

Instances in which a designer might want to prioritize a youth-specific activity include:

1. When the CDCS articulates an explicit priority on youth inclusion, or when youth populations (including young women) are perceived as necessary to achieving USAID outcomes related to food security, agricultural development, or economic growth.
2. When trying to alleviate household poverty in food insecure areas with high (and growing) youth populations.¹⁵
3. When Missions seek to address high rural youth unemployment or underemployment, and/or where youth are considered to be especially marginalized due to poor economic or educational indices.
4. In countries/ regions in which agricultural actors are aging out of the system and youth must be targeted as current or future actors in select agricultural value chains. In these cases, youth are often prioritized by country government agriculture or economic growth strategies.

3.2 Youth Segmentation Strategies

Youth inclusion is not a one-size-fits-all solution. Defining youth cohorts allows the Mission to assess the opportunities and constraints facing specific groups of youth, and to design interventions accordingly.

Segmentation also helps establish realistic targets and ensures that the profile of youth participants is aligned with the activity purpose.

Youth cohorts are most commonly categorized by age bandings, namely the stages of adolescence that mark major developmental stages: Early Adolescence (10-14 years), Adolescence (15-19 years), Emerging Adulthood (20-24 years), and Transition into Adulthood (25-29 years).¹⁶ **Generalizing “youth” according to overly broad age range banding (e.g., all people ages 15-30) leads to the unintended exclusion of certain groups over others.** In many cultures youth cohorts are differentiated by biological change (i.e., onset of puberty) or by cultural milestones (i.e., by rituals, responsibilities, and legal rights)(Volume II describes youth milestones in greater detail).¹⁷ Youth cohorts can also be defined by the young person’s identity, which can be shaped by a number of social, economic, and cultural factors, such as those listed in Table 1.¹⁸



TIP: The age-based definition of youth may be especially inappropriate in crisis- and conflict affected environments, where many young people have been “forced” into adulthood, for example by becoming heads of household, through participation in militias, or by being forced to earn money through licit or illicit means in order to survive.



Table 1. Factors Other than Age That Shape Youth Identity and Define Youth Segments

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| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Gender ✓ Socio-economic status ✓ Ethnic, tribal, or religious affiliations ✓ Geographic location (including rural, urban, peri-urban and community neighborhoods) ✓ Nationality ✓ Race ✓ Education status/level ✓ Employment status/type ✓ Marital status ✓ Sexual orientation | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Participation in group affiliations such as churches, sports teams, clubs, cooperatives, or even gangs or militias ✓ Status as HIV positive or People Living with HIV/AIDS ✓ Orphan and Vulnerable Children (OVC) status ✓ Conflict-affected ✓ Disability status ✓ Caretaker/head of household status ✓ Status as refugee/displaced person |
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EXAMPLE

The USAID Akazi Kanoze activity in Rwanda customized its employment training and service package in eight different ways, according to the characteristics of different youth cohorts and the relative capacities of local service providers.¹⁹

3.3 Opportunity for Cross-Sectoral Collaboration

Youth-inclusive projects offer a tremendous opportunity for cross-sectoral collaboration and mutual benefits. To identify opportunities for Feed the Future to collaborate with other sectors, **ask the following questions:**

- ☑ Does the target youth cohort(s) include young mothers who could potentially benefit from or participate in nutrition-sensitive interventions? (Global Health)
- ☑ Do the rates of HIV infection among the target participants significantly impact or threaten their ability to work in the agriculture sector? (Global Health)
- ☑ Do young women in the target areas face early marriage or unintended pregnancies that impact their participation in the labor market? (Global Health)
- ☑ Is the project geographic scope located in conflict-affected areas, where a combined youth development and agriculture initiative may address the drivers of conflict and violence among youth populations? (Democracy & Governance)
- ☑ Does the project offer opportunity for—or can it benefit from—youth civic participation, e.g., through the organization of youth cooperatives, community radio interventions, agriculture volunteer corps, environmental advocacy, land policy reform? (Democracy & Governance)
- ☑ Do the Feed the Future interventions in conflict-affected areas intend to increase youth's access to education, e.g. through literacy, vocational training, or other alternative education programs? Can the project benefit from and link to existing education interventions in conflict-affected areas? (Education)
- ☑ Does the project intend to incorporate basic skills (literacy, numeracy) into training programs, in addition to the soft skills that are important for economic success? Would the project benefit from leveraging existing education interventions? (Education)
- ☑ Will interventions work with or strengthen the capacity of universities or other education and training institutes to offer more relevant, market-based curricula? Could other higher education activities extend benefits to agriculture or agribusiness sectors? (Education)

