



**USAID**  
FROM THE AMERICAN PEOPLE



# *Promising Youth Development Strategies*



## **Community Youth Mapping**

A TOOL FOR YOUTH PARTICIPATION  
AND PROGRAM DESIGN

Community Youth Mapping is a youth-centered participatory development strategy that engages young people and adults in canvassing their communities to document community-based resources, needs, and opportunities. Seeing the community through the eyes of young people is, to many, a more comprehensive assessment of what a community has to offer.

**Educational Quality  
Improvement Program 3**

**Engaging and Preparing  
Youth for Work, Civil Society,  
and Family Life**

## Promising Youth Development Strategies

# Community Youth Mapping

## A Tool for Youth Participation and Program Design

**Primary Author:**

Lisa R. Kaufman, Academy for Educational Development (AED)

**Contributors:**

Kaitlyn Crooks, AED

Raul Ratcliffe, AED

Frantz-Harold Seide, Education Development Center, Inc. (EDC)

Laura Van Voorhees, AED

Shoroke Zedan, AED

**Design and Production:**

Rebecca Driscoll, EDC

Patricia Konarski, EDC

Nancy Meaker Chervin, EDC

**Photo Credits:**

Haiti Project Staff, EDC

Produced by Education Development Center, Inc.

Under the EQUIP3 Leader Agreement No. GDG-A-00-03-00010-00

EDC wishes to thank Clare Ignatowski, the EQUIP3 AOTR at USAID for her guidance in the development of this brief

This report was written as a part of a subaward to the Academy for Educational Development (AED). Since its publication, FHI 360 has acquired the programs, expertise, and assets of AED.

November 2011 | [www.equip123.net](http://www.equip123.net)

This report is made possible by the generous support of the American people through the United States Agency for International Development (USAID). This content is the responsibility of Education Development Center, Inc. (EDC), and does not necessarily reflect the views of USAID or the United States Government.

---

## Introduction

Community youth mapping (CYM) is a youth-centered participatory development strategy that engages young people and adults in canvassing their communities to document community-based resources, needs, and opportunities. Seeing the community through the eyes of young people provides a more comprehensive assessment of what a community has to offer. The resulting information describes the youth's living conditions and economic situations as seen by the youth themselves and members of their communities, and records the youth's own suggestions for improving their social status.

Youth mapping has been used domestically and internationally with urban- and rural-based youth, as well as with in-school and out-of-school young people to address a variety of issues that include education reform, livelihood development, anti-trafficking, community strengthening, and peace and security.

Youth mapping findings may be used to inform program design and implementation and to ensure that activities are responsive to youth needs and the on-the-ground reality. Among the best practices in youth participation is an emphasis on including youth in the design phase of a project, rather than later, and for a longer time frame. Youth mapping represents a tested and replicable approach to do so.

This document highlights lessons learned in implementing this innovative youth development model internationally, with specific attention to how youth mapping has been adapted for varied purposes in diverse international settings, and youth mapping's impact on individuals and communities. This document focuses on examples from CYM programs implemented by the Academy for Educational Development (AED, now FHI360).<sup>i</sup> Examples are drawn from the adaptation of youth mapping in eight countries: Chad, Egypt, Haiti, Jordan, Kosovo, Niger, Rwanda, and Sudan.



## Background and History

### Youth Mapping as a Tool for Youth Participation and Program Design

Youth mapping is grounded in positive youth development principles and practices, in which young people are not only active participants in their learning but also work in partnership with adults to lead community development projects. The growing interest in youth participation accompanies a shift within the development community toward viewing youth as assets. From this viewpoint, youth are collectively and individually seen as partners and leaders in development at the local, national, regional and international levels, rather than a problem to be addressed. Overall, there is a general movement by development agencies and policymakers to engage in work with young people who act as advisors, colleagues and stakeholders.<sup>1</sup>

Despite these gains toward achieving greater youth participation in projects, research reveals that there are few partnerships that systematically involve young people at all stages of development and policy practice for youth.<sup>2</sup> In part, this speaks to the relatively new and evolving nature of youth participation as an approach to youth development. Nevertheless, as programs continue to make youth participation a priority, a greater number of models, such as youth mapping, are becoming available to help organizations meaningfully include youth in project design, implementation, and evaluation.

### Overview and History of Youth Mapping

Community youth mapping was created in 1991 by the New York City Department of Youth Services as a way to provide information needed for a citywide information sharing phone line called a YouthLine. Young people from across New York City canvassed their own neighborhoods in search of places to go, things to do, and opportunities for young people, children and families in the city. The young people brought back more than 10,000 resources that were

---

<sup>i</sup> This report was written under a subaward to the Academy for Educational Development (AED). Since its publication, FHI360 has acquired the programs, expertise, and assets of AED.

entered into a database by young people themselves. The information was then mapped using Geographic Information System (GIS) software. Since 1995, Community *Youth Mapping™* has been promoted and utilized by AED as part of civil society, education, health and community-

## For More Information

The following resources are available for additional information on community youth mapping:

### **FHI360 (formerly AED)**

Raul Ratcliffe

Director of *YouthMapping*

(202) 884-8295

<http://www.communityyouthmapping.org>

*YouthMapping* Toolkit

Raul Ratcliffe, Eric Kilbride and Richard Murphy, 2002

Available for purchase at

<http://cydpr.aed.org/products.htm>

### **iMapAmerica and iMapVentures (formerly Youthline America)**

Richard Murphy

[info@imapamerica.org](mailto:info@imapamerica.org)

<http://imapamerica.org/>

Internationally, youth mapping is currently implemented as a component of several projects funded by the United States Agency for International Development (USAID), including the following:

- Education Reform Program (ERP) in Egypt
- IDEJEN Out-of-School Livelihood Initiative in Haiti
- Akazi Kanoze Youth Livelihoods Program in Rwanda
- Peace through Development Program (PDEV) in Chad and Niger
- Anti-Trafficking Program in Kosovo
- Education Reform for the Knowledge Economy (ERfKE) in Jordan
- Darfur Community Strengthening Project in Sudan

Overall, youth mapping is a strategy that incorporates local knowledge in the planning and management of development projects. It is highly customizable and involves young people in mapping their neighborhoods, documenting existing resources, and exploring the issues

building initiatives in over 150 communities across the U.S. and several countries in the Middle East, Africa and Europe. Youth mapping continues to be conducted domestically and internationally by other organizations such as iMapAmerica and iMapVentures.

for young people in their communities. At the core, youth mapping is a strategy created “by youth, for youth” that links data management with service learning, skills development, civic engagement, and problem solving.

Youth mappers are trained to use selected survey tools to explore their neighborhoods and gather information on the resources and supports available for young people. In most settings, the youth mappers not only use the information gathered to create databases of places local resources and youth-friendly activities, but also to design youth-led community improvement projects.

The goal of youth mapping is broader than data collection and mapping. CYM links mapping to action planning and community development projects aimed at improving social, cultural, and economic opportunities for youth. Youth mapping participants report gaining valuable livelihood skills and increased self-confidence from their training and work as youth mappers. In addition, the information collected becomes an invaluable resource for local, national, and international stakeholders that can inform such areas as:

- Community planning
- Income generation initiatives
- Vocational training programs
- Anti-trafficking awareness activities

Youth mapping stands out from other youth participation approaches by the degree that it is action oriented. Instead of asking youth what they think, such as through an interview or focus group, youth themselves are sent out into their neighborhoods to ask other youth, community leaders, and business owners for their opinions and information about services. Through this process of speaking with community members, taking surveys, and inputting and reflecting on the data, youth become more engaged in their communities. Involving youth in these activities provides them with both immediate and long-term skills that allow them to become agents of change within their communities.

## How Does Community Youth Mapping Work?

Through an inclusive and participatory process, youth mappers in AED's *YouthMapping* programs receive training in data collection methodologies and guidance through data analysis, participate in dissemination of the information collected, and often develop youth-led projects based on their findings. Community youth mapping follows a customizable 10-step process<sup>3</sup>:

1. **Community commitment:** The first step in gaining community commitment is to identify a neutral organization to convene a meeting of public and private community players. The purpose of this orientation is to bring together partners to make a presentation about *YouthMapping* and answer questions about the process and level of involvement required.
2. **Formation of an advisory board:** The advisory board's role is to help support, promote, plan, and implement community mapping activities. It is also responsible for fundraising. This advisory board should be composed of a mix of public, private, and nonprofit leaders and have no more than 15 members.
3. **Project management:** The convening organization may or may not be the lead organization. The lead organization should be a youth-related or another appropriate organization that will manage the development and implementation of the mapping activity. This results in a dedicated staff, including a program coordinator, for the implementation of the activity.
4. **Preplanning youth mapping:** Before beginning the mapping process, the Mapping Team must:
  - Identify where they are going to map (i.e., define neighborhood boundaries and what community means to them as a group) and what they want to map (businesses, community services, etc.)
  - Develop survey tools based on *YouthMapping* templates.
  - Acquire meeting space and work out a transportation strategy

The youth mappers and field supervisors must:

- Be clear on their responsibilities
- Have sufficient supplies for daily mapping

- Be familiar with the tools they will use during the data collection process
5. **Recruitment of the Mapping Team:** The Mapping Team consists of individuals who will have direct working responsibility for designing and implementing the mapping activity (field supervisors and youth mappers). At least 75 percent of the Mapping Team should be young people. These young people will not only help design and plan the mapping protocol; they are also the only individuals who will do the field work. It is important to consider providing stipends for the Mapping Team.
  6. **Training of Youth Mappers and Field supervisors:** Through training, young people acquire the skills necessary to use the survey tools, conduct challenging interviews, and set goals for the process. The training also covers: the history of *YouthMapping*, expectations and schedule, the world of work, conflict resolution, communication, team-building, inter-personal relations, youth-adult partnerships, and problem solving.
  7. **Mapping—the field work:** After training, the youth members of the Mapping Team will take the protocol into the community to gather the necessary information. The daily routine involves the following tasks:
    - Check in with supervisors
    - Review daily goals
    - Break up into groups with field supervisors
    - Pick up supplies
    - Do team-building
    - Review assignment
    - Canvass their assigned area
    - Collect surveys at the end of the day
    - Attend a debriefing session to review the day
    - Enter completed surveys into the database

Sometimes mapping field work is completed in a relatively short period of time (e.g., one or two weeks of concentrated daily work). The duration of the field work is determined by on the community and the advisory board.

8. **Analysis of mapping results:** Analysis of the mapping information permits the Mapping Team to determine the following:
  - The exact nature of the resources that are available to young people in their community
  - Where, how, when, and for whom resources are available
  - Which types of resources appear to be missing, inadequately available, inaccessible, or poorly provided
  - Which parts of the community are resource poor
  
9. **Reporting and using the findings:** A thorough analysis of mapping results will lead to a report that summarizes what the team found and presents their analysis and recommendations. Mapping Teams can report and use the findings of their field work in a variety of formats, such as the media, focus group discussions, events, and directories.
  
10. **Evaluation:** The purpose of this evaluation is to determine the impact that CYM may have had on the youth mappers, field supervisors, and community partners. The evaluation step can be used to bring people back together, discuss lessons learned, assess the data, and make adjustments to the process.

*“What I learned in terms of methodology with PDEV is what guides me in most of my professional activities today. PDEV has helped me and a lot of Nigerien youth to be empowered in a different way than we used to. It showed us that we could work ourselves on grabbing opportunities available to us but for which we never dared to go after them. I feel empowered, I have become the youth leader that I wanted and even more.”*

*—Halilatou Issoufou Mamane, Niger*



## Using Youth Mapping Internationally for Targeted Purposes

Youth mapping has been used in diverse settings, for a wide range of purposes, and with youth from different situations. Internationally, the youth mapping steps need to be adapted according to the local context and purpose. Nonetheless, adaptations to CYM share the commonality of involving young people as youth mappers. Figure 1 provides an overview of the use of CYM in Chad, Egypt, Haiti, Jordan, Kosovo, Niger, Rwanda, and Sudan.

The youth-led survey tool has helped international projects address complex issues, such as livelihood development, peace and security, education reform, anti-trafficking, and community strengthening. Figure 2 provides a snapshot of how youth mapping has been used as a tool to address these different issues.

Figure 1: International Community Youth Mapping At-A-Glance

	CHAD	EGYPT	HAITI	JORDAN	KOSOVO	NIGER	RWANDA	SUDAN	
<b>Project</b>	Sahel's Peace Through Development Initiative	EQUIP2/Egypt Education Reform Program (ERP)	EQUIP3/IDEJEN Haitian Out-of-School Livelihood Initiative	EQUIP2/Education Reform for the Knowledge Economy (ERfKE)	Kosovo Anti-Trafficking Program (KAP)	Sahel's Peace Through Development Initiative	EQUIP3/Akazi Kanoze Youth Livelihoods Program	Darfur Community Strengthening Project	
<b>Dates</b>	2008–2010	2005–2007	2004–2010	2004–2008	2009–2011	2008–2010	2009–2014	2007–2009	
<b>Project focus</b>	Counter-extremism/Youth empowerment	Education reform	Livelihood development	Education reform	Anti-trafficking, youth engagement	Counter-extremism/Youth empowerment	Livelihood development	Community peace-building	
<b>Youth target</b>	At-risk youth	Vocational and technical school	Out-of-school youth	School-to-work transition	At-risk youth	At-risk youth	Out-of-school youth	Out-of-school youth	
<b>Start:</b>	# mappers # trainers # supervisors # communities	34 mappers 5 trainers/ supervisors 1 region	500 mappers 40 supervisors 3 Governates	100 mappers 6 trainers 12 supervisors 5 regions	346 youth mappers 16 supervisors 4 regions	45 mappers 10 trainers 6 supervisors 3 regions	30 mappers 1 region	45 mappers 6 supervisors 4 sectors	Data unavailable
<b>End:</b>	# mappers # trainers # supervisors # communities	69 mappers 8 trainers/ supervisors 4 regions	4,000 mappers 125 trainers 300 supervisors 6 Governates	180 mappers 15 trainers 25 supervisors 6 regions	Data unavailable	Data unavailable	270 mappers 5 regions	Project started 2009 Mapping started in 2010	Data unavailable
<b>Return-on-Investment</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Youth traveled to Egypt and the U.S. to exchange lessons learned.</li> <li>Youth development initiatives in sports, dance, and theatre supported in each region.</li> <li>Networks crossed ethnic and religious lines.</li> <li>Youth organizations trained—now funded for surveys.</li> <li>Mappers employed by Government of Chad for census.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Launched the Youth Development Community Association</li> <li>Egyptian master trainers provided training in Jordan and Sudan.</li> <li>Ongoing scholarships and IT internships established.</li> <li>6,000+ records in CYM Web-based data management system on youth-friendly locations and services</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>youth mappers launched a community cyber center, restaurant, and youth entertainment center.</li> <li>Project produced a French CYM guide and toolkit, and a training of trainers curriculum</li> <li>AED-trained master trainer is now leading CYM training in Chad, Niger, and Rwanda</li> </ul>			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>YouthMapper Association launched.</li> <li>Youth traveled to Egypt to exchange lessons learned.</li> <li>Youth development initiatives in sports, dance, and theatre supported in each region.</li> <li>Youth networks crossed ethnic and religious lines.</li> <li>Youth organizations trained—now funded for surveys</li> </ul>			

Figure 2: Use of CYM to Address Different Issues



## Livelihood Development

In Haiti and Rwanda, CYM strategies were designed as part of livelihood development projects for out-of-school youth. The projects included a micro-finance component for youth to build businesses based on needs and resources identified by the mapping exercise.

### Haiti: Youth-Led Businesses

The EQUIP3/IDEJEN Haitian Out-of-School Livelihood Initiative aimed to provide education and job training for youth ages 15–24 with little to no formal education in selected regions of Haiti. Following the mapping effort, young people worked with local NGOs to develop business plans based on the gaps found. Individuals and teams of youth contacted community leaders to brainstorm and vet project ideas, and then submitted business proposals to IDEJEN project staff. IDEJEN selected three projects for seed funding in 2006, in each of the three pilot areas: (1) cyber center in Jérémie, (2) community restaurant in Nbele, and (3) cultural/entertainment youth center in Port-au-Prince. All projects were started and managed by the youth themselves. In Carrefour-Feuilles and Port-au-Prince the projects were sustained until the 2010 earthquake. In Jérémie, there were infrastructure and technical issues with the cyber center, and it is no longer operating.

## Peace and Security

In Chad and Niger, CYM was implemented through the Peace through Development Program and utilized mapping to engage young people in joint decision-making and problem solving as a means of preventing involvement in rebel activity and political extremism.

### Youth Mapping in Chad: Working Together with Mutual Respect

CYM strategies intentionally bring together youth from various backgrounds. In Chad, where Sahel's Peace through Development project involved young people from multiple ethnic groups, some youth began the training not wanting to work together. In one instance, a young man and woman from the Arab and Zakawa ethnic groups requested to not to be placed together. However after a short time, these two individuals not only successfully mapped five districts in N'Djamena, but they worked together so well that they eventually decided to marry. Across countries, youth mappers have reported learning important lessons from those with "different" backgrounds.

## Anti-trafficking

In the Kosovo Anti-Trafficking Program (KAP), CYM strategies targeted human trafficking awareness and education. Youth mapping was used to determine what people knew about trafficking, what resources existed and what information was lacking to create targeted education campaigns.

## Community Strengthening

In the Darfur Community Strengthening Project, local NGOs, parent-teacher associations (PTA), and youth associations developed surveys and subsequently projects to strengthen peace-building efforts in local communities.

## Education Reform

In Egypt and Jordan, youth mapping was part of an education reform initiative. In Egypt, youth identified skill sets that employers were looking for in the current marketplace and reported on the gaps in the vocational and technical education curriculum. In Jordan, youth mapping supported students in school-to-work transitions by helping them make appropriate career decisions based on the labor market findings identified by the mapping effort.

### **Egypt: CYM for Education Reform**

Through the USAID/Egypt Education Reform Program (ERP), CYM focused on identifying gaps in Egypt's vocational (technical) education curriculum. Vocational school students interviewed employers and other community members to determine how well their education was preparing them for the local and global marketplace. After analyzing their findings, Youth Mappers determined that their school curriculum needed to be updated to gain competitive employment. The students presented their findings to the Ministry of Education, project partners, and the vocational school staff. As a result, the Ministry of Education updated their curriculum based on their findings. In Egypt, Youth Mapping not only impacted education reform, but also enabled youth to establish relationships with national and local youth development policymakers and practitioners, program operators, and research organizations.

## **Tailoring Youth Mapping Steps to International Contexts**

Project managers and CYM trainers need to tailor the ten steps to the context their program operates in and to the goals of the program. These recommendations fall broadly into three categories: design, implementation, and sustainability. Like all development initiatives, these elements are highly inter-related with a wide-degree of overlap.

### **Designing CYM Strategies**

**Involve young people in the design of CYM strategies from the beginning.** The CYM concept is based on positive youth development principles and practices where youth are seen as assets rather than as a problem to be addressed. In some countries, the opinions and thoughts of youth are not highly valued. It is important to talk to local stakeholders during the design phase to assess how the process aligns with traditional beliefs and local culture. For example, in Sudan, communities tended to be suspicious about surveys, and the idea of sending a young person out to collect information from the community was initially met with great apprehension. In Kosovo, it was difficult to get all parties to agree to implement CYM as designed because of concerns about the dangers of youth asking questions about human trafficking. In these types of situations, it is important to stress the critical role that young people play in youth mapping. Youth should be included from the

beginning in a manner that takes into account specific contextual dynamics related to youth participation.

**Design CYM strategies based on available infrastructure.** It is important to consider what resources and technical infrastructure exist in-country, and how this might impact the collection and use of data or other elements of the CYM. In Sudan for example, youth mappers collected thousands of data points but without computers or other technical tools, the team had limited capacity for systemic analysis. The CYM project team in Chad addressed this by hiring a local organization to lead the data processing. This enabled the youth to look more comprehensively at the data, and then create and implement actions plans based on the findings.

**Understand the different strategies that CYM may require in urban, suburban, and rural areas.** It is important to consider whether different strategies will be required across project sites. In Haiti, the youth mapping team applied the same approach across sites but experienced different challenges. In rural areas like Jérémie, for example, the challenges were related to connecting with young people,<sup>4</sup> whereas in places like Carrefour-Feuilles, an urban center in the capital city of Port-au-Prince, safety and transport was an issue because the mapping took place in difficult zones.<sup>5</sup> While most strategies remain consistent across sites, implementers expressed the need to understand and plan for different obstacles related to transportation and data dissemination posed by urban and rural settings.

**Develop strong local partnerships.** Strong local partnerships are a key component of the CYM design strategy and are particularly important in societies where youth are disempowered. It was noted in Sudan that “you are only as good as your local partner...youth are particularly disempowered in society, so it has been difficult for them to influence community members and local authorities. We started involving the neighborhood Popular Committee (i.e., adults) in all our dealings with the youth associations to ensure accountability and provide more credibility, especially when interacting with local government authorities.”<sup>6</sup> Establishing and nurturing local partnerships is key to successful youth mapping implementation.

**Link CYM strategies across projects and countries.** Sometimes youth mapping activities benefit from intentionally building in networking activities that bring youth mappers together to scale their mapping activities and share experiences.<sup>7</sup> The Darfur Community

Strengthening Project organized events that brought together youth mappers from all over the region to share their experiences and develop best practices. However, sometimes CYM strategies are narrowly focused at the village level, so there are insufficient opportunities for participants to learn from the experiences of youth in other communities.

### Implementing CYM Strategies

**Recognize that CYM is more than a component within a larger USAID initiative.** The CYM strategy can be either broad based (e.g., general assessment of resources) or focused (e.g., livelihood development for out-of-school youth), depending on the project needs. It is important to recognize that youth mapping is more than a tool or one component of a project. Instead, implementing youth mapping changes the roles of young people in community development and raises the expectations of youth engagement across countries. Projects benefit when local leadership and project staff plan for the need to support youth participation and the expanded roles of young people.

**Train more Youth Mapping field supervisors, coordinators, and trainers.** The CYM approach intentionally builds training networks to establish and increase local capacity. This is important because in some places, for example Haiti, CYM staff noted that “we don’t have the people who know how to train young people in this way, and it is hard to find the right person with the motivation to involve young people.” Further, CYM staff indicated that in Haiti “it is really uncommon to find youth serving organizations that would engage young people at this level. Ordinarily, we would hire a research group that is well trained to get the kind of data that CYM efforts provide, but through CYM we can also empower young people.”<sup>8</sup> The successful implementation of the CYM strategy requires a lot of attention to the capacity-building of local staff to ensure that its methodology and participatory approach is effective.

### Sustaining CYM Strategies

**Identify ways to sustain the level of youth engagement.** A challenge that sometimes emerges during CYM implementation is finding ways to keep youth meaningfully engaged in high levels of participation in their communities. Youth Mapping impacts individuals by providing skills and building higher expectations for their own engagement. In some cases, communities face challenges when it comes to identifying opportunities for engagement that match the

CYM experience and provide meaningful opportunities for youth participation. In Haiti, giving small grants to youth to start their own businesses was not something that was incorporated into the original youth mapping plan, but a follow-up idea to get young people involved and use the data they collected to be proactively engaged in their community. It had become clear during the mapping process that youth wanted to stay involved and the project had to come up with strategies to keep youth in productive activities.<sup>9</sup>

**Identify ways to sustain projects developed during CYM strategies.** Program managers stress the need to closely involve relevant partners in sustaining projects started through CYM activities. For example, in Haiti, two of the three youth-run businesses started with CYM seed funding were ongoing (at least until the earthquake); however, the cyber café had some technical difficulties due to infrastructure constraints. Including technical partners in the planning and implementation of these businesses might have mitigated some of the challenges related to limited infrastructure and capacity. In Sudan, where youth mappers decided to install trash bins in neighborhoods, there has been difficulty in planning and executing the follow-up support and management. While CYM youth participants have developed great ideas, these ideas will not be sustained without the support of local adults and officials.

## Benefits of Youth Mapping

Youth mapping supports youth in developing job skills; encourages youth engagement; provides an opportunity for adults to witness the capacity and tenacity of young people in their communities; and creates important linkages between youth and other community members that could lead to future economic, social, and cultural opportunities. More specifically, successful Youth Mapping allows programs to accomplish the following:

### 1. Provide capacity-building and skills training for youth.

Youth mapping evaluations show that by participating youth acquired new skills which qualified them to participate in similar fieldwork surveys and the larger employment market. CYM training not only teaches youth how to document, analyze, report, and disseminate information about community resources, but also offers them an opportunity to use these skills in the marketplace. This experience distinguishes youth mappers from other young people, making them more competitive in the local market. In Jordan, 1,467 student youth mappers (583 females, 884 males) gained a more realistic perception of

the labor market that helped them make appropriate career decisions based on market demands.<sup>10</sup>

## **2. Understand the target population for a specific project.**

Youth mapping can be used to better understand the target population for a specific project, whether in an urban or rural setting and with both in-school and out-of-school youth. The use of youth mapping, either as part of a cross-sectoral youth assessment or in the early stages of project design and implementation, can meaningfully engage youth from the target group in designing solutions. In Haiti, for example, CYM was implemented in the communities of Carrefour-Feuilles, Mirebalais, and Jérémie to gain insight into the specific needs of out-of-school youth, and the resulting data was used to shape the local project approach.

## **3. Identify gaps in resources and provide information for community planning.**

Youth mapping strategies allow projects to collect useful data to inform planning and decision-making. Through youth mapping, young people work with adults to identify existing resources and opportunities for youth in their communities and also community needs. In Kosovo, where project efforts focused on building community awareness around human-trafficking, youth mappers identified levels of anti-trafficking awareness, reported these findings back to their communities, and then worked together to plan and execute awareness campaigns and other youth-led community development initiatives.

## **4. Provide opportunities for young people from various backgrounds to work together with mutual respect.**

Through an open and participatory process, youth mapping strategies intentionally bring together youth from different backgrounds—ethnic, religious, education, gender, and socioeconomic—around common goals. In Haiti and Rwanda, the trainers intentionally integrated in-school and out-of-school youth in order for the participants to gain a better understanding of one another. Similarly, in Egypt and Jordan, CYM trainers negotiated approval to lead mixed-gender trainings. In all cases, youth mappers reported a positive learning experience working with those whom they had originally perceived as “different.”

*“We would like to remain close to the out-of-school youth after the survey. What can we tell them when they ask questions? We would like the process to continue.”*

*—Organization Surveyed by Youth Mappers*

## **5. Build bridges between youth, local governance, and the private sector.**

The youth mapping approach provides an opportunity for young people to be part of local government and private sector initiatives. Through youth mapping activities in Egypt, young people have become partners in advancing education reform with the Ministry of Education, Ministry of Sports and Youth, and the Central Agency for Public Mobilization and Statistics. In Rwanda, youth mappers are being trained by Max Media in technology skills, and by the Strive Foundation and Pajer in income-generating activities.

## **6. Create youth-led entrepreneurship and community engagement.**

In several countries, youth mappers have received seed funding to create businesses and other activities based on their findings. In Chad and Darfur, the youth mapping approach built in funding for youth to implement small community activities based on the results of their mapping. In Haiti, youth mappers received funding to start businesses based on the resources and gaps identified in the mapping process.

## **International Impact of Youth Mapping**

Youth mapping has yielded positive development outcomes in international settings. At the core of this success is the meaningful engagement of youth, the development of cross-sector workforce skills, strengthened connections between youth and communities, and the belief that youth development is the most effective strategy for long-term development outcomes.

*"I was able to overcome my shyness, my inferiority complex... I am more open now."*

—Youth Mapper

### The Impact of CYM on Youth

Youth mappers identified the impact that youth mapping had on their relationships with family, their communities, and their own self-perception and confidence. "Youth have reported that they have gained leadership and public speaking skills as a result of this process and that the mapping has 'opened their eyes' to the resources in their own communities that they never knew existed." The CYM approach focuses on skills such as interviewing techniques, leadership training, small group planning, and team-building, all of which translates into marketable, job-preparedness skills.

Through the process of mapping their communities and sharing their findings, participants gain confidence in asking questions, increased knowledge of the resources in their communities, new connections to social networks, and an awareness of what youth from different backgrounds are doing.

Youth who have participated in the CYM efforts internationally have stated that CYM activities resulted in:

- Increased confidence and the ability to trust their own instincts
- A sense of accomplishment and a feeling of being valued by peers
- Better understanding of self and personal leadership skills
- Stronger connections to their own communities
- Changed perceptions in their traditional thinking about gender roles
- Increased assertiveness and more comfortable speaking up
- Better social networks and access to more information
- Greater volunteerism and community service
- Greater youth credibility within local communities

### The Impact of Youth Mapping on Communities

The youth mapping methodology fosters a consultative process within communities because the approach goes beyond helping to identify needs and solutions and gets people to talk to their neighbors, resulting in participatory decision-making. As such, international youth mapping

activities have invoked positive reactions from government officials, local leaders, community members, and participating youth. Project staff report that the greatest impact occurs when mapping is paired with action planning and community development projects (as seen in Sudan, Chad, Egypt, and Haiti). Youth who have participated in organizing and implementing their own community development projects report that "their leaders and community members respect them, they are viewed more positively, and their credibility is increased."<sup>11</sup> Youth mapping prepared those implementing community projects to interact with a wide variety of stakeholders and local leaders, a necessary skill for changing sociopolitical environments.

*"This survey gave me the opportunity to get to know the situation of out-of-school youth... I used to see them every day, but I had never paid attention to their living conditions."*

—Adult surveyed by Youth Mappers

*"The community has a more favorable opinion of us now. People call us all the time to ask about the project."*

—Youth Mappers

Youth mappers have developed community solutions for community-based problems, such as:

- Launching the Youth Development Community Association in Egypt to ensure the sustainability of CYM
- Starting youth led-businesses, including a cyber café and youth performance center in Haiti and a horticulture, sewing, and professional music troupe in Sudan
- Creating videos about trafficking scenarios as part of a community awareness campaign in Kosovo
- Developing programs to promote peace and tolerance, such as a *Sports for Peace* soccer tournament in Chad and a secondary school music competition in Sudan



## Conclusions and Recommendations

Overall, the CYM strategies reviewed in this study address a broad range of community and youth development issues. While international projects implement CYM strategies in different ways for varied purposes, among the core results is that youth mapping increases the credibility of youth in the countries where it is implemented.<sup>12</sup> While there have been no formal evaluations, youth mapping has been generally considered a successful youth and community engagement strategy in the countries where it has been implemented. Project staff and youth mappers say that mapping and the associated trainings that accompany CYM provide valuable workforce development skills and raise levels of youth engagement. In the contexts where youth have implemented community development projects based on their findings, participants express deepening their self-confidence and better connecting to the networks that develop from their mapping efforts.

In addition to changing the roles of young people in community development, CYM has trained a cadre of youth-serving professionals in a strategy that is solidly grounded in positive youth development principles and practice. In Haiti, The CYM strategy has raised the

issue of effective youth participation,<sup>13</sup> and through IDEJEN's efforts, many organizations, including the Ministry of Youth and local NGOs, have not only become aware of the CYM strategy, but now seek IDEJEN's expertise in this area. In the communities where youth mapping has been implemented, "there is a shift in the perception towards youth and more work needs to be done to integrate the CYM model as a best-practice case to be replicated by other programs and institutions."<sup>14</sup> In Egypt, "the need for scaling up CYM efforts has been expressed by school administrations, community leaders, and government officials."<sup>15</sup> Similar views are held by those implementing CYM in places such as Chad, Haiti, and Rwanda.

The direct results of youth mapping are that (1) youth are engaged in a constructive activity that builds positive connections with their peers and their larger community; (2) youth and parents have access to good, current information on constructive activities in the community; and (3) local decision-makers have a more complete picture of what does and does not exist in their community for young people, and generally make better decisions as a result.

The indirect results of youth mapping, however, are perhaps even more significant. Participating as a youth mapper tends to be a life-changing experience for many youth. As they venture out into their communities and make decisions and new connections on their own, youth involved in CYM invariably develop a more positive sense of themselves and their abilities. The skills gained by youth mappers through the process are tools that they take with them wherever they go. As a result of CYM activities, the "credibility in youth has grown" across several countries.<sup>16</sup> Overall, youth mapping has been successful in increasing youth voice and empowering young people to create local solutions for community needs.

---

<sup>1</sup> *Youth participation in development: A guide for development agencies and policy makers*. Department for International Development (DFID) and CSO-Youth Working Group, March 2010, p. 11; UNICEF, *Ibid.*, p. 12.

<sup>2</sup> *Youth Participation in Development*, *Ibid.*, p. 99.

<sup>3</sup> *Community Youth Mapping Guide*. Academy for Educational Development, 2001.

<sup>4</sup> Interview with Frantz-Harold Seide, Education Development Center (EDC)

---

<sup>5</sup> Ibid.

<sup>6</sup> Darfur Community Strengthening Final Report

<sup>7</sup> Sudan Community Youth Mapping Report

<sup>8</sup> Interview with Frantz-Harold Seide, EDC

<sup>9</sup> Ibid.

<sup>10</sup> Jordan Education Reform for the Knowledge Economy Final Report, Academy for Educational Development

<sup>11</sup> Interview with Kaitlyn Crooks, Academy for Educational Development (AED)

<sup>12</sup> Interview with Raul Ratcliffe, AED

<sup>13</sup> Interview with Frantz-Harold Seide, EDC

<sup>14</sup> Ibid.

<sup>15</sup> Interview with Shoroke Zedan, AED

<sup>16</sup> Interview with Kaitlyn Crooks, AED

## About EQUIP3

The USAID-funded Educational Quality Improvement Program 3 (EQUIP3) is designed to improve earning, learning, and skill development opportunities for out-of-school youth in developing countries. We work to help countries meet the needs and draw on the assets of young women and men by improving policies and programs that affect them across a variety of sectors. We also provide technical assistance to USAID and other organizations in order to build the capacity of youth and youth-serving organizations.

EQUIP3 is a consortium of 13 organizations with diverse areas of expertise. Together, these organizations work with out-of-school youth in more than 100 countries.

To learn more about EQUIP3 please see the website at [www.equip123.net/equip3/index\\_new.html](http://www.equip123.net/equip3/index_new.html).

---

**EQUIP3 CONSORTIUM:** Education Development Center, Inc. • Academy for Educational Development • Catholic Relief Services • International Council on National Youth Policy • International Youth Foundation • National Youth Employment Coalition • National Youth Leadership Council • Opportunities Industrialization Centers International • Partners of the Americas • Plan International Childreach • Sesame Workshop • Street Kids International • World Learning