

Illustrative Program Description¹

Rapid Response Program for Youth Development in Fragile States

Target Group	Young women and young men, ages 15-29
Period of Performance	2 - 3 years
Place of Work	Fragile states ² with a significant youth population (e.g.: Liberia, Sierra Leone, Rwanda, Sudan, Indonesia, Angola)
Mode of Work	Consortium of complementary international and local actors
Summary	The presence of a significant youth cohort in states exhibiting characteristics of pre-conflict, conflict or post-conflict signals the need for a coordinated set of rapid interventions specifically designed to build the capacity of young people and engage them in the development of their communities. The Rapid Response Program for Youth Development in Fragile States (RRP/YDFS) consists of a coordinated series of rapid interventions in the areas of basic education, family life/health, economic empowerment and civic engagement. The program is designed for a quick start and is based on a series of incrementally more complex interventions.

Background

This rapid response program identifies four illustrative components (appraisal, assessment, design and implementation) of a youth program development process that can connect USAID's fragile state analytical framework regarding social, economic and political factors with programs that can engage youth.

The program is designed, in part, to answer the questions: What is going on? How do youth relate to development in this country? What needs to be done? Where does USAID fit into this picture?

¹ In order to be as concrete as possible, this illustrative program description targets a specific country. This however doesn't answer a specific request from USAID.

² USAID's "Fragile States Strategy" defines these as states that are "failing, failed and recovering."
USAID, "Fragile States Strategy," Washington, D.C.: U.S. Agency for International Development, January 2005, p. 1.

Fragile states typically consist of large youth populations whose capacity to play a constructive role in the social, economic and political development of their countries is extremely low. In such environments, youth typically share one or more of the following characteristics: illiteracy and low education, knowledge and skill levels; poverty, unemployment and dependency on external sources for livelihoods; physical and psychological effects of war, trauma and gender-based violence; and alienation from society.

For fragile states to be able to emerge and recover from a failed or failing state status, it will be important to address those factors that negatively affect youth groups in a creative, holistic and targeted manner. Effective programs that can assist USAID constructively integrate youth into their countries' recovery process should focus on project interventions that can positively affect social integration (basic and vocational education; family life and health), economic integration (skills development, livelihoods and income-generation activities, and microenterprise development) and political integration (civic engagement, community service, and capacity building).

Within this context, youth programming that will help determine a specific set of project interventions for a particular fragile state consists of: 1) mapping 2) the construction of programmatic building blocks; and, 3) the selection of a final array of program activities.

Determining strategic entry points to youth programming is an important part of building a youth framework. For example, Liberia is emerging from a 14-year civil war. This has affected a significant percent of the youth cohort who have been under-educated. The national literacy rate is under 40% and dips to 25% in rural areas. Divisions that might exist due to the variety of backgrounds, needs and aspirations of youth who experienced the civil war in very different ways will indicate the need for programming that is tailored and sensitive to the characteristics and challenges that particular youth groups face. Based on the results of youth appraisal and assessment protocols, programmatic building blocks will be constructed for scenario testing with stakeholders. The final array of program activities would be responsive to youth as well as to donor and local agency clients' needs, and represent good youth practice.

The strategy outlined here provides a general model that can be tailored to advance specific USAID priorities in a variety of unique local settings. The approach described below is built around youth involvement, creating a rich environment of varied opportunities, and providing capacity building for youth at all stages of program design, implementation and evaluation. The participatory approach highlighted here requires that implementing partners model leadership skills, create the space for youth to engage, and help develop connections for the "youth voice" to be part of the national and local dialogues and decision making for policies and practices that affect them. Engaging youth directly in the development of their communities is viewed as a key step in advancing economic development, promoting political stability and building societal resilience.

In addition to differentiating between rural and urban youth, young women and young men, and in-school youth and out-of-school youth, programs targeting youth in fragile states must also distinguish between the needs and capabilities of ex-combatants, war-affected and other youth. One aspect of developing a program is to build and expand on the DDR (disarmament, demobilization and reintegration) process and create opportunities to maximize the contributions that can be made by a diverse community of young people during the process of rehabilitation, reconstruction and development.

Program Development Process

Illustrative components include: Rapid Youth Appraisal, Rapid Youth Assessment, Creating a Strategic Youth Framework from programmatic building blocks, and Program Implementation.

- Rapid Youth Appraisal

Composed of one to two international members and/or one to two local members, a Rapid Youth Appraisal team can be placed in the field within a week to ten days of receiving authorization from the Mission. Ideally, this team would include at least one member from the local NGO community and one youth.

This initial appraisal would include meetings with Mission staff, local development experts, local government officials, representatives from the private sector, and local, national and international youth-serving programs and organizations. In addition to conducting interviews, team members would gather relevant written materials. Finally, the team would begin to identify potential development partners from the local government, business and NGO communities and from the international donor community.

Following completion of the field work associated with the rapid appraisal, the team would analyze the preliminary information collected to identify the key issues to be covered in the assessment, to develop a list of stakeholders to be interviewed, to highlight gaps in information, and to define the outcomes to be expected from the Rapid Youth Assessment.

- Rapid Youth Assessment

The Rapid Youth Assessment would be carried out by a 4 person team (2 international and two local members) and would last 2-4 weeks depending on the level of detail desired. Depending on team's size, 1-2 team members would be youth leaders chosen from among USAID and local NGO and international partners' nominations. Local youth would be

engaged in the assessment through a post-conflict adapted Community Youth Mapping.³

Based on the analysis of the data collected during the Rapid Youth Appraisal, the assessment would include a series of in-depth interviews and focus group sessions with representative youth and a broad array of local stakeholders (including local government, business and civil society representatives; USAID staff and other key donors; and, individuals representing key youth-led and youth-oriented NGOs). The utilization of analytical tools would include a disaggregation of data to ascertain gender considerations of victims of trauma; mental health wellness; access to education, training and resources; to work experience opportunities and youth participation in decision-making. Additional data would be collected to fill in gaps in information identified by the rapid appraisal team, including an inventory of select urban, peri-urban, and rural locations of existing opportunities and services and the absorptive capacity of informal and formal social, economic and learning systems which allow and encourage (or constrain) male and female youth of varying abilities to advance and fulfill their roles in the world of work, civil society and family life.

Quantitative and qualitative data collected during the Rapid Appraisal and Rapid Assessment would be analyzed and used to adapt the Illustrative Framework described in the next section to a specific country setting. The findings would be complemented by a review of lessons learned from youth programming in other fragile states.

Strategic Youth Framework

The planning process described earlier makes it possible to move exceptionally quickly from program design to program implementation. The goal is to jumpstart youth development in a way that advances specific USAID mission objectives; facilitates youth participation in program design, implementation and evaluation; builds a network of potential partners; bolsters the capacity of youth to contribute; and, builds societal resilience.

³ Community Youth Mapping (CYM) is a community-based strategy developed by EQUIP3 consortium member Academy for Educational Development that involves youth and adults in the collection, organization, analysis and dissemination of information about community resources for youth, children and families. CYM has benefited from over 10 years of experience in the US. It has been successfully adapted to work in EQUIP3's Haiti project and also has been adapted for use in Egypt and Jordan.

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The table of programmatic building blocks presented below grows out of a holistic approach to youth development based on four core programming components which are deliberately interconnected: basic education, family life/health, economic empowerment and civic engagement. Activities within each of these four areas are sequential and graduated, and increasing in implementation complexity and requiring more local assets and capacity.

Based on findings from the Rapid Youth Assessment that fully segment the “market” of youth aspirations, needs and opportunities, informed by the experiences of implementing consortium members, and with active youth participation and that of local youth-focused expertise, a strategic youth framework can be constructed using interventions specifically designed to fit a country’s unique circumstances. (See Appendix 1 for an illustrative Strategic Youth Program Framework)

Programmatic Building Blocks for Youth in Post-Conflict Fragile States

A strategic youth framework can be constructed using these programmatic building blocks specifically designed to fit the unique circumstances of a country, region and/or locality. See pages 8-9 for an illustrative framework.

Basic	Intermediate	Advanced
(quick start, low barriers to entry)	(build from emerging basic activities or current work and/or work from moderate level organizational and youth client asset base)	(more developed programming, scaling up, sustaining, systems building, and advanced individual and group pathways to development)
<p>Basic Education</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Alternative basic education for rapid acquisition of numeracy, literacy and life skills • Non-formal education in literacy/numeracy • Pre-vocational education • Life skills for “normalizing” life and identity 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Extended non-formal basic education • Vocational education/ training • Career counseling/guidance services • Service learning 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Re-entry into formal education sector • Vocational education (advanced skill levels) • Life skills for livelihood / Work skills • Self-advocacy for access, options and quality of learning experiences
<p>Family Life/health</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Conflict resolution at the individual, family and community levels • Mental health and trauma counseling • Socializing and conflict resolution within new peace environment • Psycho-social counseling for ex-combatants and war-affected • Domestic violence prevention education 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cultural identity, goal planning and communication skills training • HIV/AIDS and other STDs prevention and care • Integrated approaches to wellness • Sport for development, wellness, and socialization for health • Hygiene and nutrition 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Parenting skills • Nutrition and wellness competency • Self-advocacy and empowerment and use of mental and physical health services • Reproductive health education • Gender-based sexual violence interventions
<p>Economic Empowerment</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Short term jobs creation / food for work programs/ stipends for community service activities • Entrepreneurship training and mini-grants for micro-enterprise practicums • Access to savings services 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Apprenticeships, work placements • Microenterprise development services (savings and credit products, business development services) • Mentorship services re livelihood coaching • Savings clubs / peer lending programs 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Small business support (youth-led or youth employing) • Expanded micro-finance services (with a focus on youth readiness and access) • Job placement into private sector
<p>Civic Engagement</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Providing safe spaces for youth activities such as training courses, recreation activities, sports programming via existing community entities (NGO’s, churches, schools, community centers) • Create and support youth led clubs which provide opportunities for peer to-peer life skills, peace building, and community service activities 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Community service programs and leadership development • Capacity-building for youth-led and youth-oriented organizations • Training in peace-building, conflict mitigation and mediation • Challenge grants program for youth-led activities / organizations 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Civic participation • National, regional and local training and long- term opportunities for service action and service learning • Advocacy training through speech, drama, art, radio, press and TV

Implementation

Graduated clusters of interventions in the areas of basic education, family life/health, economic empowerment and civic engagement would be introduced, further developed or connected at the outset of the program, at six months and again at twelve months and revisited at 24 months.

A detailed set of program activities for each stage would be developed as well as an evaluation framework for the program. The scope and details of the program would reflect the evolving role to be played by a variety of public and private sector stakeholders at each stage of the framework.

Scale, Sustainability and Collaboration

The program's success, relevance and durability will be enhanced by the creation of a development alliance of key stakeholders, including representatives from the public and private sector; local national and international NGOs; and youth and women's groups. This integrated effort offers great continuity and responsiveness to Mission needs from Appraisal through Implementation.

Appendix 1: Illustration: Ruwwad Program Framework

Ruwwad Vision: “Youth Centered and Youth Led Development”

