.2 | 32.9 |
| Montenegro | 60.0 | 37.0 |  | 58.4 | 61.6 | 35.9 | 38.3 |
| Serbia | 44.2 | 33.2 |  | 65.0 | 22.5 | 45.0 | 20.7 |
| Ukraine | 80.7 | 58.3 |  | 111.8 | 48.2 | 81.1 | 34.3 |

Note: No data are available for Kosovo.

Similar to other countries across the globe, mortality rates for 20 to 24 year olds in the E&E countries (Table 6) are significantly higher than those for 15 to 19 year olds over the same period. Many E&E countries, however, reported significant declines in mortality in this age group. Armenia and Georgia are exceptions, with the trends for both age cohorts increasing during the past decade, and Montenegro has divergent trends for the two age groups, with the mortality rate of the younger age group decreasing and the rate of the older group of 20 to 24 year olds increasing. Ukraine and Belarus continue to have the highest mortality rates for 20 to 24 year olds in the selected countries in spite of significant improvements over their 2003 rates.

Table 6: Youth Mortality Rates (per 100,000), 20-24 Years Old

| Country | Total 2003 | Total 2013 | Overall Trend | Male 2003 | Female 2003 | Male 2013 | Female 2013 |
|------------------------|------------|------------|---|-----------|-------------|-----------|-------------|
| Albania | 83.2 | 69.6 |  | 118.2 | 50.9 | 95.3 | 39.6 |
| Armenia | 45.4 | 54.3 |  | 67.6 | 23.3 | 79.9 | 29.6 |
| Azerbaijan | 75.0 | 66.6 |  | 97.5 | 51.6 | 91.5 | 41.3 |
| Belarus | 151.8 | 91.8 |  | 241.1 | 59.3 | 137.4 | 43.7 |
| Bosnia and Herzegovina | 49.7 | 38.2 |  | 69.4 | 29.2 | 58.7 | 14.8 |
| Georgia | 64.1 | 65.8 |  | 85.6 | 42.8 | 105.6 | 24.9 |
| Republic of Macedonia | 58.2 | 42.6 |  | 89.1 | 25.3 | 53.2 | 31.4 |
| Moldova | 98.2 | 61.5 |  | 150.3 | 45.1 | 91.9 | 30.1 |
| Montenegro | 48.7 | 57.7 |  | 72.0 | 24.7 | 88.3 | 24.9 |
| Serbia | 62.7 | 45.1 |  | 90.3 | 33.9 | 67.5 | 21.5 |
| Ukraine | 158.2 | 99.4 |  | 239.1 | 74.5 | 146.7 | 49.7 |

Note: No data are available for Kosovo.

As in most countries around the world, young males in both age groups in most E&E countries have significantly higher mortality rates than females in the same groups. Montenegro is an exception where 15 to 19 year old females have a slightly higher rate than males of the same age (38.3 and 35.9, respectively). Mortality rates for males are on average 50 percent higher than for females in the 15 to 19 year old group and almost 65 percent higher in the 20 to 24 year old group. Rates for 20 to 24 year old males for example in Belarus and Ukraine are 137.4 and 146.7 per 100,000 respectively versus female rates of 43.7 and 49.7 for the same countries.⁵⁴

- **Suicide rates**

Suicide rates for youth ages 15 to 19 years are reported for most countries in the E&E region. Over the last five years, with the exception of a few countries, average suicide rates have been generally quite low, ranging from 1.5 (per 100,000) in Armenia and Albania, up to 2.6 and 2.8 for Montenegro and Republic of Macedonia respectively. Three countries however exhibit rates that are high in contrast to the other countries, signaling disruptive social and economic issues at work which are negatively and severely impacting youth: Belarus (12.5), Ukraine (11.0) and Moldova (8.6).⁵⁵ Rates of young male suicide in these three countries are more than four times higher than other E&E countries. Suicide rates for

54. Ibid TransMonEE 2015

55. TransMonEE 2014, Dataset (Geneva: UNICEF, 2014).

young males are much higher than females in all countries.⁵⁶ Of particular note is the suicide rate of young males in Moldova which has more than doubled from 2003 to 2012 (7.0 to 15.2 per 100,000).

- **Live births to women under age 20**

As a group, live births for women in the younger age bracket, 15-19, have shown little movement over the ten year span, but individual countries have experienced significant changes. In Azerbaijan, live births to younger women have almost doubled over the last ten years to a regional high of 51 per 1,000 (Table 7). Azerbaijan has the highest percentage of live births to women under 20 in the region, at 11.1 percent in 2013, compared to Montenegro at the low end with 3.4 percent.⁵⁷ This may be the result of an increase in early and child marriages in some parts of the country.⁵⁸ Albania and Georgia also experienced significant increases in live births to women in this age group. On the other end of the spectrum, Republic of Macedonia, Serbia, Armenia, Montenegro, and Bosnia and Herzegovina experienced precipitous declines in live births to women under 20.

Live births for the older group of women (20-24 years old), however, have shown an average downward trend, from 102.5 per 1,000 to 91.4 per 1,000 over the last ten years. As with the younger group, rates fluctuate among the different countries; live birth rates in several countries have declined as much as 30 to 40 percent points, for example, in Serbia (from 94 to 60 per 1,000), Montenegro (102.6 to 71.6 per 1,000), and the Republic of Macedonia (111.9 to 67.2 per 1,000). As with the younger group, Azerbaijan exhibits the greatest increase of live births, from 124.2 up to 156 per 1,000. The older group of women generally has four to five times the number of live births per 1,000 as the younger group in the same time span, probably indicating their increased tendency to marry and have children during this age span.⁵⁹

Table 7: Live Births per 1,000 Women

| Country | Age 15-19 | | Age 20-24 | |
|------------------------|-------------|-------------|--------------|-------------|
| | 2003 | 2013 | 2003 | 2013 |
| Albania | 16.4 | 20.4 | 111.0 | 108.2 |
| Armenia | 29.3 | 22.7 | 126.6 | 118.3 |
| Azerbaijan | 26.6 | 51.0 | 124.2 | 156.0 |
| Belarus | 23.8 | 22.1 | 96.5 | 91.7 |
| Bosnia and Herzegovina | 16.5 | 11.4 | 80.8 | 55.3 |
| Georgia | 33.1 | 40.8 | 99.3 | 108.8 |
| Republic of Macedonia | 25.7 | 17.4 | 111.9 | 67.2 |
| Moldova | 29.2 | 25.4 | 89.7 | 77.1 |
| Montenegro | 17.6 | 12.0 | 102.6 | 71.6 |
| Serbia | 25.3 | 18.2 | 94.0 | 60.4 |
| Ukraine | 28.9 | 27.0 | 92.0 | 90.9 |
| Average | 24.8 | 24.4 | 102.5 | 91.4 |

Note: No data are available for Kosovo.

56. Ibid TransMonEE 2014

57. TransMonEE 2015. Dataset (Geneva: UNICEF, 2015).

58. Verdiyev, Ali. "Child Marriage: Broken Dreams of Azerbaijani Girls". (New York, NY: UNICEF, n.d.). http://www.unicef.org/azerbaijan/media_11778.html

59. Ibid TransMonEE 2013

- **HIV, Gonorrhea, Syphilis**

Youth HIV statistics are not readily available for most E&E countries; the reported prevalence rates of new HIV cases for the population aged 15 to 49 were extremely low across the region, ranging from less than 0.1 percent (Serbia, Albania, and Republic of Macedonia) to 0.8 percent in Ukraine in 2013.⁶⁰ Low rates however may be more of an indication of the difficulty and sensitivity involved in the collection and reporting of HIV data rather than a true representation of the presence of the disease. Numerous sources, particularly UNICEF which conducts extensive HIV/AIDS research, advocacy, and programming in multiple countries in the E&E region, report that the number of individuals in the region living with HIV tripled between 2000 and 2009 and infection rates in many of the countries were the fastest growing in the world.⁶¹ The World Health Organization reports that new HIV infections have increased 80 percent between 2004 and 2014 in Europe; 76 percent of these new infections are reported to be in the Eastern Europe and Central Asian countries.⁶² Additionally, UNICEF notes that infection rates are masked by an official overall low HIV prevalence rate in the region; the infection rate however is increasing among ever younger, vulnerable adolescents in the region.⁶³ UNICEF reports that the spread of HIV goes hand-in-hand with the social marginalization of sub-sectors of the populations delineated by poverty and ethnicity; the spread of the disease is exacerbated by multiple social and economic issues which plague many of the countries, including involvement in individual risky behaviors, unavailability of free testing and counseling, low awareness of benefits of testing and the requirement of parental consent, low perception of the risks of infection, social exclusion, violence and conflict with the law, migration, and segmented government health and social service systems.⁶⁴

Between 2003 and 2013, the incidence of sexually transmitted infections (gonorrhea and syphilis) among youth stayed the same or decreased for most E&E countries except Armenia and Serbia, which reported increases⁶⁵ (see Table 8). Moldova has the highest incidence rate: 164.2 per 100,000—more than twice as high as the next highest rate, which is in Belarus (76.3 per 100,000). Surveillance of the incidence of gonorrhea and syphilis and other sexually transmitted infections⁶⁶ is closely monitored throughout Europe but less so in the E&E countries; additionally because of similar transmission methods, data for HIV, gonorrhea, and syphilis are sometimes collected together; therefore making trends from the data difficult to discern. On the other hand, proximity of countries and openness of borders suggests that some generalizations across the region could be useful. For example, the European Center for Disease Prevention and Control (ECDC) reports in 2011 that the incidence of gonorrhea in member countries was increasing and that 40 percent of all gonorrhea cases were reported in individuals below 25 years of age.⁶⁷ For syphilis, incidence has decreased slightly to a low level and most frequent incidence occurs in individuals older than 25. Prevalence of both of these diseases occurs most frequently among men who have sex with men (MSM) and are often reported in conjunction with HIV rates.

60. UNAIDS, <http://www.unaids.org/en/dataanalysis/datatools/aidsinfo/>

61. UNICEF Media [http://www.unicef.org/partners/Partnership_profile_2012_HIV_CEECIS\(2\).pdf](http://www.unicef.org/partners/Partnership_profile_2012_HIV_CEECIS(2).pdf)

62. World Health Organization: Europe. *Europe's HIV response falls short in curbing the epidemic*. <http://www.euro.who.int/en/media-centre/sections/press-releases/2014/europes-hiv-response-falls-short-in-curbing-the-epidemic-80-more-new-hiv-cases-compared-to-2004>

63. UNICEF *Experiences from the Field*, 2013 <http://www.unicef.org/ceecis/ExperiencesFromTheField2013.pdf>

64. UNICEF Media http://www.unicef.org/ceecis/hiv_aids_27035.html

65. "TransMonEE 2013," Dataset (Geneva: UNICEF, 2013).

66. These include: Chlamydia, gonorrhea, Hepatitis B and C, HIV/AIDS, and syphilis.

67. European Center for Disease Prevention and Control. *Annual Epidemiological Report: Reporting on 2011 Surveillance Data and 2012 Epidemiological Intelligence Data*. 2013 <http://ecdc.europa.eu/en/publications/Publications/Annual-Epidemiological-Report-2013.pdf#page=55>

Table 8: Incidence of Gonorrhea and Syphilis among 15-19 Year Olds (per 100,000)

| Country | 2003 | 2013 |
|-----------------------|-------|-------------|
| Armenia | 9.1 | 73.6 |
| Azerbaijan | 10.1 | 5.3 |
| Belarus | 198.4 | 76.3 |
| Georgia | 55.9 | 43.2 (2011) |
| Republic of Macedonia | 0.0 | 0.0 |
| Moldova | 168.6 | 164.2 |
| Montenegro | 0.0 | 4.6 |
| Serbia | 2.2 | 4.6 |
| Ukraine | 145.8 | 33.7 |

Note: No data are available for Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, or Kosovo.

SOCIOCULTURAL NORMS FOR YOUTH IN E&E REGION

For the most part, youth in the E&E region experience similar norms in life transitions as those in OECD countries, at least in terms of marriage. Fairly low percentages of adolescent marriage exist for females, with the highest being in Azerbaijan (10%) and Georgia (11%)⁶⁸ (see Table 9). Even those are quite low compared to percentages in other geographic areas, which average 29 percent.

Table 9: Percentage of Married Females Ages 15-19 Years^{69,70}

| Country | Percent |
|------------------------|---------|
| Albania | 8 % |
| Armenia | 7 % |
| Azerbaijan | 10 % |
| Belarus | 4 % |
| Bosnia and Herzegovina | 7 % |
| Georgia | 11 % |
| Montenegro | 2 % |
| Serbia | 6 % |
| Ukraine | 6 % |

Note: No data are available for Kosovo, Republic of Macedonia, or Moldova.

In some E&E countries, a substantial number of female youth agree that instances of domestic violence between partners are justified.⁷¹ Table 10 shows the percentage of the female population 15 to 19 years old who consider that a husband has the right to hit or beat his wife for at least one of the following reasons: if his wife burns food, argues with him, goes out without telling him, neglects the children, or

68. UNICEF, *Progress for Children: A Report on Adolescents* (New York: UNICEF: 2012).

69. Data are averages for 2000–2010.

70. Data are for married adolescents or those in a permanent union.

71. UNICEF, *Progress for Children: A Report on Adolescents* (New York: UNICEF: 2012).

refuses sexual relations. The highest percentages are in Azerbaijan (39%), Albania (24%), and Armenia (22%), but these are still somewhat lower than in other regions (non-OECD countries), which average 56 percent.

Table 10: Percentage of Females Ages 15-19 Who Feel a Husband Is Justified in Hitting His Wife

| Country | Percent |
|------------------------|---------|
| Albania | 24 % |
| Armenia | 22 % |
| Azerbaijan | 39 % |
| Bosnia and Herzegovina | 4 % |
| Georgia | 5 % |
| Montenegro | 6 % |
| Serbia | 5 % |
| Ukraine | 3 % |

Note: No data are available for Belarus, Kosovo, Republic of Macedonia, or Moldova.

TECHNOLOGY AND SOCIAL NETWORKS

Access to and use of mobile devices (e.g., laptops, cell phones) among youth worldwide is growing at a rapid pace. While data are not available on the percentage of youth who access the Internet, “in all countries with data, a higher proportion of people under age 25 use the Internet than people over age 25.”⁷² Between 2008 and 2012, the number of Internet users increased in all countries with data. Many countries in the region reported significant increases⁷³ (see Table 11).

Table 11: Number of Internet Users of All Ages (per 100 people)

| Country | 2008 | 2012 |
|------------------------|------|------|
| Albania | 23.9 | 54.7 |
| Armenia | 6.2 | 39.2 |
| Azerbaijan | 17.1 | 54.2 |
| Belarus | 23 | 46.9 |
| Bosnia and Herzegovina | 34.7 | 65.4 |
| Georgia | 10 | 45.5 |
| Republic of Macedonia | 46 | 63.1 |
| Moldova | 23.4 | 43.4 |
| Montenegro | 32.9 | 56.8 |
| Serbia | 35.6 | 48.1 |

Note: No data are available for Kosovo or Ukraine.

72. UNICEF, *Progress for Children: A Report on Adolescents* (New York: UNICEF: 2012), p.11.

73. The World Bank, “World Bank Open Data,” Dataset (Washington, D.C.: World Bank, 2013).

Mobile cell phone use in the region has also increased. In 2012, most E&E countries had 100 percent coverage or nearly so (Bosnia and Herzegovina: 90% and Serbia: 93%).⁷⁴ Between 2008 and 2012, the largest increases in cell phone coverage were for Albania (+42%) and Armenia (+53%).

Internet and mobile phone technology give youth unprecedented access to information and resources, and social networking is a popular communication medium. Facebook is easily the most well-known social networking site available. The site allows users to communicate with each other on mobile devices and computers through the posting of messages and pictures. “Friends” who have similar interests can be sought out locally and around the world. “As of December 31, 2012, Facebook had 1.06 billion monthly active users and 618 million daily active users [globally].”⁷⁵ At this time, each of the E&E countries has a Facebook page.

74. Ibid World Bank 2013.

75. Bloomberg Businessweek, “Company Overview of Facebook,” *Bloomberg Businessweek* (2013).

GUIDANCE NOTE: YOUTH AND CIVIC ENGAGEMENT

INTRODUCTION

Elections and civic engagement are the foundations of democratic societies. No democracy can be said to exist without elections, but alone, elections provide citizens with only a limited opportunity to influence government and society. Even under the best of circumstances, elections typically provide voters only with choices between aggregated policy positions represented by individual politicians or parties. Civic engagement fills this gap in the foundation of democracy.

The definition of civic engagement depends on the context in which it is exercised, but a useful description would be: “participating to make a difference in the civic life of... communities and developing the combination of knowledge, skills, values and motivation to make that difference.... through both political and non-political processes.”⁷⁶

In both electoral and civic engagement, youth⁷⁷ face many of the same challenges facing other groups marginalized as a result of their ethnic, religious, gender, or other identities. In fact, in E&E countries, where formal legal equality among these other groups is generally the norm, youth may face greater formal barriers to participation than other marginalized groups, including age restrictions on voting and running for office, prohibitions on contracting, restrictions on work, national service requirements, etc. Practical barriers, such as limited financial resources, lack of personal freedom, and prejudice also negatively affect youth.

While some of the challenges youth face pass with time simply because they attain majority or life experience, youth as a cohort, however, continue to face the same challenges over time without the benefit of experienced leaders or a cohesive, motivated membership to call attention to their interests. The very factors that so often define youth: inexperience, dependency, powerlessness, also explain the lack of attention often given to youth concerns.

This lack of attention results in a missed opportunity, as adolescence is the developmental period when patterns of political participation are forming. Key social influences over democratic life, such as value formation, identity formation, and social engagement as an individual beyond the family, are developing intensely in this period. Positive civic and political engagement in this period can establish understanding and appreciation for the roles of these institutions in communal life. Conversely, negative or non-existent experience in political or civic processes during this developmental period can solidify alienation from the political and civic systems within a community.

In the E&E region, the process of developing lifelong democratic habits has reached a pivotal point. Although the E&E region has no youth demographic bulge, those citizens now in their early 20s are the vanguard of an entirely new and growing demographic that has never lived under the autocratic regimes that collapsed at the end of the 1980s and early 1990s. To be sure, this does not mean that youth in E&E countries live in fully democratic states. Indeed, by the Economist Intelligence Unit’s measure of democratic development,⁷⁸ the highest ranked countries of focus in this paper, Serbia and Moldova, are

76. Thomas Ehrlich, ed., *Civic Responsibility and Higher Education* (Westport CT: Oryx Press, 2000), vi.

77. “USAID uses the term youth and young people interchangeably and while youth development programs often focus on youth in the 15 to 24 year age range, USAID programs also are likely to engage individuals aged 10-29 as a broader youth cohort.” USAID, *Youth in Development, Realizing the Demographic Opportunity*, (Washington, D.C.: USAID, 2012), 4.

78. “Democracy Index 2014: Democracy and Its Discontents,” *Economist Intelligence Unit* (2015), accessed October 12, 2015, 5, 8.

“flawed” democracies which place no better than 56 and 69, respectively, out of the 167 states included in the survey. The lowest ranked states, Azerbaijan and Belarus, are categorized as “authoritarian” and are ranked at 148 and 125, respectively. Trust in governance is little better: the best performing E&E country in the Corruption Perceptions Index is Georgia, ranked at 50 of 175 countries and the worst, Ukraine, ranked at 142.⁷⁹ Performance on Freedom House’s index was similar.⁸⁰

But with youth born after the dissolution of the Soviet bloc attaining majority, a unique opportunity presents itself to positively affect democratic development in the E&E region. Youth want a voice in society. They want the ability to participate in their nation’s public life, hold leaders accountable (including a say in how public funds are spent), and enjoy the basic rights of freedom of speech and association.⁸¹ Their desire is mirrored by societal demands. Between the ages of 15 and 25, societies expect children to assume independence and begin taking on the responsibilities of adulthood: by finding paid employment, voting, engaging in national service (military or otherwise), attaining the right to contract, receiving adult treatment in the criminal justice system, etc. As civic participation during youth tends to carry over into adulthood, young people are better prepared for the increased civic engagement of adulthood if they have already participated in student governance, youth councils, scouting, sports, and other youth-oriented community activities.⁸² Supporting and facilitating such activities is a key to advancing democratic development and, perhaps more importantly, preventing democratic backsliding.

Without positive electoral and civic engagement experiences, youth may be disillusioned and disenchanted with what they see as ‘democracy’ and choose a more authoritarian future. A thought to keep in mind - democracies can decay as well as develop. The global trend is for governments to become more open and democratic, but individual governments can also slide back toward more authoritarian structures. Political scientists generally recognize three major global waves of democratization over the past 200 years. While each of these waves has left greater numbers of democracies after their peak than before, at their ebb, fewer democracies existed than at the peak.⁸³

BROADER ENVIRONMENTAL CONDITIONS IMPACTING YOUTH AND ELECTORAL AND CIVIC ENGAGEMENT

Two of the three expected outcomes of USAID’s *Youth in Development Policy* are directly related to electoral and civic engagement:

- 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.⁸⁴

The clearest barrier to youth participation in elections is voting eligibility and candidate eligibility. Voting eligibility vests at 18 years of age in all countries in the E&E region;⁸⁵ however considerable variation

79. “Corruption Perceptions Index, 2014,” *Transparency International* (2015), accessed October 12, 2015.

80. “Freedom in the World, 2015,” *Freedom House* (2015), accessed October 12, 2015.

81. Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono, Ellen Johnson Sirleaf, David Cameron, et al., *A New Global Partnership: Eradicate Poverty and Transform Economies Through Sustainable Development* (New York: United Nations, 2013), 2, 17.

82. Jean Fares, Varun Gauri, Emmanuel Y. Jimenez, et. al. *World Development Report 2007: Development and the Next Generation*, (Washington, D.C.: The International Bank for Reconstruction and Development/World Bank, 2006).

83. Samuel P. Huntington, “Democracy’s Third Wave,” *Journal of Democracy*, 2 (1991): 12-13.

84. USAID, *Youth in Development Policy: Realizing the Demographic Opportunity* (Washington, D.C.: USAID, 2012).

exists across the region on the minimum age at which individuals can run for office. This is evident in the differing ages of eligibility for election to the national legislature. Most of the E&E countries permit candidacy at 18 years old. However, Georgia and Belarus delay the age of eligibility to 21, and Armenia and Azerbaijan delay eligibility until 25 years of age.⁸⁶ However, these restrictions on voting and candidacy do not eliminate opportunities for electoral engagement during youth. Young people may participate in important electoral activities, including working on campaigns with parties or candidates, fundraising, providing public information on candidates, supporting voter registration and “get out the vote” activities, etc.

Civic engagement provides opportunities for young people to participate and have a voice in local and national institutions without any legal entanglements especially in contexts designed for young people such as schools. Schools can host robust student governments, school newspapers, blogs, sports clubs, debate teams, cultural societies, intern programs, and other time-tested methods of youth engagement while building linkages across ethnic, religious, gender, and other demographic lines.

Once the clearly-demarcated issues of voting and candidate eligibility are taken off the table, the line between electoral and broader civic engagement is rather vague. For example, during campaign season a student debate society might choose to debate party platforms, a student newspaper might make candidate endorsements, internship programs can be established within political parties, etc. These youth electoral activities should be viewed as a subset of broader civic engagement.

Opportunities for civic engagement among youth may differ most significantly between university students and non-students.⁸⁷ Electoral and civic engagement programs can take advantage of education institutions to support their programs; however, the ease with which university youth can be engaged creates a real danger of ignoring harder-to-reach young people who for one reason or another are not enrolled in tertiary education.

Non-student youth are further divided by employment status. By one ranking, Kosovo has the highest youth unemployment rate in the world, at 73 percent. Bosnia and Herzegovina, the Republic of Macedonia, Serbia, and Armenia closely follow within the top ten most affected countries with about half of their youth populations out of work.^{88,89} Ukraine is the best performer in the E&E region; however even in this case, youth unemployment is over 18 percent. Such high rates of unemployment are clearly problematic but represent a vast resource for civil society and political organizations which benefit from the energy and idealism of youth but have limited funds. For youth, participation in these organizations presents real opportunities to obtain valuable world experience of organizing, writing, and advocating. Supporting such participation is relatively inexpensive.

Broad *de jure* equality is common in E&E but does not always translate into actual or *de facto* equality. In some instances, electoral and civic participation is limited because of the use of official but not universal languages as in Georgia, where a significant portion of the population does not speak Georgian. Similarly

85. ACE Electoral Knowledge Network, “Voting Age,” *ACE Electoral Knowledge Network* (n.d.), accessed December 4, 2013.

86. ACE Electoral Knowledge Network, “Registration Requirements for Candidates (Chamber 1),” *ACE Electoral Knowledge Network* (n.d.), accessed December 4, 2013.

87. United States Central Intelligence Agency, “Field Listing: School Life Expectancy (Primary to Tertiary Education),” *The World Factbook, 2013-2014* (n.d.), accessed January 16, 2014.

88. United States Central Intelligence Agency, “Country Comparison: Unemployment, Youth Ages 15-24,” *The World Factbook, 2013-2014* (n.d.), accessed January 16, 2014.

89. These numbers do not agree with the data provided in Table 5: Youth Unemployment Rates. Definitions and parameters of unemployment are used differently among databases.

in Kosovo, election information and ballots have not consistently been available in Serbian, leading to abysmal voter turnout in 2013 elections and disenfranchising many youth newly eligible to vote.

The recent trend in E&E has been to professionalize military service and end conscription; currently more than half the E&E countries still conscript young men, generally beginning at age 18, for periods of one to two years.⁹⁰ Requirements of the military service limit opportunities for these young people to participate in election and civic engagement activities (aside from voting).⁹¹ In countries with longer electoral cycles, such as Moldova, where national elections happen every four years, a conscripted 18 year old youth's first opportunity to engage in election-related activities may be delayed until well into his early 20s.

STRATEGIES AND SUPPORTS FOR ACTIVITIES RELATED TO ELECTIONS AND CIVIC ENGAGEMENT FOR YOUTH

Elections and civic engagement are usually clearly distinguishable activities but programming should be designed and implemented to recognize the natural relationship between the two. Civic engagement activities, such as community activist training, civil society organization strengthening, and legislative monitoring, share commonalities with similar electoral activities such as political party activist training, party development, and election monitoring. Electoral reform happens in the same way as other types of government reform; voter registration drives and candidate signature collection have much in common with civic action campaigns and petition drives. Young people should be encouraged to move between both types of activities and view their participation in either area as part of their broader public life.

Electoral activities and civic engagement have complementary strengths when youth are involved. Electoral activities require massive mobilization of people; the attention and funding often directed at major elections can provide a gateway for large numbers of motivated youth to learn about and later participate in broader work in civic engagement. By creating awareness of the relationship between community issues and government, civic engagement projects can kindle an interest in politics and a greater involvement in electoral activities. Separate programming may be run by different organizations in each area but the natural synergies created by motivating youth in either area should be recognized and encouraged through cross-implementer communication and coordination. This can include sharing program participant contact lists and cross-publicizing programming.

Both electoral and civic engagement activities can benefit from effective application of the explosion of available information and mobile computing as well as the growing variety of interpersonal networking technologies. Within the E&E region, UNICEF Kosovo's Innovations Lab directly targets youth, uniting these threads together by providing small grants to technical innovators in electoral and civic engagement and holding debates and trainings.⁹² Globally, the Making All Voices Count initiative is working on similar issues although it is not limited to youth.⁹³

Both election activities and civic engagement can benefit from the following strategies and supports:

90. United States Central Intelligence Agency, "Field Listing: Military Service Age and Obligation," *The World Factbook, 2013-2014* (n.d.), accessed January 16, 2014.

91. See, for example the Election Code of the Republic of Albania, Article 63.4(c), December 29, 2008, as amended July 19, 2012 at <http://www.osce.org/albania/14464> (accessed February 27, 2014), prohibiting the candidacy of members of the military in active service; Electoral Code of the Republic of Armenia, Article 18.6(2), May 26, 2011, prohibiting military personnel from disseminating any type of campaign material; and the Election Code of Georgia, Article 39.4(f), December 27, 2011, prohibiting staff of the Ministry of Defense from becoming electoral observers.

92. Homepage, *Innovations Lab Kosovo* (n.d.), accessed January 10, 2014.

93. Homepage, *Making All Voices Count* (n.d.), accessed January 10, 2014.

Facilitate consultation with youth: USAID already supports broad consultation in civil society on electoral reform, bridging the gap between civic engagement and elections. For example, IFES Georgia’s *Increased Trust in the Electoral Process* hosted civil society roundtables on electoral reform including support to the Georgian Young Lawyers Association.⁹⁴ On another occasion, at least one of the projects’ young civic education alumni attended a conference on disability rights in elections, illustrating an example of bringing youth into any aspect of civic engagement.

Develop youth leadership: As experienced leaders age out of the youth demographic, young people are often left without effective leaders. While not focusing exclusively on youth, political party activist training, often implemented in the E&E region by the National Democratic Institute (NDI), has been an effective way to train youth leaders.⁹⁵ The International Republican Institute is also an important player in youth development in the E&E region and runs a Youth Leadership Development project offering workshops and cross-cultural exchanges among youth in Belarus⁹⁶ and a similar program in Georgia.⁹⁷ Junior Achievement has run several similar programs across the E&E region targeting youth; the final report on Junior Achievement’s Bulgaria program found participants had improved key leadership skills such as confidence, communication, teamwork, and decision-making.⁹⁸ Counterpart International supports 4I Youth and Community Action Centers throughout Armenia to help young people advocate for issues they believe are important.⁹⁹

Promote and support civic education targeted at youth: Civic education can take a variety of forms, from essay contests for high school students as recently implemented by *Strengthening Election Administration in Kosovo (SEAK II)*, or creation of a Democracy and Citizenship Handbook for university students in Georgia (*Increased Trust in the Electoral Process*) for use in courses in 21 universities. IFES’ *Electoral Administration Capacity Development* program in Moldova launched a voter education campaign pinned, in part, on a hip-hop remake of a traditional folk song.¹⁰⁰ Civics.ge is an online portal to promote greater civic engagement among young people in Georgia and to expand and institutionalize secondary school civic education curricula through practical applications with support for teachers and parents.¹⁰¹

Facilitate youth participation in organizations: Young people can provide key assistance in many organizations where their numbers, energy, and time are key assets. In exchange for valuable work experience and better understanding of what is needed to make democracy function, youth can provide the ‘people power’ that make possible key democratic activities such as media monitoring, election observation, and legislative observation. Legislatures, political parties, and CSOs all benefit from interns who can supplement often minimal staff.

Build bridges among groups of youth: Encouraging the development of youth groups based upon interests rather than ethnicity, religion, gender or language can help set a pattern of non-sectarian

94. International Foundation for Electoral Systems (IFES), “IFES Convenes Fifth Civil Society Roundtable on Electoral Reform” (Washington, D.C.: IFES, 2013), accessed January 20, 2014.

95. National Democratic Institute (NDI), “Regional Political Party Initiative” (Washington, D.C.: NDI, n.d.).

96. International Republican Institute (IRI), *Belarus Overview* (Washington, D.C.: IRI, 2013).

97. International Republican Institute (IRI), *Georgia Overview* (Washington, D.C.: IRI, 2013).

98. Aleksandar Nenkovic, Alma Kospiri, and Kalina Vanova, *Evaluation of Junior Achievement Bulgaria: Final Report* (Washington, D.C.: USAID, 2005).

99. Counterpart International, “Youth Community Action Centers” (Yerevan, Armenia: Counterpart International, n.d.), accessed February 10, 2014.

100. Maxim Tsurkan, *Lume-Lume-Soro-Lume-Cover*, Video, performed by Maxim Turksan (2011), Youtube.

101. USAID and PH International. Civics.ge website. (Tbilisi: PH International, n.d.). accessed October 14, 2015.

interaction among young people and empathy for and understanding of others. As youth mature, they will bring this interest-based approach to their electoral and civic engagement, producing an approach based on a common issue rather than an identity-group approach. NDI's regional Roma initiative is designed to bring Roma and non-Roma youth together by forming youth clubs, tutoring, and holding sporting events. These sorts of efforts encourage mainstream political parties to ensure that issues of importance to Roma are included in their political strategies.¹⁰² In Kosovo, NDI supports programs bringing together Albanian and Serbian youth for community development, debate clubs, and public awareness campaigns.¹⁰³

KEY CONSIDERATIONS FOR USAID MISSION STAFF

In developing programming for youth in elections and civic engagement, USAID should consider:

1. Does the programming recognize the transitory nature of youth?

Programming in other sectors can often assume increasing capacity of the target audience, but youth programming must consider that new people are constantly joining the group and trained, experienced people are constantly leaving the group. Creating age appropriate ladders within programs for youth to progress into leadership roles is a useful way of channeling and retaining increased capacity while delaying departure.

2. Does the programming reach across the various fissures that subdivide youth?

Programming need not address all of these issues but design should consider multiple youth demographics of gender, ethnicity, religion, language, age, employment, and schooling status.

3. Does the programming develop leadership skills?

A willingness to participate, and often to lead, in political and civic organizations are keys to elections and civic engagement.

4. Does the programming develop critical thinking and communication skills?

Effective election and civic engagement requires abilities to analyze facts, construct arguments, and persuade others. However, a good argument in itself is insufficient without understanding how to communicate that idea, whether face to face, or using some mode of media.

5. Does the programming develop empathy?

A well-constructed, logical argument is useful in elections and civic engagement. Going deeper to understand the ideas, goals, values, and fears of others in society assists in creation of coalitions across demographic and political divides, and can narrow areas of conflict. Bridge-building programming can be especially useful at developing empathy.

6. Does civic education programming develop both knowledge as well as political skills?

Civic education in its most austere form provides youth with an understanding of the structure of government. However, democracy demands more than just learning about government structures; understanding the influence of those structures is critical.

7. Does the programming facilitate youth participation in decision-making on important issues?

Facilitation of youth participation can create a positive model for inclusive decision-making, a central component of a democratic governance system.

102. National Democratic Institute (NDI), "Regional Roma Initiative" (Washington, D.C.: NDI, n.d.), accessed January 10, 2014.

103. National Democratic Institute (NDI), "Kosovo," (Washington, D.C.: NDI, n.d.), accessed December 4, 2013.

ORGANIZATIONS

Youthpolicy.org, <http://www.youthpolicy.org/>.

ACE: The Electoral Knowledge Network, <http://aceproject.org/>.

Youth Initiative for Human Rights, <http://www.yihr.org/en>.

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GUIDANCE NOTE: YOUTH AND EDUCATION

INTRODUCTION

For the E&E countries, transition to a market economy in the last twenty years has completely changed the context relative to human resource development policies and implementation. The restructuring of the economy and dissolution of large state enterprises lead to alarming levels of unemployment with serious implications on the social and economic status quo. Systems of preparation of youth to participate in the world of employment had to undergo significant and necessary re-alignment to meet the needs of a demand-driven market. As current populations in the Europe and Eurasia region age and decline, ensuring that youth receive the skills and knowledge they need to take their place as future workers and leaders in the region is critical for national and regional cohesion, development, and individual identity and self-fulfillment.

In the E&E region, the most compelling story of youth and education takes place at the upper secondary level. This sector sheet takes a closer look at the issues of quality and access of upper secondary programs of technical vocational education and general academic programs, discussing the relationship between their current status and the commensurate ability of youth to gain valuable knowledge and skills for employment. Additionally, an examination is made of some of the strategies and supports currently in place and actors involved in the process to modernize education systems, making them more responsive to youth needs. A checklist of issues is provided for consideration in the design and development of sound education and training programs for youth. Additionally, relevant resources and organizations are listed to serve as references for deeper understanding and perspectives on program design.

BROADER ENVIRONMENTAL CONDITIONS IMPACTING YOUTH AND EDUCATION

In this era of globalization, the development and growth of countries around the world depend on performance of their education and training systems, and specifically their VET [vocational education and training]¹⁰⁴ subsystems. To put into perspective the coordination required between education and training systems resulting in skills development for decent jobs, three categories are noted here of necessary skills and contexts in which they can be acquired:

- *Foundation skills:* At the most basic level is literacy and numeracy, the prerequisites for further education, training, and acquisition of transferable knowledge and skills. Completion of primary and lower secondary education is critical to ensure development these skills.
- *Transferrable skills:* Addressing a broad range of skills that can be transferred and adapted to different work needs and environments examples of which include communication, analysis, creativity, and leadership. These are fostered in quality secondary education programs and to some extent outside of the school environment.
- *Technical and vocational skills:* These are specific technical skills and knowledge linked to identified work categories. These can be acquired through targeted delivery in work placement programs linked to secondary education and formal technical and vocational education or work-based training.¹⁰⁵

104. VET (vocational education and training) is the European version of the commonly-known U.S. nomenclature: TVET, technical-vocational education and training.

105. UNESCO. *Global Monitoring Report: Youth and skills, putting education to work.* (Paris: UNESCO, 2012).

Vocational education programs in the E&E region operate under multiple challenges which during the past twenty years have decreased their appeal as educational options for young people. Critiques of education policy note the poor integration of programming across levels of the system, particularly at the post-secondary level. On a review of the progress of Armenia's vocational education and training reforms, the European Training Foundation notes, "The first problem is quality, then transparency, [and] mobility between high schools and vocational schools, between high schools and universities."¹⁰⁶ Others point out the classroom routines of rote learning and memorization at the expense of critical thinking, problem solving, 'hands-on' learning, and teamwork that affect the preparation youth need for the modern economy.¹⁰⁷

Historically, as many less academically-capable students have ended up in the vocational education track in upper secondary school, it has become known as the 'second chance' option for less-privileged students (as in Armenia and Moldova).¹⁰⁸ Additionally, in many countries, participation in the vocational education stream does not allow students the opportunity to continue or re-enter alternative post-primary education at a later date and, therefore, VET has also become known as the 'dead-end' option, the education of last chance attended by individuals from socially disadvantaged groups.

Quality of vocational education programs is an issue. Old-fashioned vocational profiles and a lack of sufficient training and skills development leave young graduates poorly prepared for the job market. The mismatch of skills between TVET programs and the demands of national labor markets is often cited throughout the E&E region as a crucial weakness of vocational programs (as in Azerbaijan, Belarus, and Montenegro). The mismatch may go either way – under-qualification as well as over-qualification. As an example, the Labor and Employment Agency of Bosnia-Herzegovina reported that the largest share of registered unemployment was among youth with three-year vocational education degrees (i.e., 'skilled manpower') at 35 percent; unskilled labor had 32 percent employment.¹⁰⁹

Wider public awareness about VET remains low and institutions have limited resources available to provide information and career guidance to school students and adults. Out-dated infrastructure, weak governance, poor teacher professional development, poor monitoring, assessment, and data collection practices, and inadequate financing all contribute to poorly-performing education and training systems. The juncture between basic education (at grades 8/9) and the beginning of upper secondary education where the students (or the schools) make final decisions about which educational stream (academic or vocational) will be followed is a critical transition point in the education career of youth. Completion of compulsory education (grades one to eight/nine) coupled with the prospect of attending poor quality vocational training appears to convince many young people to leave school at this point.

The need to address training requirements of early school-leavers, long-term unemployed with decaying skills, and adults who are semi-skilled or have outdated skills is a critical issue in the face of a rapidly-changing job market. Non-formal and in-formal education programs exist in all the countries to address these needs and are often identified as 'adult education' programs in sector policies; they are not as often listed as training options for 'out-of-school' youth. The validation of these programs within national training systems is variously accepted by governments despite strong support of the Council of Europe to validate and accredit non-formal and in-formal programs.¹¹⁰ The Ministry of Education in

106. Interview with Milena Corradini, ETF Country Manager for Armenia in 'Vocational education and training reforms in Armenia.' 25 December 2010, <http://eunewsletter.am/eu-armenia/vocational-education-and-training-reforms-in-armenia>

107. UNICEF (2009) *Country Profile: Education in Serbia*. http://www.unicef.org/ceecis/Serbia_2010.pdf

108. Corradini, M. (n.d.) *Education and Business Study: Armenia*. Torino, Italy: European Training Foundation (ETF).

109. Labor and Employment Agency of Bosnia-Herzegovina (2009) *Youth (Un)employment in Bosnia-Herzegovina*, powerpoint presentation, European Union, Brdo, Slovenia.

110. http://www.coe.int/t/dg4/youth/Source/Resources/PR_material/2012_Compndium_Non-Formal_Education_text_en.pdf

Bosnia-Herzegovina notes, “This area of education obviously does not have a visible strategic status and is not recognized as an area of education that is of vital importance for the present and future of the country.”¹¹¹ On the other hand, the Montenegrin government notes in its VET Strategy, “Certifying vocational qualifications enables people with a lower level of education, unemployed persons and early drop-outs to obtain basic vocational qualification (for the first occupation) or to obtain different qualification through re-training and additional training.”¹¹² Validation and coordination of non-formal and informal training services with formal education systems need to be critically examined from the potential they have of offering a range of qualification types for different needs (young first-time job-holders, adult re-training, long-term unemployed, etc.) and presentation options (as examples, flexible delivery, learner access, and simpler assessment).¹¹³

With the exception of Azerbaijan, Serbia, and Ukraine,¹¹⁴ most countries included in this study have recently updated education sector plans which include a strong focus on increased upper secondary and vocational education enrollment and quality. Some countries, for example Armenia, Georgia, and Montenegro, have recently developed new comprehensive stand-alone TVET strategies. With only minor contextual differences, objectives in both national education and TVET strategies are similar to those found in the Kosovo Education Strategic Plan¹¹⁵ noted here:

- Developing and supporting an inclusive system of education enabling equitable access to quality education;
- Developing child/friendly school environments [including teacher professional development and revised curricula];
- Developing and expanding upper secondary schooling;
- Improving the quality of teaching and learning and promoting quality learning outcomes by defining and helping learners learn what they need to learn and teaching them how to learn;
- Restructuring of secondary education and promoting vocational education and training;
- Aligning more closely education and employment, including the development of tertiary, vocational education and training in response to labor market demand;
- Developing information and communication technology (ICT) in all levels and all groups of education.

While strategies are comprehensive and well-articulated, it remains to be seen how progressive countries are in moving from the rhetoric of the plans to actions in schools. The absence of external assessment severely limits ability to objectively evaluate student achievement, affecting comparability at local, regional, and national levels, and ultimately hindering development of compensatory programs to meet the specific needs of youth across diverse regions and social groups. As noted by UNICEF, accurate statistics on youth unemployment are notoriously difficult to come by and aside from measures of learning outcomes, little data are available as the basis to inform programming decisions.¹¹⁶ Despite stated intentions, decentralization of relevant education delivery options is hindered by lack of resources, capacity, and political will; in most E&E countries, education management remains for the

111. Ministry of Education, Bosnia-Herzegovina (2007) *Strategy for Development of Vocational Education and Training in Bosnia-Herzegovina for the Period of 2007-2013*.

112. Ministry of Education Montenegro (2010-2014) *Montenegrin Vocational Education Development Strategy*.

113. European Training Foundation (2013) *Making Better Vocational Qualifications: Vocational Qualifications System Reforms in ETF Partner Countries*. Torino, Italy.

114. These countries however, appear to have comprehensive legal and normative frameworks in place to guide the strengthened focus on TVET provision.

115. Ministry of Education Science, and Technology, Republic of Kosovo (2011) *Kosovo Education Strategic Plan, 2011-2016*.

116. UNICEF (2011) *The Right of Roma Children to Education*. Geneva, Switzerland.

most part, centrally administered. Education and TVET strategies appear to have little space or place for input from youth voices.

STRATEGIES AND SUPPORTS FOR ACTIVITIES RELATED TO EDUCATION AND YOUTH

Synchronizing education and training systems to produce well-qualified youth to enter the labor market benefits from increased understanding and cross-fertilization among multiple players: representatives from the labor force, economies (globally, regionally/nationally, and locally), education and training, youth, and parents. The reform of vocational education programs benefit from the following strategies:

- *Alignment of stakeholders' views on quality:* reaching a common interpretation and acceptance of chosen quality definitions for education and training achievement among stakeholders at national level;
- *Alignment of policies and procedures:* ensuring that shared visions, stakeholder collaboration, data systems and supports, and professional development of VET staff all lead to the same point;
- *Alignment of sector policies:* ensuring that TVET, economic development, labor force development, and youth policies resonate together to produce a coordinated approach to education and training;
- *Alignment of TVET around evidence-based decision-making:* using evidence from public and private entities as the basis for change and improvement of programs.¹¹⁷

Countries in the E&E region receive extensive support from an active and forward-thinking youth community of practice under the auspices of the European Union (EU). European Union integration or minimally close cooperation is a goal shared by all of the governments in the selected E&E countries in order to expand markets, increase national and regional stability, and ease mobility of youth across borders for work and study. Toward this end, the EU supports development of a common platform for the production of well-trained youth who can supply labor demands across Europe. EU guidelines for VET development assist the E&E countries through sharing of effective practices in development and design of vocational education and training programs and set high standards for development of effective secondary and vocational education programs.

Through a partnership with the Council of Europe (CoE), the EU reviews youth policies and youth work in the countries of South East Europe, Eastern Europe and the Caucasus, investing in research to promote development of evidence-based policy on youth in Europe. The CoE-EU youth partnership hosts seminars on youth policy for member states to share good practices and review the status of youth development efforts in the region. The European Union maintains an active youth website which provides advice and resources for university financial aid, volunteer opportunities and traineeships to build the youth community in the region.¹¹⁸ The Council of Europe is spear-heading an effort to get non-formal education and learning of employment and citizenship skills of youth validated and recognized through delivery at European youth centers.¹¹⁹

The European Commission, a regional agency under the EU, is the focal point for the Education and Training component of the pan-Europe 2020 strategy which focuses on four education areas: schools, vocational education and training, higher education, and adult education. The Commission is in the

117. Galvao, M. E. (2014) 'Making the Case for Vocational Education and Training Improvement: Issues and Challenges.' In European Training Foundation (2014) *Quality Assurance in Vocational Education and Training*.

[http://www.qualificationsplatform.net/webatt.nsf/0/270970490A6E9327C1257CA800407038/\\$file/Quality%20assurance%20in%20VET.pdf](http://www.qualificationsplatform.net/webatt.nsf/0/270970490A6E9327C1257CA800407038/$file/Quality%20assurance%20in%20VET.pdf)

118. http://europa.eu/eu-life/education-training/index_en.htm

119. http://www.coe.int/t/dg4/youth/Source/Resources/PR_material/2012_Compndium_Non-Formal_Education_text_en.pdf

process of developing a “Youth Guarantee” policy in which EU countries (and potentially accession countries as well) commit to ensure that youth under age 25 receive an offer of employment, further education, an apprenticeship, or internship within four months of leaving school or losing a job.¹²⁰ Commitment to this document will pressure members to proactively improve education and training systems and employment opportunities and processes. The EC is also an avid supporter of social inclusion and has been a leader for example, in the current European movement to expand inclusion and services to Roma populations. A recent publication on the Agency’s website, “Monitoring Good Practices in the Areas of Employment, Social Affairs, and Inclusion,” provides guidance for inclusion of marginalizes populations in education and employment efforts.¹²¹

All countries within the scope of this paper actively support the Bologna Process (in the purview of the EU under the Higher Education Policy section) which supports creation of a common and coherent system of the European Higher Education Area (EHEA). The objective is to foster student mobility and employability within member countries by the development of aligned university systems with comparable degrees, cycles, and credits systems. Members receive quality assurance guidance and programming advice leading to standardized and stronger upper secondary education delivery.¹²²

Donors, particularly European state agencies, for the most part support individual programs for the improvement of formal education and training systems in Eastern Europe and Central Asia. These are designed to produce good practices that host countries can use as models for greater national expansion and input to strengthen policy guidance. Other donors have funded various initiatives supporting youth at different points in their education and employment careers as well as discrete programs for targeted populations of youth (out-of-school, disabled, refugees, Roma, and unemployed). Youth organizations are active in each of the select countries but assessing their agency in sponsoring or inputting to education and training programs is difficult as they are highly dependent on outside funding sources to do so. Additionally, centralized education systems are difficult obstacles for youth organizations to make inroads to. Several projects are profiled here, providing examples of the types of support that have successfully involved and supported youth in the quest for training and effective employment.

Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC): “From School to Work”: Vocational Education and Training for Albania’s Youth

The SDC partnered with the Albanian formal vocational education and training system with the goal of making vocational training more responsive to the needs of the labor market. Efforts focused on several components including modernization of occupational training courses in 21 categories, renovation of schools, up-dating of curricula, and training of vocational teachers. Training modules consisted of theoretical and practical training followed by a year-long traineeship. The practical components of the modules were highly regarded by Albanians students as they allowed them hands-on experience which transferred easily into real jobs. Through the project, the Swiss agency was able to reach forty percent of the occupational training sector in the country. Of two hundred yearly-enrolled trainees, 70 percent of graduates find jobs on completion compared to the national average of 20 percent.

120. <http://ec.europa.eu/social/main.jsp?langld=en&catld=22>

121. European Commission (2014) *Monitoring good practices in the areas of employment, social affairs, and inclusion*. <http://ec.europa.eu/social/main.jsp?catld=738&langld=en&publd=7727&furtherPubs=yes>

122. Expansion to twelve grades of formal education in Central and Eastern Europe and Commonwealth of Independent States countries has been partly due to a strong recommendation of the Bologna Process to do so.

USAID: Kosovo: Young Entrepreneurs Program (YEP), 2010-2013

USAID worked within selected market areas, engaging employers and other stakeholders to bring together resources, skills, and policies to build a sustainable system of support for out-of-school and out-of-work young people. Using a system of grants and skills training, YEP supported young people to consider starting their own businesses through participation in Entrepreneurship Skill Development Workshops. By the end of the project, 363 grants to young entrepreneurs had been approved and 2,683 youth achieved new or better employment. The project supported young people in their own home towns and regions to increase local businesses. YEP worked closely with other USAID projects in the economic growth and agriculture sectors enabling integration

International Youth Foundation (IYF): Passport to Success, Global

The IYF program was a work-readiness and service-learning curriculum for young people, aged 14 to 24. The program provided them with skills to assist them to stay in school and acquire the education, profession skills, employment readiness, and confidence to succeed in life and the workplace. Vulnerable youth at-risk or already out of school, out of work, or working in dangerous environments were targeted. A 60-module life skills curriculum was developed focusing on personal development, problem solving, healthy lifestyles, workplace success, service learning, and entrepreneurship skills for profession growth. With assistance, participants developed a career plan to guide them to a productive future. The curriculum was used in formal school systems in Poland, Hungary, and Russia among other countries. At program end, 97 percent of program graduates in Mexico and 86 percent in India were in school or employed six months after program completion.

USAID: Republic of Macedonia: Youth Employability Skills (YES) Network, 2010-2015

USAID targeted students in general and vocational secondary schools, registered unemployed youth, and other out-of-school youth (ages 15-27) in Strumica, Stip, Bitola, Prilep, Gostivar, Tetovo, and Skopje to help them gain skills relevant to their local economies. In six municipalities, the project re-established the job club in each of the local ESA Employment Centers, and established Career Centers in 25 secondary schools. Over 3,000 students enrolled in courses on employment preparation and work experience as elective courses at the Vocational Education and Training. USAID also helped establish Local Economic and Social Councils (LESCs) and build the capacity of the LESCs to conduct local labor market analyses and develop local employment plans. Finally, USAID worked with the Ministry of Education and Science to develop competence-based standards for professional school Career Advisors.

In 1998, USAID conducted an extensive study of TVET and workforce development programs to assess effective program strategies. The study concluded that successful youth workforce programs appeared to have nine characteristics in common.¹²³ Their applicability to current needs in workforce development and TVET programming hasn't diminished with age. They offer sound advice for

123. Cited in Airang, M. and R. DePietro-Jurand (2012) *Technical and Vocational Education and Training*. Education Development Center: USAID Equip3. <http://www.equip123.net/docs/e3-TVET.pdf>

improvement of education and training provision in E&E countries to meet the training and future employment needs of youth.

1. *Leadership and accountability*: Shared underlying philosophies, values, and strategies ensure all stakeholders are ‘on the same page’ with the program and working toward the same goal.
2. *Demand-driven design*: Programs should be aligned with local, national, and regional needs to be contextually grounded and applicable.
3. *Open access*: Transparent entry criteria ensure access and inclusion of all participants, particularly for those often excluded from training and employment options.
4. *Portable skills*: Skills should be portable across geographic boundaries and occupations for mobility across and access to employment locations.
5. *Continuous improvement*: On-going measurement and evaluation ensure maintenance of quality and targeted response to labor market fluctuations.
6. *Public-private partnerships (PPP)*: PPPs bring together resources from demand side (employers) and supply side (learners) leading to the most sustainable approaches to workforce development initiatives.
7. *Sustainable financing*: Multiple and flexible financing sources (i.e. stakeholders) enables response to diverse funding circumstances.
8. *Replicability*: Identification of factors aligned with national needs, social mores, and labor laws allows for expansion of good practices.
9. *Economic and social impact*: Programs need to contribute to economic growth and democratic processes in order to be successful, i.e. benefit youth who participate in the programs.

KEY CONSIDERATIONS FOR USAID MISSION STAFF

USAID Mission staff should consider the following questions when developing programs to meet the education and training needs of youth in the E&E region. Mission programmatic priorities complemented by results of the youth analysis will determine which of the goals of the USAID Education Strategy are most relevant to improve education and training experiences for youth. Responsive program design assists youth to attain success in skills acquisition and employment.

1. What national sector policies (e.g. education, TVET, youth, higher education) are in place to guide implementation of youth-focused programming? Are they aligned across programming so they all support the same vision of success for young people?
2. What are the most pressing issues that constrain youth from progressing successfully between education levels and from education and training opportunities to employment?
3. What specific populations are most impacted by education constraints?
4. How well integrated are non-formal and formal service providers/programs to facilitate validation/certification and progression of youth across education levels and programs?
5. What mechanism/s is in place to enable all stakeholders (government officials, educators, employers, private sector, etc.) input to the design and development of relevant quality education and training programs? What specific options do youth have to input to program design and planning?

6. What process is in place to develop a vocational education qualifications and certifications framework that meets local, national, and regional standards?
7. How are the education and labor sectors aligned to ensure effective communication and coordination across policies leading to effective school-to-work flows?
8. What monitoring processes are in place to ensure collection and use of relevant data? How often are programs assessed and re-adjusted to ensure current relevance and applicability?

Information to respond to these questions will be collected from analysis of existing data sources, interviews with key stakeholders at all levels of the education system, employers and other stakeholders, and surveys and focus group interviews with youth and parents. Information collection will need to be sensitive to the different languages and communication styles of diverse populations to ensure that all individuals are equally represented in the assessment. After an appropriate strategy has been identified, program designers should construct a results framework to identify and map expected outcomes, checking back with relevant stakeholders to verify the veracity of the design. Several of the resources listed in the following section offer guidance to the design and planning of quality education and training programs for youth.

ORGANIZATIONS

European Training Foundation (ETF): http://www.qualificationsplatform.net/web.nsf/pages/What_we_do

European Youth Forum: <http://www.youthforum.org/>

International Youth Foundation: <http://iyfnet.org/young-entrepreneur-india-designs-her-own-future>

UNESCO-UNEVOC: <http://www.unevoc.unesco.org/go.php>

YouthBuild: <http://youthbuildinternational.org/>

RESOURCES

Aring, M. and R. DePietro-Jurand (2012) *Technical and Vocational Education and Training*. Education Development Center: USAID Equip3.

<http://www.equip123.net/webarticles//anviewer.asp?a=600&z=123>

Engel, J. (2012) *Review of Policies to strengthen skills-employment linkages for marginalized young people*. UNESCO: Background paper prepared for the Education for All Global Monitoring Report.

Equip3. *Lessons Learned: Experiences in Livelihoods, Literacy, and Leadership in Youth Programs in 26 Countries*. Washington D.C.: Education Development Center, USAID.

<http://idd.edc.org/sites/idd.edc.org/files/EQUIP3%20Lessons%20Learned%20-%20Book.pdf>

Fawcett, C., G. El Sawi, and C. Allison (2014) *TVET Models, Structures, and Policy Reforms: Evidence from the Europe and Eurasia Region*. http://pdf.usaid.gov/pdf_docs/pa00jzsw.pdf

Mourshed, M., D. Farrell, and D. Barton (2012) *Education to Employment: Designing a system that works*. McKinsey Center for Government. www.mckinsey.com/mcg

OECD (2014) *Skills Beyond School: Synthesis Report*, OECD Reviews of Vocational Education and Training, OECD Publishing. <http://www.oecd.org/edu/skills-beyond-school/oecdpolicyreviewsofvocationaleducationandtrainingvet.htm>

Sondergaard, L. and M. Murthi (2012) *Skills, Not just diplomas: Managing education for results in Eastern Europe and Central Asia*. Washington D.C.: The World Bank.

World Bank: *Stepping up Skills for More Jobs and Higher Productivity*. Retrieved from <http://web.worldbank.org/WBSITE/EXTERNAL/TOPICS/EXTEDUCATION/0,,contentMDK:22640776~menuPK:282391~pagePK:148956~piPK:216618~theSitePK:282386,00.html>

GUIDANCE NOTE: YOUTH & EMPLOYMENT

INTRODUCTION

According to the International Labor Organization's (ILO) *Global Employment Trends for Youth 2013*, "the global youth unemployment rate, estimated at 12.6 percent in 2013, is close to its crisis peak."¹²⁴ During the same year, data show that 73 million youth aged 15–24 were unemployed. This is a full percentage point higher than the 2008 pre-crisis level, with some developing countries hitting as high as 26 percent youth unemployment. Even in developed countries, youth are disproportionately becoming unemployed.

Registered youth unemployment rates reported in the 2015 TransMonEE database for E&E countries served by USAID vary widely from 9.8 percent in Armenia to almost 22 percent in Montenegro and Moldova.¹²⁵ Other reports which may account for unregistered unemployment show much higher rates per country, such as 22 percent in Albania¹²⁶ and 36 percent in Republic of Macedonia.¹²⁷ Youth in the E&E region encounter challenges similar to those of other young people around the globe in securing and retaining stable employment. Stagnant economic growth, skills mismatches, political uncertainty, and recovery from previous conflicts are some of the reasons finding meaningful formal employment has been difficult.¹²⁸

This sector sheet examines the details behind youth employment challenges in the E&E region as well as strategies currently in place to support young people in seeking stable employment and business opportunities. A checklist of issues to consider when developing youth workforce and livelihoods programs in the region are provided along with a list of relevant youth-serving organizations. Links to key resource documents and websites on the topic are also made available.

BROADER ENVIRONMENTAL CONDITIONS IMPACTING YOUTH AND EMPLOYMENT

The Youth Employment Network (YEN), a partnership between the UN, ILO, and the World Bank, highlights the following global trends in youth employment that are also reflective of issues in the E&E region:¹²⁹

- Youth make up 25 percent of the global working-age population, yet their share in total unemployment is currently about 44 percent;
- Youth are more than three times as likely to be unemployed as adults;
- Insufficient employment opportunities mean that youth are more likely to be employed in part-time, seasonal, or informal jobs that pay very low wages;

124. International Labour Organization, *Global Employment Trends 2013* (Geneva: ILO, 2013), 1.

125. TransMonEE. 2015 Dataset (Geneva: UNICEF, 2015). The [Transformative Monitoring for Enhanced Equity](#) (TransMonEE) No data provided for Kosovo, Georgia, or Bosnia and Herzegovina. Rates are for registered unemployed 15-24 year olds.

126. The World Bank, "Standing on Their Own: Youth Employment Opportunities in Albania," *World Bank* (2013).

127. USAID, *Work-Based Learning and Preparing the Next Generation Workforce. Case Study: USAID Macedonia Competitiveness Project* (2012).

128. The World Bank, *Kosovo Youth in Jeopardy; Being Young Unemployed, and Poor in Kosovo; A Report on Youth Employment in Kosovo* (2008); Tomić, Velinka, "Social Exclusion of The Young From The Labour Market In Bosnia And Herzegovina" (2012); European Commission, and Institute for Strategic Studies and Prognoses, *Assessment of the Labour Market in Montenegro-Final Study Report* (Brussels: European Commission, 2010); Newkirk, James A., *Final Evaluation: Support to National Efforts for the Promotion of Youth Employment and Management of Migration* (2012); International Labour Organization, *Global Employment Trends 2013* (Geneva: ILO, 2013).

129. Youth Employment Network, *Benchmarks for Youth Employment: Report on the First Benchmarking Exercise of the Lead Country Network*. Geneva: International Labour Organization (2010).

- Youth between 15 and 17 years of age are more likely to be engaged in hazardous forms of work.¹³⁰

Unfortunately, unemployment in many countries in the region is long-term (searching for work for a year or longer); especially for young people with little experience.¹³¹ For this reason some young people become completely inactive or not involved in either the education system or the employment market.¹³² Often termed NEET (not in education, employment or training), these youth have either become completely disillusioned or they have taken on other roles such as parenting or working in an unpaid family business.¹³³

Many youth in the region are also choosing to migrate to other nearby countries for employment, sometimes illegally.¹³⁴ Because of high rates of poverty and unemployment, migration is an attractive option especially for young people. In 2010, Armenia, Georgia, Republic of Macedonia, and Moldova were in the top thirty emigrating countries in terms of percentage of the population.¹³⁵ Additionally, nearly 25 percent of the Albanian population is presently living abroad, primarily in Greece and Italy where the majority of remittances (90 percent) are received.¹³⁶ As a consequence, the country has suffered a huge loss of population and workforce capacity, especially of young male workers.

In a few countries in the region, even university-educated youth experience high rates of unemployment primarily due to very few job openings for new labor market entrants.¹³⁷ Employers tend to look for those with some experience and more educated youth will often wait for preferred jobs instead of taking a job perceived as inferior. In some locations, government jobs are seen as the “golden opportunity” and youth will forego what they consider unstable employment options to secure a public sector position.

In countries with somewhat lower youth unemployment rates, a real concern is that young people desperately take any available employment because they have to work thus becoming more susceptible to working in vulnerable employment situations.¹³⁸ This rise in vulnerable employment and casual labor is causing an “increasingly crowded” informal economy.¹³⁹ Young people are more likely to find themselves in temporary employment contracts that offer very low compensation, long hours, and no

130. <http://www.ilo.org/public/english/employment/yen/about/>

131. USAID, *Workforce Development Regional Overview: Republic of Macedonia: Regional Competitiveness Initiative* (2009); N. Maddock, and L. Ramguttee, *Youth Unemployment and Poverty in Moldova: Current Situation and Possible Response* (2009).

132. The World Bank, *Armenia Promoting Productive Employment* (2012).

133. Ibid.; Ni. O'Higgins, *Youth Labour Markets in Bosnia and Herzegovina* (2009); S. Elder, B. Novkovska, and V. Krsteva, *Labour Market Transitions of Young Women and Men in the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia* (Geneva: International Labour Office, 2013); IFAD, “Moldova: A Country Fact Sheet on Youth Employment” (Rome: IFAD, 2011); International Labour Organization, *Youth Employment in Eastern Europe: Crisis within the Crisis* (Geneva: ILO, 2011).

134. The World Bank, *Kosovo Youth in Jeopardy; Being Young Unemployed, and Poor in Kosovo; A Report on Youth Employment in Kosovo* (2008); Daniela Zampini, *Local Youth Employment: Albania's Experience* (2012); Nick Maddock, and Lovita Ramguttee, “Youth Unemployment and Poverty in Moldova: Current Situation and Possible Response” (2009); International Labour Organization, *Youth Employment in Eastern Europe: Crisis within the Crisis* (Geneva: ILO, 2011).

135. International Labour Organization, *Youth Employment in Eastern Europe: Crisis within the Crisis* (Geneva: ILO, 2011).

136. Daniela Zampini, *Local Youth Employment: Albania's Experience* (2012).

137. M. Barrett, L. Fajfer, and S. Maguire, *You(th), the People: Integrating Youth into USAID/BiH Programming* (Sarajevo: USAID/BiH, 2010); European Commission, and Institute for Strategic Studies and Prognoses, *Assessment of the Labour Market in Montenegro-Final Study Report* (Brussels: European Commission, 2010); S. Elder, B. Novkovska, and V.a Krsteva, *Labour Market Transitions of Young Women and Men in the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia* (Geneva: International Labour Office, 2013); The World Bank, “Standing on Their Own: Youth Employment Opportunities in Albania” *World Bank* (2013).

138. International Labour Organization, *Youth Employment in Eastern Europe: Crisis within the Crisis* (Geneva: ILO, 2011); Alfred Topi, “Albania: Youth Employment as a Priority for the #Post2015 Development Agenda [blog entry],” *Voices from Eurasia* (2013).

139. Ibid.; V. Tomić, “Social Exclusion of The Young From The Labour Market In Bosnia And Herzegovina” (2012).

social or health benefits.¹⁴⁰ The informal economy may be the most likely type of employment available to youth, but it offers few prospects for advancement and growth.

Several underlying factors impact the challenging trends in regional youth employment:

1. Access to a quality education that prepares youth for jobs is lacking.

Rates of primary and secondary education completion are quite high in E&E countries compared to other regions. However, education provision may not be adequate to train young people for jobs. In many classrooms, teachers tend to rely on 19th century methodologies that include lecturing, reading, memorizing facts, presenting rote recitations, and taking tests.¹⁴¹ Students in such educational settings have limited opportunities to learn and practice critical thinking, creativity, and problem-solving. They also may have limited exposure to information technologies, which are crucial to preparation of young people for the modern labor market.¹⁴² An evaluation of programs funded by USAID in the Republic of Macedonia discovered that many students were leaving school without basic skills such as literacy and numeracy.¹⁴³

2. Few school-to-work transition opportunities exist.

Even in more optimal educational settings, many young people do not understand the relevancy of getting and completing an education.¹⁴⁴ They often do not understand the link between their school experiences and their futures, especially regarding the type of job they will be able to obtain. In the E&E region, youth have a long transition from school to employment. In Kosovo young males are estimated to take ten years to transition from school to a stable employment situation and in the Republic of Macedonia five years are necessary.¹⁴⁵ Because of a lack of career planning, internships, and service learning opportunities in many schools, youth are unable to “draw the dotted line from where they are to where they want to be.”¹⁴⁶ Frequently they do not understand all of the steps involved in getting a good job nor do they have an opportunity to experience the process in a learning atmosphere.

3. A mismatch between skills and workforce demands often exists.

In many communities around the E&E region, direct linkages between educational institutions, vocational/technical training programs, and employers are lacking.¹⁴⁷ Thus, young people exit the education system without the skills necessary to compete in the workforce. Even when enrolled in a specific workforce development or Technical Vocational Education Training (TVET) program, youth

140. YEN, *Benchmarks for Youth Employment: Report on the First Benchmarking Exercise of the Lead Country Network* (Geneva: International Labour Organization, 2010).

141. G. Torosyan, *Youth Employment in Rural Areas: Armenia UNDP/UNIDO. MDG Acceleration Framework Application in Armenia MAF* (2012); The World Bank, *Kosovo Youth in Jeopardy; Being Young Unemployed, and Poor in Kosovo; A Report on Youth Employment in Kosovo* (2008); IFAD, “Albania: A Country Fact Sheet on Youth Employment” (Rome: IFAD, 2011); V. Tomić, *Social Exclusion of The Young From The Labour Market In Bosnia And Herzegovina* (2012); The World Bank, “Standing on Their Own: Youth Employment Opportunities in Albania,” *World Bank* (2013); J. A. Newkirk, *Final Evaluation: Support to National Efforts for the Promotion of Youth Employment and Management of Migration* (2012).

142. Ibid The World Bank, 2013.

143. USAID, *Secondary education activity: Final report* (2011).

144. The World Bank, *Armenia Promoting Productive Employment* (2012); N. O’Higgins, *Youth Labour Markets in Bosnia and Herzegovina* (2009); International Labour Organization, *Youth Employment in Eastern Europe: Crisis within the Crisis* (Geneva: ILO, 2011); IFAD, “Bosnia and Herzegovina: A Country Fact Sheet on Youth Employment” (Rome: IFAD, 2011).

145. The World Bank, *Kosovo Youth in Jeopardy; Being Young Unemployed, and Poor in Kosovo; A Report on Youth Employment in Kosovo* (2008).

146. Gagik Torosyan, *Youth Employment in Rural Areas: Armenia UNDP/UNIDO. MDG Acceleration Framework Application in Armenia MAF* (2012).

147. USAID, *Workforce Development Regional Overview: Kosovo Regional Competitiveness Initiative* (2009); M. Barrett, L. Fajfer, and S. Maguire, *You(th), the People: Integrating Youth into USAID/BiH Programming* (Sarajevo: USAID/BiH, 2010); J. Prokopenko, *The Role of Employers’ Organizations of Ukraine in Promoting Youth Employment and Strengthening Vocational Education and Training System* (2008); European Commission, and Institute for Strategic Studies and Prognoses, *Assessment of the Labour Market in Montenegro-Final Study Report* (Brussels: European Commission, 2010).

graduate programs acquiring only technical skills. One of the key complaints of employers is the limited understanding youth have of life and employability skills. Despite excellent technical qualifications, new young hires often do not exhibit positive workplace behaviors (e.g., on-time arrival). Few government education systems offer training in life and employability skills as part of their curriculum.

4. Certain segments of youth experience more difficulties in obtaining employment than others.

Overall, young women have a more difficult time securing a job than young men in the region.¹⁴⁸ According to a recent study by IFAD¹⁴⁹ in Moldova, young women represent 66 percent of unpaid family labor and are the most vulnerable group of workers. While young women are making headway toward more equal rights in countries throughout the region, traditional patriarchal roles continue to exist in many places;¹⁵⁰ thus young women are limited in securing employment in the marketplace and their abilities to build businesses are impeded due to difficulties securing start-up loans with little collateral.

Youth living in rural areas also face grim job prospects and have less access to formal job training.¹⁵¹ In Albania, for example, the agricultural sector absorbs 51 percent of the labor force. Youth in these areas work in subsistence farming and are either self-employed or unpaid family members.¹⁵² In other countries such as Armenia, rural youth are largely jobless.¹⁵³ The difficulties of youth to build successful farming businesses include: lack of access to markets and extension services, low affordability of loans, and little education on business development principles.¹⁵⁴ In fact, the highest incidence of informal youth employment is found in agriculture, meaning that many youth are exposed to unstable wages with little to no employment benefits.¹⁵⁵

Other segments of youth in the region also have a difficult time obtaining work. These include ethnic minority groups such as the Roma, Europe's largest ethnic minority with an estimated ten to 12 million members, nearly half of whom are children and youth.¹⁵⁶ Many face high levels of discrimination, poverty and exclusion. Roma adolescents are especially vulnerable as hardship forces many to leave school early and forego opportunities for education, training, and participation in mainstream economic and social life. The results of this exclusion show marked issues for youth employment in countries such as the Republic of Macedonia, Kosovo, Albania,¹⁵⁷ Bosnia and Herzegovina,¹⁵⁸ and Serbia.¹⁵⁹

148. The World Bank, *Kosovo Youth in Jeopardy; Being Young Unemployed, and Poor in Kosovo; A Report on Youth Employment in Kosovo* (2008); The World Bank, *Armenia Promoting Productive Employment* (2012); H. Heeman and F. Baleci, 'Making Kosovo Work Again: Challenges and Opportunities for Young People,' *European Perspectives* (2013); M. Barrett, L. Fajfer, and S. Maguire, *You(th), the People: Integrating Youth into USAID/BiH Programming* (Sarajevo: USAID/BiH, 2010); S. Elder, B. Novkovska, and V. Krsteva, *Labour Market Transitions of Young Women and Men in the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia* (Geneva: International Labour Office, 2013); International Labour Organization, *Global Employment Trends 2013* (Geneva: ILO, 2013).

149. IFAD, "Moldova: A Country Fact Sheet on Youth Employment" (Rome: IFAD, 2011).

150. M. Barrett, L. Fajfer, and S. Maguire, *You(th), the People: Integrating Youth into USAID/BiH Programming* (Sarajevo: USAID/BiH, 2010).

151. FAO, ILO, and UNESCO, *Training and Employment Opportunities to Address Poverty among Rural Youth: A Synthesis Report* (Bangkok: UNESCO/Thailand, ILO, and FAO, 2009).

152. IFAD, "Albania: A Country Fact Sheet on Youth Employment" (Rome: IFAD, 2011).

153. The World Bank, *Armenia Promoting Productive Employment* (2012).

154. G. Torosyan, *Youth Employment in Rural Areas: Armenia UNDP/UNIDO. MDG Acceleration Framework Application in Armenia MAF* (2012).

155. N. O'Higgins, *Youth Labour Markets in Bosnia and Herzegovina* (2009).

156. FXB Center, "Reclaiming Adolescence: Roma Transitions to Adulthood," *Harvard University FXB Center for Health & Human Rights* (2013).

157. F. Copin, "Empowering Roma Youth in Albania," *UN Volunteers* (2012); S. Kjosev, "EEO Review: Youth Employment Measures, 2010: The Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia," *European Employment Observatory* (2010); UNDP, "Kosovo Human Development Report 2012: Private Sector and Employment," *UNDP*, (2012).

158. D. Aigner, *Youth Employability and Retention Programme: Mid-Term Evaluation of the Millennium Development Goal Achievement Fund* (2012).

STRATEGIES AND SUPPORTS FOR YOUTH RELATED TO EMPLOYMENT

A majority of youth employment strategies in the region can be classified as one or a combination of the following:¹⁶⁰

1. **Supply side or workforce development programs:** activities such as basic or vocational technical education, job skills, apprenticeships, and life skills training.
2. **Demand side policies and programs:** broad-based activities such as national youth employment policies, public works programs, wage subsidies, and tax breaks for employers.
3. **Entrepreneurship and enterprise development:** programs supporting self-employment and business development including entrepreneurship training, mentoring, and financial services for loans and capital.
4. **Matchmaking employment programs:** ongoing job referral (i.e., ‘help desk’) services that bring employers and workers together through print and on-line job postings, job fairs, job shadowing, job placement, resume preparation, and coaching.

Supply side or workforce development programs emphasize preparation of youth for the labor market and can be based in or out of school. Out-of-school programs might be offered by community-based or private organizations.¹⁶¹ Several examples of such programs in the region include the following:

| Country | Youth Labor Market Preparation Program Examples |
|------------------------|--|
| Albania | The Youth Empowerment and Community Development project provides apprenticeships to young job seekers and works to reform the vocational education system. ¹⁶² |
| Armenia | The Vocational Education and Training system has provided training to many unemployed youth, especially those in rural areas. ¹⁶³ |
| Bosnia and Herzegovina | A USAID-funded program called Youth Eco-Leadership Corps (YELC) provides youth with industry-recognized training and credentials geared to a natural resources career. ¹⁶⁴ |
| Georgia | UNDP in partnership with the European Union, the Swiss Agency for Development Cooperation, and the Governments of Norway and Romania support building the capacity of national vocational technical training programs, including development of nine professional education centers focused on training youth in the nation’s top 25 high-demand careers. ¹⁶⁵ |
| Republic of Macedonia | USAID and Habitat for Humanity have joined forces to pilot a project to improve energy efficiency in Republic of Macedonia by employing youth to complete home renovations. ¹⁶⁶ |
| Republic of Macedonia | USAID funds the Youth Employability Skills (YES) Network ¹⁶⁷ where students in general and vocational secondary schools, unemployed registrants with the Employment Service Agency (ESA), and other out-of-school youth, aged 15-27 participate in job-shadowing, internships, and career counseling. |
| Moldova | Through the development of ten social rehabilitation centers for vulnerable populations, UNDP, USAID, and others provided life skills and vocational training to youth. ¹⁶⁸ |

159. J. A. Newkirk, *Final Evaluation: Support to National Efforts for the Promotion of Youth Employment and Management of Migration* (2012).

160. USAID, *State of the Field Report: Examining the Evidence in Youth Workforce Development* (Washington, D.C.: USAID and Aguirre Division, JBS International Inc., 2013).

161. EQUIP3, *EQUIP3 Lessons Learned: Experiences in Livelihoods, Literacy, and Leadership in Youth Programs in 26 Countries* (Washington, DC: Education Development Center, 2012).

162. The World Bank, “Standing on Their Own: Youth Employment Opportunities in Albania,” *World Bank* (2013).

163. hetq, “USAID Round-Table Explores Market-Oriented Workforce Development in Armenia,” *hetq* (2012).

164. USAID/Bosnia and Herzegovina, “Fact Sheet: Youth Eco-Leadership Corps” (2012).

165. S. Tchitchinadze, “In Georgia, Vocational Training Equips Youth for Job Market,” *UNDP Georgia* (2013).

166. Habitat for Humanity, “Macedonia: Taking Energy Seriously,” *Habitat for Humanity* (2013).

167. USAID, “Youth Employability Skills (YES) Network,” *USAID* (2013).

168. UNDP, “Moldova: Vulnerable Youth and Women Make a Fresh Start,” *UNDP* (2013).

Demand side policies and programs encourage a youth employment-friendly environment. Broad-based government policies and programs have traditionally created demand for labor, such as public works, workfare, and wage subsidies. In the E&E region, many governments are combining these broader employment policies with youth-specific policies. Examples include:

| Country | Employment and Youth Policy Examples |
|------------------------|---|
| Azerbaijan | The Youth Policy of the Republic of Azerbaijan is designed to support the comprehensive development of youth; provide equal educational opportunities; and increase youth employment including the creation of favorable conditions for employment and enterprise development. ¹⁶⁹ |
| Belarus | The Youth Policy of the Republic of Belarus is coordinated by the Department of Youth Affairs of the Ministry of Education. One component of the policy is a guaranteed first job for graduates, touted as reducing the youth unemployment rate in recent years. ¹⁷⁰ |
| Bosnia and Herzegovina | The Youth Employability and Retention Program of the Government of Bosnia and Herzegovina implemented by the UN is financed by Spain under the MDG Achievement Fund for Youth, Employment and Migration. The effort is designed to increase employability of youth through improvement of education and employability services. ¹⁷¹ |
| Kosovo | The Kosovo Youth Employment Action Plan (KYEAP) is a broad set of policy options to improve youth employment overseen by the Ministry of Labor. The KYEAP has three main objectives: 1) to promote employment among young people; 2) to increase decent work opportunities for young people; and 3) to prevent social exclusion of youth through targeted labor market measures. ¹⁷² |
| Republic of Macedonia | The national Action Plan on Youth Employment 2015 is aimed at improving employment prospects for youth aged 15-29. Emphasis is placed on education and training, job creation and entrepreneurship, inclusion of youth in the labor market, and institutional reform. ¹⁷³ |
| Moldova | The National Youth Strategy of Moldova has incorporated labor market policies that work together with the country's National Development Strategy, National Employment Strategy, and the Strategy for Vocational Education and Training. ¹⁷⁴ |
| Ukraine | The National Youth Policy of Ukraine implemented by the Ministry on Family, Youth and Sport (MoFYS) is intended to provide support for improved youth employment, youth entrepreneurship and self-employment. ¹⁷⁵ |

More recently, demand-side programs have been re-focused to work actively in partnership with the private sector. In Kosovo for example, Active Labor Market Programs (ALMP) have concentrated on strengthening vocational education and training, providing temporary employment, and promoting youth entrepreneurship.¹⁷⁶

Entrepreneurship and enterprise development efforts are a large part of the workforce development discussion for youth. In Bosnia and Herzegovina for example, small businesses and microenterprises provide employment to almost a third of all formally-employed persons.¹⁷⁷ In fact, microenterprises

169. Republic of Azerbaijan, *State Program Azerbaijani youth in 2011-2015* (2011).

170. Y. Oleinik, *Reviews on Youth Policies and Youth Work in the Countries of South East Europe, Eastern Europe & Caucasus: Republic of Belarus* (2011).

171. D. Aigner, *Youth Employability and Retention Programme-Final Evaluation Report* (New York: MDG Achievement Fund, 2013).

172. The World Bank, *Kosovo Youth in Jeopardy; Being Young Unemployed, and Poor in Kosovo; A Report on Youth Employment in Kosovo* (2008).

173. S. Elder, B. Novkovska, and V. Krsteva, *Labour Market Transitions of Young Women and Men in the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia* (Geneva: International Labour Office, 2013).

174. N. Maddock, and L. Ramguttee, "Youth Unemployment and Poverty in Moldova: Current Situation and Possible Response" (2009).

175. J. Prokopenko, *The Role of Employers' Organizations of Ukraine in Promoting Youth Employment and Strengthening Vocational Education and Training System* (2008).

176. The World Bank, *Kosovo Youth in Jeopardy; Being Young Unemployed, and Poor in Kosovo; A Report on Youth Employment in Kosovo* (2008).

177. M. Barrett, L. Fajfer, and Sh. Maguire, *You(th), the People: Integrating Youth into USAID/BiH Programming* (Sarajevo: USAID/BiH, 2010).

constitute more than 85 percent of all businesses in the country.¹⁷⁸ The ILO¹⁷⁹ also identifies Ukraine and Moldova as markets where youth entrepreneurship is a particularly viable option. Unfortunately the workforce skills dilemma in the region means little focus is given to business start-up and sustainability training.¹⁸⁰ For this reason, several programs in the region now offer business and financial literacy training, access to credit, and mentoring/networking opportunities. Examples include:

| Country | Entrepreneurship and Enterprise Development Program Examples |
|------------------------|---|
| Albania | The World Bank offered a program providing entrepreneurship and business advisory services including access to credit opportunities. ¹⁸¹ |
| Armenia | The Young Agriculturalists Network of Armenia developed 29 youth clubs that provide training on income generation opportunities and resources for business start-up. ¹⁸² |
| Bosnia and Herzegovina | The Youth Promotion Project offers rural youth training in agriculture especially in growing fruits and vegetables, and support for the development of small farms. ¹⁸³ |
| Bosnia and Herzegovina | A World Bank project provides business and financial literacy education to youth 18-35 years old in order to promote the creation, survival, and growth of youth-led enterprises. ¹⁸⁴ |
| Kosovo | The Youth Self-Employment in Kosovo project provides young entrepreneurs with 'tools grants' to help purchase needed business start-up equipment from computers and printers to air compressors and sewing machines. ¹⁸⁵ |
| Moldova | IFAD has made loans to young entrepreneurs to finance agricultural businesses. ¹⁸⁶ |
| Serbia | USAID and DAI together have offered the Preparedness, Planning, and Economic Security project which supported youth-led businesses. ¹⁸⁷ |

Fewer programs provide matchmaking and (inter)mediation employment services that bring youth and employers together. Typical services in this category include online job banks or mobile phone job alerts; job placement services; or job training programs that include job fairs, job matching, resume preparation, and counseling or coaching. These bridging programs foster graduates' smooth transition to the workforce and provide employers with information on potential young talent. Examples of these types of programs in the E&E region include:

178. IFAD, "Bosnia and Herzegovina: A Country Fact Sheet on Youth Employment" (Rome: IFAD, 2011).

179. International Labour Organization, *Youth Employment in Eastern Europe: Crisis within the Crisis* (Geneva: ILO, 2011).

180. USAID, *Work-Based Learning and Preparing the Next Generation Workforce. Case Study: USAID Macedonia Competitiveness Project* (2012).

181. D. Zampini, *Local Youth Employment: Albania's Experience* (2012).

182. A. Ghazanchyan, *Empowering Armenian Youth to Solve Problems in Mountain and Rural Areas*, Heifer International (2012).

183. IFAD, "Bosnia and Herzegovina: A Country Fact Sheet on Youth Employment" (Rome: IFAD, 2011).

184. M. Bruhn and Z. Bilal. *Business and Financial Literacy for Young Entrepreneurs: Evidence from Bosnia-Herzegovina*. Washington, D.C.: World Bank, DECFP, n.d.

185. The World Bank, "In Kosovo: Helping Young People Join Society," *World Bank* (2013).

186. IFAD, "Moldova: A Country Fact Sheet on Youth Employment" (Rome: IFAD, 2011).

187. DAI, "Youth Workforce Development Efforts in Serbia Lead to Internships, Jobs, and New Businesses," *USAID* (2012).

| Country | Youth-Employer Bridging Program Examples |
|------------------------|--|
| Azerbaijan | UNICEF developed programs in Azerbaijan that teach youth the skills needed to acquire stable employment, including resume development and job interviewing skills. ¹⁸⁸ |
| Bosnia and Herzegovina | The World Bank funds efforts to support youth in gaining job search skills while also offering networking opportunities with private employers and business owners. ¹⁸⁹ |
| Kosovo | Seventeen Centres of Information, Counseling, and Training (CISO) were created to offer services such as career orientations for in-school youth, training on employability skills, and job seeking techniques for youth ready to enter the job market. ¹⁹⁰ |

KEY CONSIDERATIONS FOR USAID MISSION STAFF

USAID Mission Staffs should consider several key factors when developing youth employment and livelihoods programs in the E&E region. The following list of questions will assist program developers to identify strengths, resources, and gap areas in a country context:

1. What is the current status of youth employment in the country, considering both formal and informal employment?
2. What are the most pressing issues in youth employment (e.g., vulnerable employment, few linkages between education system and labor market, few school-to-work transition opportunities, mismatch of youth skills and labor market needs)?
3. Which youth populations are most impacted by employment challenges (e.g., young women, rural youth, university educated youth, ethnic minorities) and how are they affected?
4. What national level policies, if any, are in place to support youth employment, entrepreneurship, or self-employment?
5. What are the quantity and quality of supply side or workforce development programs that prepare youth for work?
6. What are the quantity and quality of entrepreneurship or self-employment programs that prepare youth to create and sustain their own businesses?
7. What are the quantity and quality of matchmaking or mediation programs that help youth access stable employment situations?

Answers to these questions can be collected through analysis of existing data sources; key informant interviews with employers, donors, education system representatives, and other stakeholders; and focus groups or surveys of youth. Once a chosen strategy has been identified, program developers should construct a results framework to identify the expected outcomes of the upcoming program. In the recent USAID 'State of the Field Report' on youth workforce development,¹⁹¹ authors identify a framework of common youth outcomes in these programs, including categories such as skills and knowledge development, attitudes and behavior change, and actual results of employment (e.g., earnings and benefits). The recommendation is made that indicators of this kind be considered for evaluation of the success of youth employment and livelihoods programs.

188. United Nations, "UNO Baku Helps Azerbaijan Youth to Develop Job Seeking Skills and Prepare for a Working World," *UN Azerbaijan* (2013).

189. The World Bank, "Improving Opportunities for Young People in Bosnia and Herzegovina," *World Bank* (2013).

190. The World Bank, *Kosovo Youth in Jeopardy; Being Young Unemployed, and Poor in Kosovo; A Report on Youth Employment in Kosovo* (2008).

191. USAID, *State of the Field Report: Examining the Evidence in Youth Workforce Development* (Washington, D.C.: USAID and Aguirre Division, JBS International Inc., 2013).

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http://www.ilo.org/public/english/region/eurpro/geneva/download/events/ministers2011/youthempl_easteur_en.pdf

Relevant Youth-Led and Youth-Serving Organizations in the Region:

Donors

Balkan Children and Youth Foundation
Eurasia Foundation
GIZ
IFAD
International Labour Organization
International Organization for Migration
Soros Foundation
Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation
The Government of Japan
The Government of Spain
The MasterCard Foundation
United Nations/UNICEF/UNDP/UNFPA
World Bank

Implementers

CARANA Corporation
DAI
EDC
Habitat for Humanity
Helvetas-Swiss Intercooperation
Junior Achievement
Management Development Associates
SOS Villages
Youth Agriculturalists Network of Armenia

GUIDANCE NOTE: YOUTH & MEDIA

INTRODUCTION

The intersection of technology, information, and communication has had a powerful impact on media development, particularly the explosion of digital media and online social networks. Since the 1990s, legacy media such as newspapers, magazines, and broadcasters have established an online presence and are now globally accessible. Satellite television has continued to grow, and streaming television via the internet is even beginning to replace more conventional hardwired cable television and satellite receiver systems. Social media platforms, including YouTube, Facebook, and Twitter, and websites of citizen journalists and bloggers now compete convincingly with traditional media outlets. The opinions of such influential online writers are often viewed the way previous generations saw prominent newspaper columnists. An ongoing fundamental restructuring of the media sector is underway, and digital media are changing how citizens, especially youth, can connect to each other and their governments and other citizens. It is also changing how they make their voices heard.

Since the fall of communist regimes in the late 1980s and early 1990s, media plurality in the E&E region has increased, and the Internet is creating more opportunities for diverse, democratic, and horizontal flows of information.. To some extent, youth in the E&E as well as elsewhere are the vanguards of a global experiment in this rapid transformation of information technology. New forms of media are helping realize the free expression guarantees in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights,¹⁹² the Convention on the Rights of the Child,¹⁹³ and other legal instruments in unprecedented ways; however, the new media landscape can also present a threat to the wellbeing of young people who are, by definition, still in the early stages of physical, social, and mental development.¹⁹⁴

This is especially important now when youth engagement in media is not merely the consumption of information, but the production of content on platforms growing in sophistication, reach, and impact. Microblogs, social media networks, website comment sections, etc., as well as the “old” new media tool of SMS, allow youth to express opinions on important public issues to potentially massive audiences. Even the oldest forms of publishing have been transformed by the ease with which people can now layout and publish their own newspapers, magazines, and books without turning to traditional publishing houses. Whether the Twitter and Facebook “revolutions” of the past few years led to the toppling of dictators in the Arab Spring or merely reflected the use of new information dissemination tools among established dissidents,¹⁹⁵ it is clear that the impact of digital media will grow as internet penetration, facilitated by increasingly inexpensive mobile technology, continues to deepen.

Finding effective ways for youth to engage in the media while meeting the obligation of protecting them from dangers of media exposure in such a rapidly changing environment is akin to threading a needle. Youth is the developmental stage when patterns of civic engagement are formed and will extend well into adulthood. Encouragement of critical and intelligent engagement with media among young people will facilitate their development as critical and intelligent consumers and creators of media as adults.

The dangers are real. Media interaction leaves digital footprints that governments, predatory adults, or bullies can use against individuals. The example of mobile phone users in Kiev who were in the vicinity of

192. United Nations, *Universal Declaration of Human Rights*, art. 19.

193. United Nations, *Convention on the Rights of the Child*, art. 13.

194. *Ibid.*

195. See M. Gladwell, “Small Change,” *The New Yorker* (October 4, 2010); E. Zuckerman, “The First Twitter Revolution?” *Foreign Policy* (January 14, 2011).

the 2014 Maidan protests who received messages stating: “Dear subscriber, you are registered as a participant in a mass riot,”¹⁹⁶ provides a chilling reminder of real-time tracking that governments can use to identify and suppress protesters exercising their right to free expression.

Finding the right balance between protection and exposure is especially important in the E&E region, where relatively free media is a new phenomenon. E&E youth in their 20s are facing a radically different media environment than that faced by their parents, but the development of independent media in the region has faced challenges. In its 2015 Freedom of the Press index of 199 countries, Freedom House reported that Montenegro leads the E&E countries in 78th place, tied with El Salvador, and just ahead of Croatia. However, at the tail end of the region, Azerbaijan and Belarus came in at 188 and 194, respectively, scoring among the least free in the index.¹⁹⁷ Youth will have a substantial impact on the future of press freedom in the region as both consumers and producers of information. Their ability to engage effectively with the media sector will be integral to media’s role in promoting democracy and good governance.

BROADER ENVIRONMENTAL CONDITIONS IMPACTING YOUTH AND MEDIA

All three of the expected outcomes of USAID’s *Youth in Development Policy* are directly related to media:

- 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.¹⁹⁸

Participating in democratic and development processes requires forming networks of individuals who can work together to build a peaceful civil society. Some experts and mainstream media outlets have questioned whether social network activism is “real” activism with “real” outcomes, but practitioners may have little doubt that social networks and other new media can provide youth with a stronger voice in local and national institutions, enabling these entities to ensure that youth interests are met.

Young people are not a monolithic group; they are divided along many lines, all of which must be considered in designing media programming. Access to media may vary significantly between those who are in school and out of school,¹⁹⁹ and those who are employed and out of work. The ease with which youth can be engaged through university or school resources creates a real danger of ignoring harder-to-reach youth who for one reason or another are not enrolled in educational institutions. High youth unemployment rates can also make access to and participation in digital media cost-prohibitive for many, although legacy media such as newspapers, radio, and television are still often inexpensive or free. Gender differences in access to tertiary education (which generally favors women across the region) and employment (which generally favors men in this age group) may also result in gender differences in engagement with different forms of media.

196. Heather Murphy, “Ominous Text Message Sent to Protesters in Kiev Sends Chills Around the Internet,” *New York Times* (January 22, 2014).

197. “Harsh Laws and Violence Drive Global Decline: Freedom of the Press 2015,” *Freedom House* (2015), accessed November 12, 2015.

198. USAID, *Youth in Development, Realizing the Demographic Opportunity* (Washington, D.C.: USAID, 2012), I.

199. “The World Factbook, 2013-2014,” *United State Central Intelligence Agency* (n.d.), accessed December 4, 2013.

Another facet of access to and engagement with media that has to be considered is language. For example, countries with different language groups may have fragmented media markets, which may limit youths' (and adults') access to balanced reporting. While being an informed media consumer is important, the lack of press freedom in some parts of the region inhibit youths' ability to access information from independent sources (and relevant minority media sources), particularly those with limited access to online resources.

Further, dramatic changes in computer technology since the introduction of the smartphone, tablets, and other mobile devices have made the internet accessible in more places and lowered the cost of access. Such technological advances are also reducing the need for costly broadband connectivity through hardwire cable or digital subscriber lines). The availability of widespread, affordable, and reliable internet access has never been greater, or potentially more transformative for democratic development.²⁰⁰ This development poses some risk for youths as well, however, as they may be exposed (accidentally or purposefully) to content that is inappropriate without parental or other oversight.

This availability of internet access has also had ramifications for interpersonal interactions and an individual's image in a community or in the wider public eye. Cyberbullying has become a concern for youth in the E&E region, as in many other parts of the world.²⁰¹ Cyberbullying and online harassment also have specific gendered facets. Recent studies in the US and UK indicate that women more frequently experience and report sex-based abuse (e.g., harassment, rape threats, death threats, solicitation crimes by impersonators), although no readily-available studies specific to the E&E region exist.²⁰² Such abuse includes the distribution of pornographic material; the phenomenon of revenge porn, posting pictures or video of consensual sexual activity after a relationship has ended in retaliation for a perceived slight, has become a common concern. In addition, mobile technology has been used to record rapes and publicize them by posting the video online or sharing through mobile messaging applications.²⁰³ Other marginalized groups, such as LGBT youth, who rely on web-based and mobile social networks for support²⁰⁴ may find themselves targeted for abuse on Twitter, Facebook, YouTube, and elsewhere.²⁰⁵

Researchers have found that “giving and receiving negative feedback may be more common on the Internet” than offline,²⁰⁶ although the specific targeting of certain groups may be more of a perception than reality.²⁰⁷ In a study on gender-swapping in online gaming with social media aspects, more than half of both males and females report playing the other sex online at times, finding such a switch to be

200. M. Karanicolas, *A Truly World-Wide Web: Assessing the Internet from the Perspective of Human Rights* (Halifax: Centre for Law and Democracy, 2012), 38-40.

201. “Cyberbullying Risks Permanent Harm to European Children,” European Union (August 5, 2014). http://europa.eu/epic/news/2014/20140805-cyberbullying-harm-european-children_en.htm

202. See: Danielle Citron, *Hate Crimes in Cyberspace* (Harvard University Press, 2014); A. Hess, Why Women Aren't Welcome on the Internet, *Pacific Standard* (January 6, 2014) <http://www.psmag.com/health-and-behavior/women-arent-welcome-internet-72170>; and J. Bartlett, R. Norrie, S. Patel, R. Rumpel, & S. Wibberly, *Misogyny on Twitter* (London: Demos, 2014) http://www.demos.co.uk/files/MISOGYNY_ON_TWITTER.pdf?1399567516.

203. Rama Lakshmi, “Video Recordings of Gang Rapes on Rise in India in Effort to Shame, Silence the Victim,” *Washington Post* (August 14, 2014). https://www.washingtonpost.com/world/video-recordings-of-gang-rapes-on-rise-in-india-in-effort-to-shame-silence-the-victim/2014/08/13/41d8be42-3360-4081-9ff0-dee2df54f629_story.html

204. A. Carroll, *Testing the Waters: LGBT People in the Europe and Eurasia Region* (Washington, DC: USAID, 2013).

205. See: Gay, Lesbian, & Straight Education Network, *Out Online: The experiences of lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender youth on the Internet* (New York: GLSEN, 2013). <http://www.glsen.org/sites/default/files/Out%20Online%20FINAL.pdf>

206. D. J. Kuss and M. D. Griffiths, “Online Social Networking and Addiction—A Review of the Psychological Literature,” *International Journal of Environmental Research and Public Health* 8 (2011): 3528–3552.

207. “The Web at 25 in the U.S.,” *Pew Research Center* (February 27, 2014).

advantageous, suggesting the existence of real differences in the treatment males and females receive in social media.²⁰⁸

For young men in E&E, mandatory military service can affect abilities to engage with media. The recent trend in E&E has been to professionalize military service and end conscription but more than half of E&E countries still conscript young men, generally beginning at age 18, for periods ranging from one to two years.²⁰⁹ Options of participation in civic life as a full- or part-time journalist, blogger, or other media professional are obviously deferred during military service. Further, free speech itself, especially political speech, for members of the military is often restricted in the E&E region.²¹⁰ This is the case even in the United States, a country with robust free speech protections.²¹¹ On a positive note, through the use of digital media, abuses in the military, especially of conscripts, have been revealed.²¹²

STRATEGIES AND SUPPORT FOR YOUTH RELATED TO MEDIA ENGAGEMENT

A number of initiatives in the E&E region and globally are targeted at youth engagement through media and development of media-related skills. Consider the following:

Media literacy and critical thinking skills are important regardless of media platform. In the current convergence of legacy and digital media, assisting young people to become informed and critical consumers of news - to be able to identify accurate, objective, independent sources of information, evaluate the quality of reporting, and produce relevant information for audiences - provides a foundation for them, in turn, to become informed and engaged citizens. Growing their critical thinking skills helps them to both understand and use media as citizens and active members of civil society. Internews has several projects across the E&E region aimed at improving media literacy in youth. For example, Internews' "Alternative Resources in Media" program in Armenia has developed a media literacy curriculum to educate high school students in 10 topics arranged in a teacher handbook.²¹³ In Ukraine, Internews works with the Academy of Ukrainian Press to provide college and secondary school teachers with information on improving students' media literacy.²¹⁴ The Strengthening Independent Media in Macedonia project, which is implemented by three local CSOs, includes a media literacy/fact-checking component aimed at university students. If the activity were able to continue, the goal would have been to include students at the secondary school level, which is where most experts believe media literacy really needs to start.²¹⁵

Another USAID-funded programs linked young people in low level conflict areas (the Caucasus) via summer camps (in Georgia) to learn how to jointly produce news content and sharpen their critical thinking skills. Internews Georgia's "Kids Crossroads" paired high school students from Azerbaijan, Georgia, and Armenia to work as teams to produce newscast segments. Learning focused on how to

208. Z. Hussain, and M. D. Griffiths, "Gender Swapping and Socializing in Cyberspace: An Exploratory Study," *Cyber-Psychology & Behavior* 11 (2008): 47-53.

209. "The World Factbook, 2013-2014," *United State Central Intelligence Agency* (n.d.), accessed December 4, 2013.

210. See: *Electoral Code of the Republic of Armenia*, Article 18.6(2), May 26, 2011, Prohibiting Military Personnel from Disseminating Any Type of Campaign Material.

211. See *Parker v. Levy*, 417 U.S. 733, 758 (1974).

212. Artmika, "New Video Allegedly Shows Bullying and Violence in the Armenian Army," *Unzipped* (2010).

213. "Media Literacy Course Will Reach Public Schools across Armenia," *Internews* (September 18, 2013),

214. "Media Literacy Added to Teachers' Curriculum in Ukraine," *Internews* (October 1, 2013), accessed December 10, 2013.

215. Paul Mihailidis. *Media Literacy and the Emerging Citizen: Youth, Engagement and Participation in Digital Culture* (New York: Peter Lang Publishers, 2014).

interview a subject, operate a camera, use audio and editing systems, and employ basic standards of balanced journalism. The program was a big hit, but also expensive, so it was not continued.

Teaching the technical and ethical skills of new media is a key part of many implementers' programs. UNICEF Kosovo's Innovations Lab directly targets youth.²¹⁶ The Hear Me campaign uses social media to mobilize youth on good governance issues by asking them to design photo messages for posting on Facebook.²¹⁷ These photo messages are voted on and the most popular ones become postcards containing a message of good governance which are delivered to key stakeholders. Also in Kosovo, NDI's New Media School has taught youth activists the use of social media to translate citizens' concerns into concrete government action. This program began with a series of three day media "boot camps" leading to a six month communications strategies program.²¹⁸ The Making All Voices Count initiative mobilizes individuals in a similar way to close the feedback loop between citizens and government, although, as with many similar programs, it is not limited to youth.²¹⁹

Existing social media can be used to develop young people's media interaction skills. Internews' Youth LINC,²²⁰ in partnership with Youth Initiative for Human Rights Bosnia and Herzegovina, brings Balkan youth together using social media to discuss ethnicity, religion, activism, volunteerism, and regional politics.²²¹

After young people have developed a foundation of media skills as both consumers and content creators, **the next step is to provide access to new technologies.** The ability to do this cheaply is a useful skill, especially for youth. IREX Azerbaijan's New Media Project provided training for one alumnus to develop Azerbaijan's first multi-media website. Most importantly, it was done using freely available technologies, greatly reducing cost.²²² However, media skills are not useful without media access. IREX Azerbaijan's "Electronic Villages" provided free internet access to people living in remote villages through kiosks set up in the local post office. This program has proven popular with youth, allowing them to follow news and connect with other young people around the world.²²³

Finally, **youth benefit from media platforms developed for, by, and aimed at youth.** In Central Asia, "M@trix," a television technology magazine program (and companion website) hosted by young people explained the internet, social media, new gadgets, and mobile technology. The program was an immediate hit following its launch in 2009 due to the widespread lack of information technology knowledge across Central Asia. The program was distributed via the Internews NAU satellite channel as well as broadcast on local partner stations in Russian and local languages. Due to lack of continued funding, the last episodes were produced in 2014. The project is now closed, but episodes are still available on [YouTube](#).

RadioMOF in Republic of Macedonia is a youth-initiated online radio platform that was established to provide creative space for youth to develop and deliver independent and objective programming. It is run

216. Homepage, *Innovations Lab Kosovo* (n.d.), accessed January 10, 2014. <http://www.kosovoinnovations.org/>

217. "Hear Me," *UNICEF Innovations Lab Kosovo Facebook* (2013), accessed January 10, 2014.

218. "Social Media Boot Camp Empowers Kosovo's Youth Activists," *National Democratic Institute* (2013), accessed January 10, 2014; USAID, "Raising Awareness Through Facebook and Twitter," *USAID* (2013).

219. Homepage, *Making All Voices Count* (n.d.), accessed January 10, 2014. <http://www.makingallvoicescount.org/>

220. YouthLINC, *The YouthLINC Project Facebook* (n.d.), accessed January 10, 2014. <https://www.facebook.com/iYouthLINC>

221. "Balkan Youth Tackle Discrimination and Intolerance through Innovation Labs," *Internews* (August 29, 2013), accessed January 10, 2014; Homepage, *Youth Initiative for Human Rights* (n.d.).

222. USAID, "Azerbaijanis Develop Their Social Media Skills," *USAID* (January 30, 2014), accessed February 1, 2014.

223. "Internet Comes to Fatalikand," *IREX* (May 23, 2013).

by the Youth Educational Forum, a USAID partner on multiple education efforts. USAID also supports Euroradio, which was established by Belarusian media professionals in Warsaw in 2005 with a mission to deliver factual, current, independent, trustworthy information to Belarusian listeners about events in Belarus and in the world, as well as to promote European democratic values. From the outset, the station has sought to cater to both online and offline audiences by operating on multiple platforms including internet, satellite and lower band FM signals transmitted from a range of strategic locations outside of Belarus. Initially, the station's target audience consisted of politically inactive 15 to 35 year-olds who were considered the prime targets of state propaganda. Over time, this audience has begun to expand into the over 35 age range as the multiplatform strategy enabled the station to establish and grow a broad audience base.

KEY CONSIDERATIONS FOR USAID MISSION STAFF

In developing programming for youth and media, USAID programmers should consider:

1. **Does the programming recognize the transitory nature of youth?** Programming in other sectors can often assume increasing capacity of the target audience. Youth programming must consider that new people are constantly joining the demographic and will need training, while experienced people are constantly leaving the group. Youth media programming should consider its foundational role in determining how people interact with the media as adults.
2. **Does the programming reach across the various fissures subdividing youth?** Programming need not address all of the issues, however program design should consider gender, ethnicity, religion, language, age, employment and schooling status, and military status.
3. **Can the programming adjust to the rapidly changing technological environment?** With new types of media developing every day, and with youth often on the cutting edge of adoption, programming must constantly adapt to stay current.
4. **Does the programming develop critical thinking skills and a media literate audience?** At the core of media engagement is communication. Effective communication depends on understanding the difference between opinion and fact, making intelligent decisions about information accuracy, and judging the merits of various arguments.
5. **Does the programming protect youth from the dangers of media engagement?** As with any other tool, engaging with media carelessly can do damage. Youth must be taught about privacy concerns, stalking, bullying, the benefits and pitfalls of anonymity on the web, and the fact that digital footprints can last a lifetime—or more.
6. **Does the programming inform youth about ethics and the law?** Not all youth are or intend to be journalists, however understanding journalistic ethics and laws surrounding media and freedom of expression can inform them on how media operates, how it should operate, and how they should engage in today's participatory media environment.
7. **Does the programming focus on access to information?** Training youth as informed consumers and creators of news is only relevant if they also have regular and reliable access to information. Access can include access to technology, to independent news sources, or to equipment for people with disabilities using the internet.

ORGANIZATIONS

BTC ProMedia (Bulgaria), <http://www.btcpromedia.org>

Center for Independent Journalism (Romania), <http://www.cji.ro/>

Independent Journalism Center (Moldova), <http://ijc.md/eng/>

Mediacentar Sarajevo, <http://www.media.ba>

National Association for Media Literacy Education, <http://namle.net/>.

Youth Initiative for Human Rights, <http://www.yihr.org/en>.

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Rachael Bongiorno, “A Handbook for Youth Empowerment Through Media Participation,” *National Ethnic and Multicultural Broadcasters’ Council* (2012), <http://www.nembc.org.au/userfiles/file/4.Projects/1.%20Media%20Kit/Next%20Generation%20Media%20Manual%20NGM.pdf>.

Robert Norris, Patrick Merloe, *Media Monitoring to Promote Democratic Elections: An NDI Handbook for Citizen Organizations*, (Washington: National Democratic Institute, 2002), <http://www.ndi.org/node/12997>.

Tim Unwin, “Social Media, Democracy, and Good Governance,” in *Commonwealth Governance Handbook, 2012/2013*, (London: Commonwealth Secretariat, 2013), 44 – 46, <http://www.commonwealthgovernance.org/assets/uploads/2012/10/Social-media-democracy-and-good-governance.pdf>.

Toby Mendel, *Handbook on International Standards and Media Law in the Arab World*, (Halifax: Centre for Law and Democracy, and Brussels: International Federation of Journalists, 2013), <http://www.law-democracy.org/live/wp-content/uploads/2013/09/Handbook.IFJ-CLD-MENA-region.13.08.pdf>.

USAID, “The Role of Media in Democracy: A Strategic Approach” (Washington, D.C.: USAID, June 1999), <http://www.ifes.org/~media/Files/Publications/Money%20and%20Politics/Research%20and%20Publications/Reports%20and%20Papers/English/pnace630.pdf>.

WNYC Radio, “Radio Rookies Youth Media Resources,” *WNYC Radio*, accessed January 30, 2014, <http://www.wnyc.org/shows/rookies/youth-media-resources/>.

Michael Karanicolas, *A Truly World-Wide Web: Assessing the Internet from the Perspective of Human Rights*, (Halifax: Centre for Law and Democracy, 2012), <http://www.law-democracy.org/wp-content/uploads/2010/07/final-Internet.pdf>.

The World Bank, *World Development Report 2007 (Development and the Next Generation)* (Washington, D.C.: World Bank, 2007), accessed December 1, 2013, <http://documents.worldbank.org/curated/en/2006/09/7053031/world-development-report-2007-development-next-generation>.

USAID, *Youth in Development, Realizing the Demographic Opportunity* (Washington, D.C.: USAID, October 2012), accessed December 10, 2013, http://www.usaid.gov/sites/default/files/documents/1870/Youth_in_Development_Policy_0.pdf.

John Burgess. “Media Literacy 2.0: A Sampling of Programs Around the World” (Washington, DC: Center for International Media Assistance, November 2013), accessed October 26, 2015: <http://www.cima.ned.org/resource/media-literacy-2-0-a-sampling-of-programs-around-the-world/>

Paul Mihailidis. *Media Literacy and the Emerging Citizen: Youth, Engagement and Participation in Digital Culture* (New York: Peter Lang Publishers, 2014).

GUIDANCE NOTE: YOUTH AND RULE OF LAW

INTRODUCTION

“Rule of law” is the framework within which a society functions. Ideally, the rule of law is accountable, transparent governance that equitably enforces societal norms, typically embodied in laws and regulations, to create a “level playing field” for all members of a society.²²⁴ In relatively developed regions, such as E&E, enforcement comes through an independent judiciary. But in every society, rule of law exists (or does not exist) far more broadly, based upon citizens’ understandings of what is right, just, and fair and citizens’ enforcement of those norms through social sanction and personal actions.²²⁵ Rule of law is not merely structures and institutions, it is a culture.

In the E&E region, this culture was damaged by years spent under authoritarian regimes, and lost confidence in public institutions is still a serious problem. In many E&E countries, democratic reforms were more rhetorical than real.²²⁶ Where laws were changed to reflect a more democratic future, enforcement lagged.²²⁷ Political prosecutions using rule of law structures while violating its spirit have been seen, notable recently in the case of former Ukrainian Prime Minister Yuliya Tymoshenko.²²⁸ Improving this situation by developing the culture of rule of law— transparency, justice, fairness, freedom, etc. — is where programming targeted to young people can excel. However, rule of law programs typically focus on adult institutions such as bar associations, prosecutors, judges, court clerks, defense lawyers, prison administration, judicial training centers, etc. These are often essential components of an effective rule of law program, but youth are typically not the current judges, administrators, lawyers and prison guards (and if they are, they are likely not influential). However, young people will be composing the ranks of these institutions in the future.

The development of civil society, effective journalism, and civic education are all parts of the environmental structure supporting the social enforcement of rule of law norms. However, entrenched economic and political interests invested in a predatory state and a society unrestrained by rule of law may fight against the development of this structure, and work to undermine institutions and the overall rule of law culture.

In the E&E region, rule of law and its supporting culture has reached a pivotal point. While the levels of political openness and democracy have varied in different countries, people who are now in their early twenties had a different civic and political experience than their parents’. According to the Economist Intelligence Unit’s measure of democratic development,²²⁹ the highest ranked countries of focus in this paper, Serbia and Moldova, are “flawed” democracies which place no better than 56 and 69 out of the 167 states included in the survey. The lowest ranked states, Azerbaijan and Belarus, are categorized as “authoritarian” and are ranked at 148 and 125, respectively. Trust in governance is little better: the best performing E&E country in the Corruption Perceptions Index is Georgia, ranked at 50 of 175 countries and the worst, Ukraine ranked at 142.²³⁰ Performance on Freedom House’s index was similar.²³¹

224. Wade Channell, *Lessons Not Learned: Problems with Western Aid for Law Reform in Postcommunist Countries* (Washington, D.C.: Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, May 2005), 3.

225. Kirsti Samuels, Rule of Law Reform in Post-Conflict Countries, Operational Initiatives and Lessons Learnt, *Social Development Paper No. 37* (2006), 17, 18.

226. “Democracy Index 2014: Democracy and Its Discontents,” *Economist Intelligence Unit* (2015), accessed October 12, 2015, 5, 8.

227. Wade Channell, *Lessons Not Learned: Problems with Western Aid for Law Reform in Postcommunist Countries* (Washington, D.C.: Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, May 2005), 3.

228. “Democracy Index 2014: Democracy and Its Discontents,” *Economist Intelligence Unit* (2015), accessed October 12, 2015, 5, 8.

229. *Ibid.*

230. “Corruption Perceptions Index, 2014,” *Transparency International* (2015), accessed October 12, 2015.

Fundamentally, the rule of law is about good governance—a state without the rule of law is a predatory society, with the state preying on its citizens and citizens preying on each other, resulting in social and economic stagnation. Without effective rule of law, as shown by governmental transparency, justice, fairness, citizens’ freedom, as well as societal efficacy in containing crime and corruption, people lose faith in democratic processes and turn to authoritarian alternatives.²³² Young people may turn to youth gangs, criminal networks, and insurgent organizations. These failures also slow economic growth and damage a society’s ability to address issues such as unemployment, healthcare, and education.²³³ Given the opportunities to support the development of rule of law among youth in the E&E region, this is not a necessary or acceptable outcome.

BROADER ENVIRONMENTAL CONDITIONS IMPACTING YOUTH AND RULE OF LAW

Two of the three expected outcomes of USAID’s Youth in Development Policy are directly related to rule of law:

- 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 organizations²³⁴

Economic and social opportunities are increased for youth, as well as society as a whole, when:

- citizens understand how their government works and what it does;
- government treats citizens fairly;
- government respects and protects property rights;
- people have the right to speak freely; and
- people choose to obey the law.

Youth also avoid participation in youth gangs, criminal networks, and insurgent organizations when other options exist – real alternatives for youth exist when laws are respected and there is social and economic growth – outgrowths of effective rule of law culture and institutions.

For some youth, their primary institutional experience with the rule of law is the criminal justice system. While most E&E countries have a relatively low percentage of prisoners under the age of 18 (ranging from 0.5 percent in Bosnia and Herzegovina to 2.1 percent in Albania), this still accounts for tens of thousands of young people incarcerated across the E&E region. Further the number of young prisoners swells considerably when taking into account those who are over 18, but still within the youth demographic. Young men and boys are primarily affected; in none of the E&E countries do female prisoners account for more than seven percent of a country’s prison population.²³⁵

231. “Freedom in the World, 2015,” *Freedom House* (2015), accessed October 12, 2015.

232. Larry Diamond, “The Democratic Rollback: The Resurgence of the Predatory State,” *Foreign Affairs* (March/April 2008).

233. *Ibid.*

234. USAID, “Youth in Development, Realizing the Demographic Opportunity,” (Washington, D.C.: USAID, October 2012), 1,

235. “Europe: World Prison Brief,” *International Centre for Prison Studies* (n.d.), accessed January 30, 2014.

The economic situation of young people is often what leads to encounters with the criminal justice system. For those out of school, young people are divided between the employed and unemployed. By one ranking, Kosovo has the highest youth unemployment rate in the world, at 73 percent. Bosnia and Herzegovina, the Republic of Macedonia, Serbia, and Armenia closely follow within the top ten most affected countries with about half of their youth unemployed. Ukraine is the best performer in the E&E region; however, its youth unemployment rate is still over 18 percent.²³⁶

High unemployment exacerbates economic inequality and incentivizes anti-social activity, especially when youth view their situation as an outgrowth of a predatory economy, where privileged individuals take advantage of corruption to benefit at the expense of others. Unemployment is not merely an economic injury; it is a social injury that undermines young people's investment in society and willingness to follow its laws and norms, sometimes with violent outcomes.²³⁷ That being said, youth unemployment can also be a resource for CSOs, who are often short of resources but can provide guidance and valuable workplace experience to young people in need of a leg up in difficult economies.

Besides the employed versus unemployed groups of youth in E&E, the other major divide is between students and non-students, with the largest break occurring at the time of university attendance.²³⁸ Rule of law programs can take advantage of scholastic structures to support their work, particularly in political and legal education. However, the ease with which university youth can be engaged creates a real danger of easily ignoring harder to reach youth who have finished school and who make up a growing proportion of the youth demographic through the tertiary education years.

Broad *de jure* equality is common in E&E countries, but this does not always translate into actual or *de facto* equality. Official but not universal languages, as in Georgia, where a significant portion of the population does not speak Georgian, challenge the likelihood of fair treatment of minority groups by government. In Kosovo, Serbian opposition to the majority Albanian government has led to deep alienation from the government, as indicated by abysmal voter turnout figures in 2013 elections. Roma face deep challenges across the region, with Roma youth paying the greatest price for their marginalization across the region.

STRATEGIES AND SUPPORTS FOR YOUTH RELATED TO RULE OF LAW

Measures designed to support justice, fairness, and civic freedoms all contribute to the development of the culture necessary to support rule of law. Many key components of rule of law programming can be found in programs supporting civil society development or the capacity of local journalists.

Understanding the importance of these cross-cutting programs for creating a culture that supports rule of law is essential to developing effective rule of law institutions, as institutional structures and processes are influenced by broader society. The greatest opportunity for young people to influence rule of law institutions will most likely be from the outside. As youth, they will not have either the position or seniority to truly affect the institutions from the inside.

Young lawyers associations are where civil society and rule of law most clearly intersect; these will be the reservoir from which future judges, prosecutors, defense lawyers, legislators, civil society leaders, and others will likely be drawn. Given the scope of rule of law programs, a variety of international organizations support these types of associations, including those specializing in politics, human rights, elections, as well as rule of law.

236. "The World Factbook, 2013-2014," *United State Central Intelligence Agency* (n.d.), accessed December 4, 2013.

237. Dan Bilefsky, "Protests Over Government and Economy Roil Bosnia," *New York Times* (February 7, 2014),

238. "The World Factbook, 2013-2014," *United State Central Intelligence Agency* (n.d.), accessed December 4, 2013.

In Armenia, USAID is supporting the American Bar Association's (ABA) work with the Armenian Young Lawyers Association national network of anti-corruption centers. At these centers, citizens can access legal and other support in reporting corruption,²³⁹ complementing USAID Armenia's work with the Independent Bar Association and the judiciary.²⁴⁰ Another aspect of this program is training for young lawyers on the European Court of Human Rights jurisprudence and administrative law. This directly builds the technical side of rule of law by teaching young lawyers important substantive legal issues. Additionally, rule of law culture is advanced by emphasizing international human and political rights, standards, and norms. The ABA currently runs similar programs targeting youth in Belarus²⁴¹ and Ukraine.²⁴² USAID Macedonia provided funding for members of the Macedonian Young Lawyers' Association and the European Law Students Association to travel to Sweden and Estonia to learn how legal organizations and other CSOs interact with justice sector institutions in other countries.²⁴³

Programs working on legal reform and the enforcement of laws and regulations also implicate rule of law issues, and can easily be tailored to include youth components. One example is the International Foundation for Electoral Systems' (IFES) Increased Trust in the Electoral Process project, which included the Georgian Young Lawyers Association in electoral reform roundtables.²⁴⁴ The Open Society Foundation is working with the Macedonian Young Lawyers' Association on providing legal support to citizens whose requests to government for public information are improperly denied.²⁴⁵

Some programs target law students regardless of their interest in legal CSOs. The ABA ran client counseling competitions in universities across Kosovo, teaching legal students how to interact with their clients.²⁴⁶ Other programs target students with broader interests. The "Teenlaw" curriculum was created to promote formal high school education regarding law, rights, and responsibilities, and encouraging dialogue amongst young people about the law.²⁴⁷ Internews Bosnia and Herzegovina has produced a media primer which, in addition to teaching journalistic ethics, covers laws regarding freedom of expression, privacy, defamation, and access to information.²⁴⁸ The Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE) works to educate young people, targeting high school and college students and political party activists, about prosecution for war crimes.²⁴⁹

Education on broader civic and political rights is crucial to developing a rule of law culture. Education can take a variety of forms, from essay contests for high school students as recently implemented by Strengthening Election Administration in Kosovo (SEAK II), or creating a Democracy and Citizenship Handbook for university students in Georgia (Increased Trust in the Electoral Process) for use in courses in 21 universities. IFES' Electoral Administration Capacity Development program in Moldova launched a voter education campaign pinned, in part, on a hip-hop remake of a traditional folk song,

239. Homepage, *Anti-Corruption Center* (n.d.), accessed January 30, 2014.

240. "Armenia Current Programs," *American Bar Association* (n.d.), accessed January 30, 2014.

241. "Belarus Programs," *American Bar Association* (n.d.), accessed January 30, 2014.

242. "Ukraine Current Programs," *American Bar Association* (n.d.), accessed January 30, 2014.

243. "Inspiring Civil Society's Role in the Justice Sector," *Tetra Tech, DPK* (April 2013), accessed January 7, 2014.

244. International Foundation for Electoral Systems (IFES), "IFES Convenes Fifth Civil Society Roundtable on Electoral Reform," *IFES* (February 1, 2013), accessed January 30, 2014.

245. Homepage, *Foundation Open Society Macedonia* (n.d.), accessed January 7, 2014.

246. "Kosovo (Past Program)" *American Bar Association* (n.d.), accessed January 30, 2014.

247. "Teenlaw," *American Bar Association Rule of Law Initiative, Kosovo* (September 2007),

248. "First Bosnian Media Law Primer Published," *Internews* (November 30, 2012),

249. OSCE Mission to Serbia, "Rule of Law/Human Rights," *OSCE Mission to Serbia* (n.d.), accessed January 9, 2014.

directly targeting youth.²⁵⁰ In Ukraine, the ABA encouraged support among youth for tolerance, diversity, and non-discrimination by supporting student discussion groups, campaigns on inter-cultural issues (both traditional and through new social media outlets), and ethnic campus organizations.²⁵¹

KEY CONSIDERATIONS FOR USAID MISSION STAFF

In developing programming for youth and rule of law, USAID should consider:

- 1. Are there programs within related sectors (legislative strengthening, electoral reform, media support, civil society strengthening) that can be coordinated?** Most projects have rule of law components, such as sectoral legal reforms, enforcement of sectoral laws and regulations, and sectoral civic education. Rule of law programming should include coordination of these various sectoral efforts under a broader umbrella.
- 2. Does the programming recognize the transitory nature of youth?** Programming in other sectors can often assume increasing capacity of the target audience. Youth programming must consider that new people are constantly joining the demographic group and trained, experienced people are constantly leaving. Youth programming should consider its foundational role in determining how people interact with rule of law issues as adults, whether as practitioners, (e.g., judges, lawyers, legislators, police officers, administrators), or as participants (e.g., litigants, defendants, jurors, or witnesses).
- 3. Does the programming reach across the various fissures subdividing youth?** Programming need not address all of the issues, but program design should consider gender, ethnicity, religion, language, age, employment and schooling status, and military status. Youth facing or already in the criminal justice system are an important demographic rarely addressed in programming.
- 4. Does the programming develop critical thinking skills?** Effective rule of law requires citizens to hold their government and fellow citizens accountable. Doing so fairly, recognizing people's rights and freedoms as well as their duties, is an important part of rule of law education.
- 5. Will the programming develop rule of law institutions in the future, in part by encouraging qualified youth to work in rule of law related fields?** Governmental institutions focused on rule of law, whether the judiciary, the legislature, police, prosecutors, or others, as well as criminal defense attorneys, and CSOs focused on human rights and other rule of law issues, depend on well qualified youth joining their ranks. Educating young people about the importance of these fields is critical to youth programming.
- 6. Does the programming inform youth about the rights and duties of citizens and government officials?** Not all youth intend to work in the rule of law sector, but all citizens should understand what they should expect from government, how to challenge government officials (whether for decisions they disagree with or if they see wrongdoing such as corruption), and what their duties as citizens are.

250. Maxim Tsurkan, *Lume-Lume-Soro-Lume-Cover*, Video, performed by Maxim Turksan (2011), Youtube.

251. "Ukraine Current Programs," *American Bar Association* (n.d.), accessed January 7, 2014.

7. Does the programming build on existing multi-national anti-corruption and open government initiatives, such as the Open Government Partnership (OGP)²⁵² and the Extractive Industries Transparency Initiative (EITI)²⁵³?

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Extractive Industries Transparency Initiative, <http://eiti.org/>.

Georgian Young Lawyers' Association, <http://gyla.ge/eng/news> (accessed January 7, 2014).

International Association for Court Administration, <http://www.iaca.ws/>.

International Association of Judges, <http://www.iaj-uim.org/home/>.

International Network to Promote the Rule of Law, <http://inprol.org/>.

Macedonian Young Lawyers Association, <http://www.myla.org.mk/index.php/en/>

Open Government Partnership, <http://www.opengovpartnership.org/>.

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252. Homepage, *Open Government Partnership* (n.d.).

253. EITI International Secretariat, Homepage, *Extractive Industries Transparency Initiative* (n.d.).

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