

DESIGNING FOR YOUTH INCLUSION IN AGRICULTURE AND FOOD SYSTEMS

To achieve the objectives of the U.S. Government Global Food Security Strategy (GFSS) and “A Food-Secure 2030” vision, we need to harness the creativity and energy of youth.

There is a strategic imperative for investing in youth: young people are critical to global stability, economic growth, and development today and into the future. The ***Project Design Guide for Youth-Inclusive Agriculture and Food Systems*** (Volumes I & II) bridges the US government Global Food Security Strategy objectives and builds on USAID’s youth inclusion policy, embodied in USAID’s Youth in Development Policy.

Background

Young people are entering the labor market in large numbers in areas like in Sub-Saharan Africa, where an estimated 11 million young people reach working age each year. With increased rates of migration to urban areas, particularly among youth, there may not be enough opportunities for youth in cities in the future: overcrowded cities offer little opportunity, as there are more youth than there are viable jobs. While many economies are experiencing job growth in non-agriculture sectors, agriculture will remain a significant source of employment for youth in low- and middle-income countries as the farming population around the world is aging—a significant proportion of farmers are above the age of sixty.

Policymakers today must think creatively about how to bridge the economic opportunities in agri-food systems with the range of economic, demographic, and socio-political factors that youth face.

About the guides

The two-part *Project Design Guide for Youth-Inclusive Agriculture and Food Systems* (Volumes I & II) provides USAID staff and implementing partners with approaches, frameworks and tools to design agriculture programs that promote successful and meaningful youth engagement with the US Feed the Future Initiative and the US government Global Food Security Strategy.

Volume I is intended to support Feed the Future staff (USAID Missions and others) to design youth inclusive programs based on the USAID project design cycle.

Volume II offers implementation guidance for activity-level interventions, intended for USAID staff and implementers who may ultimately be managing activities and/or who wish to know more about youth-inclusive approaches to implementation in Feed the Future activities.



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What's in the design and implementation guide?

This guide highlights ways in which program designers can develop youth-inclusive projects and activities that account for the both diversity of the youth cohort as well as the dynamism of the agricultural sector. Additionally, the guide supports Missions and implementing partners to more intentionally incorporate youth in Feed the Future activity implementation.

Top takeaways for youth-inclusive Feed the Future project design (Volume I)

- Actively seek youth participation throughout the entire USAID program cycle
- Enlist the expertise of a youth specialist in project design, especially for projects or activities that focus on youth as the primary participant/beneficiary
- Acknowledge the heterogeneity of young men and women and identify the specific age-appropriate youth segment(s) to be included in or targeted by the project/activity
- Conduct a youth analysis to inform the different stages of project design. If a stand-alone youth analysis is not an option, integrate youth analysis as part of the mandatory gender analysis and/or Mission-led value chain analysis.
- Apply a Positive Youth Development (PYD) lens and approach to intentionally integrate young people into the agri-food system, based on evidence-based approaches.

Top takeaways for youth-inclusive Feed the Future project design (Volume I)

- Identify value chain entry points that are both relevant to and accessible for young people.
- Ensure that workforce training aligns youth with the demands of the value chain entry points, but also develops transferable skills that enable youth to upgrade and tap into new opportunities as they emerge over time.
- Offer youth follow-on support through mentoring, internships, job intermediation, and market facilitation services (Section 2.2)
- Consider the entire supportive environment that influences youth decisions and behaviors, including family, community, institutions, and policies/norms.
- Apply a conflict-sensitive youth lens when integrating youth into agriculture and food systems affected by conflict.
- Apply a youth lens to intentionally integrate young people into the agriculture/food system throughout the program cycle along with a Positive Youth Development approach to ensure quality implementation based on evidence-based approaches.

The interactive *Project Design Guide for Youth-Inclusive Agriculture and Food Systems* will be made available online.

Please visit bit.ly/BFSGuide for more details, or email info@youthpower.org.