SAHEL YOUTH ANALYSIS

Building resilience to shocks and stresses and promoting alternatives to violent extremism in Burkina Faso and Niger

INTRODUCTION AND APPROACH

This report presents the findings of a Youth Analysis Desk Study that aims to inform the development of future programmatic interventions in the Sahel by the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) Sahel Regional Office (SRO) at USAID/Senegal, the Resilience in the Sahel Enhanced (RISE) 2 program, as well as activities to counter recruitment into violent extremist groups, and other strategic efforts that target youth. The USAID Youth in Development policy asks all USAID Missions to consider how they can mainstream youth across their portfolios, and provides guidance on when and how to prioritize and target intentional youth development efforts. The purpose of this Analysis is, in accordance and in support of this policy, to identify and analyze important issues related to youth in the Sahel, propose recommendations for integrating youth into programming, and ensure that USAID staff and partners are aware of USAID's policy, approach, and resources for youth in development.

SCOPE
The Sahel Youth Analysis has three key functions: (1) to identify gaps in youth engagement from RISE I, (2) to inform ongoing and future iterations of youth resilience programming in Niger, Burkina Faso, and potentially other Sahelian countries, and (3) to inform programming on preventing or countering recruitment of youth into violent extremist organizations. A key focus of the youth analysis will be how to promote meaningful youth engagement into resilience programming in a way to affect positive development outcomes. Furthermore, the analysis will provide guidance on how to effectively integrate and engage youth to address the deep underlying issues that foment extremist violence and fragility in the region. The study will focus primarily in Niger (Tillabery, Maradi, Zinder and Diffa) and Burkina Faso (Nord, Sahel, Centre-Nord, Est).

FRAMING QUESTIONS
1. Youth Profile: Who are the 'youth' that RISE II should target? What do we mean by the youth? What does it mean specifically in the context of Niger and of Burkina Faso? What are the elements of this heterogeneous category (poverty level, gender, age, disability, religion, ethnicity, etc.)?
2. How to target youth more explicitly? What are their needs and aspirations? What are the needs of the various components that comprise this heterogeneous category? How do these needs differ? How to effectively take these differences into account while designing resilience programs? What kind of youth-sensitive interventions will most benefit the societies in which they live?
3. RISE 1 learning on Youth: What did we learn from RISE I implementation about the process of engaging adolescents and young adults of both sexes in development initiatives? How can these lessons help us in the design and implementation of RISE II? What are some good practices for ensuring youth 'voice' at different points in the project design and implementation?
4. How should we effectively engage with youth (girls and boys) while promoting social behavior change (early pregnancy, adolescent marriage, malnutrition among adolescents - especially girls of childbearing age, keeping girls in school, youth involvement in nutrition interventions, GBV, etc.) at community and household levels within RISE?
5. What do we know about why youth do or don't join VE orgs? What type of interventions will equally benefit them, the overall community, and discourage youth involvement in radical groups? To what extent are civic education and engagement interventions effective in ensuring that youth become productive members of their societies, contribute to political stability and peace? To what extent do these interventions increase the resilience of youth to radical and extremist groups?
6. What could be effective strategies of creating an enabling environment that promotes youth employment and self-employment/entrepreneurship? What are the leading 'youth entry points' for employment and self-employment within available market opportunities?

BACKGROUND

Burkina Faso[1]

- The national youth policy of 2008 defines youth as 15-35
- ~65% of the population is under 24 years (median age 17.1)
- Majority of Burkinabé youth are faced with un-/underemployment and poverty:
  - Urban unemployment: 69.4% (15 to 34 years)
  - Rural underemployed: 40%
  - Informal sector workers under 25 years: 64.7%
  - Employees in the formal sector under 25 years: 8% of workers
- Youth Development Index: 0.43, 134 out of 170 countries
- Literacy Rates: Both (15-24) 45.43%, Male 47.56, Female 43.24%
- Net Enrollment Rate: (Secondary School) Both 19.74%, Male 21.53%, Female 17.88%

Burkina Faso, Population 19,173,322[2]
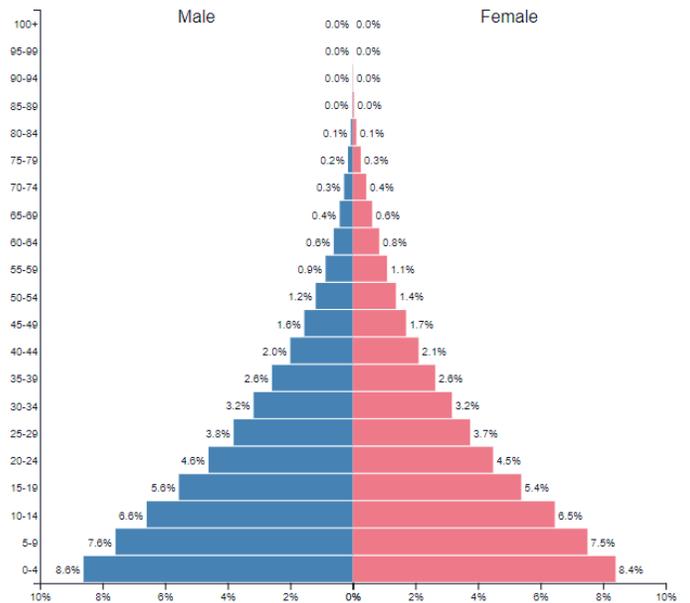
Niger[3]

- Niger's 2013 Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper defines youth as 15-35
- ~68% of the population is under 24 years (median age 15.2)
- The lack of job opportunities for youth is a contributing factor to social instability
  - 1.5 million young people ages 13-19 are neither in school nor employed
  - More than 50,000 graduates are unemployed
- Youth Development Index: 0.38, 144 out of 170 countries
- Literacy Rates: Both (15-24) 26.56%, Male 36.43, Female 17.15%
- Net Enrollment Rate: (Secondary School) Both 12.20%, Male 14.69%, Female 9.71%

Niger, Population 21,563,607
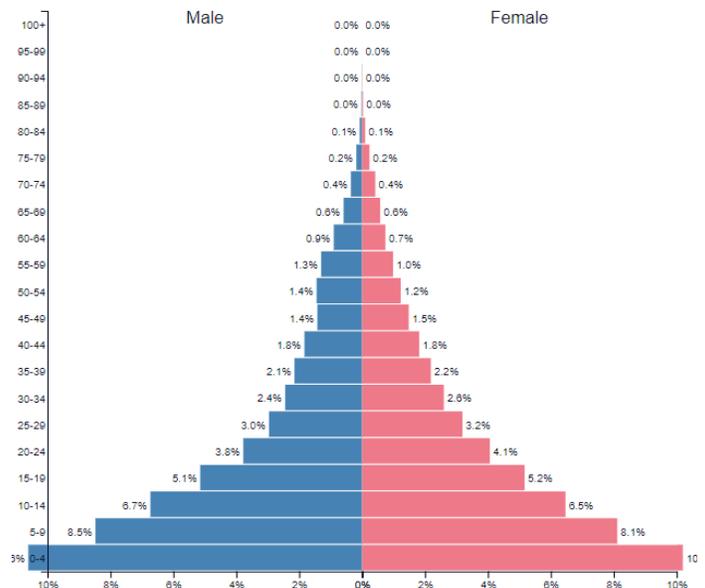
KEY FINDINGS

[1] Youthpolicy.org, Burkina Faso, 2014, http://www.youthpolicy.org/factsheets/country/burkina-faso/.

[2] PopulationPyramid.net, 2017.

[3] Youthpolicy.org, Niger, 2014 http://www.youthpolicy.org/factsheets/country/niger/.

Health and Nutrition

- Girls in the Sahel region are more likely to marry at very young ages (9-12), to be illiterate, to be younger when giving birth to their first child, and to have more children over their lifetime than girls in other parts of the world. Many girls marry into polygamous marriages, further limiting their power and agency in their relationship. Child, Early and Forced Marriage (CEFM) is often accompanied by the harmful traditional practice of Female Genital Mutilation/Cutting (FGM/C).[4]
- Burkina Faso average age of first marriage for females is 17.8 years. While the prevalence of FGM/C has fallen among younger women, certain "hot spot" regions have prevalence rates as high as 89.5%.[5] Niger average age of first marriage for females is 15.7 years. At 76%, Niger has the highest CEFM prevalence rate in the world.
- Burkina Faso has more supportive Family Planning (FP) policies, however, needs assessments have shown that FP is not well understood in many communities, while Niger has significant room for improvement on policy and creating an environment conducive to youth FP services and access. See the Youth FP Policy Scorecard for more details.
- Both countries have higher rates of married adolescent girls than boys, suggesting husbands are significantly older, which limits the capability of young wives to negotiate childbearing and contraceptive use. Mother-in-laws also have significant influence over family planning.
- Targeting girls before they are married or pregnant is critical to: 1) improve an adolescent girl's nutrition before she becomes pregnant, which evidence shows improves health outcomes for mother and baby; and 2) delay adolescent girl's first pregnancy, which improves health outcomes for mother and baby, as well as decreases the number of children a girl has in her lifetime.[6]
- Married girls remain invisible to many policymakers and development actors, programming tends to target young girls or married adult women and mothers. Married girls face increased isolation from friends and families; isolation coupled with a lack of autonomy means that girls miss out on health care, education and meaningful employment. Marriage also leads to a dramatic increase in girls' workload at home, further limiting their ability to leave the house.[7]
- A recent study in Niger found that a fatalistic attitude and a refusal to interfere with God's plans by limiting pregnancies was a prevalent theme. This default to religious beliefs was more common in Niger, and more tied to Islam than Christianity or other beliefs.[8]
- The study also found that normative factors – such as gender roles around FP decision-making, polygamy and desired family size – facilitated or hindered the use of FP. Using FP methods to have smaller families was least common in Niger, where the concept of limiting remains "forbidden" or taboo.
- Evidence indicates that investments in education are more likely to affect both early marriage and education than are child marriage policies alone. At the same time, programs that provide parents with incentives to delay their daughter's' marriage might have benefits for both delayed marriage and improved educational attainment.
- Girls who participated in the Mercy Corps Safe Spaces program (Sawki) did not feel they have the right to refuse sex to their husbands, demonstrating power imbalances in the home.[9] Girls and women generally do not have the autonomy to manage childbearing. The desire and ability to delay first

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[4] USAID Child and Early Forced Marriage Guide, 2015.

[5] Population Reference Bureau, Female Genital Mutilation/Cutting: Data and Trends, 2017 http://www.prb.org/pdf17/FGMC%20Poster%202017.pdf.

[6] The Lancet 2013 Maternal and Child Nutrition Series, 2013.

[7] Peter McIntyre, Married Adolescents: No Place of Safety (Geneva: WHO, 2006).

[8] HC3 Healthy Timing and Spacing of Pregnancy, 2017 http://healthcommcapacity.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/01/HTSP-Brief-2_AMA-HP-Culture-and-Community.pdf.

[9] Mercy Corps, https://www.mercycorps.org/sites/default/files/mercy_corps_niger_rising.pdf.

pregnancy is critical to decreasing maternal and child mortality rates, while improving the health outcomes of mothers and babies.[10]
- Girls in the program were also not able to access nutrient-rich foods, possibly because of having limited input on the types of food their families cultivate or purchase or to intra-family power dynamics allocating more diverse or expensive food to men and boys.[11]
- A United Nations Population Fund (UNFP) study in Niger found that men often determine whether or not their female relatives should have access to reproductive health services. This inspired the creation of Husband Schools in the Zinder Region, which aim to educate men on the importance of reproductive health and foster behavior change. As a result, the region has witnessed an increase in rates of safe delivery, contraception use and reproductive health services. Many men now attend the deliveries of their children, more deliveries are being assisted by skilled personnel, and more women are attending prenatal/postnatal consultations.[12]

Countering Violent Extremism
- In Southeast Niger Boko Haram remains a threat in an area that is under a state of emergency, food-insecure, and hosts tens of thousands of Nigerian refugees and perhaps hundreds of Boko Haram defectors. Some of the government's anti-Boko-Haram measures—such as a ban on motorcycles and on pepper growth and trade, which the government believes are a key source of Boko Haram's funding—undermine already precarious livelihoods, especially for youth. These actions frustrate local populations and do not weaken the insurgency.[13]
- Adding to the frustration are recent actions by Nigerien security forces in 2017, which resulted in the death of several student protestors, as well as reduced government spending as uranium prices have dropped and defense spending has increased.[14]
- Boko Haram (BH) has also been attracting youth from Diffa with the help of substantial financial benefits. Members of youth gangs have stated that they joined BH only for money and not for ideological reasons.
- A Mercy Corps study in Nigeria found that some youth saw membership in BH as opportunity to "get ahead through business support," with many youths accepting loans or joining with the hope of receiving capital for business activity.
- Group discussions in the Livelihoods Diversification Analysis (LDA) Study in Niger/Burkina Faso indicated that there is a need for communication forums and peace-based messaging (along with livelihood opportunities and civic engagement) to mitigate radicalization of youth.
- Violent extremism (VE) concerns in Burkina Faso include groups in Mali conducting cross-border attacks.
- As a resilience factor, Burkinabé youth have strong national identity, family ties, and "joking custom," which can help to resolve conflicts peacefully and mitigate inter-ethnic violence.
- Young men in both countries experience a delayed "adulthood" transition where traditional markers of manhood (marriage, starting a family, jobs) are unattainable for many, leaving youth vulnerable to migration and trafficking as well as recruitment from gangs or VE groups who can offer money, status, and a sense of belonging.

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[10]Ibid 9

[11] Ibid 9

[12] Deliver for Good, Meet the Demand for Modern Contraception and Reproductive Health, 2017 http://womendeliver.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/09/Deliver_For_Good_Brief_2_09.17.17.pdf.

[13] Vanda Felbab-Brown, In the eye of the storm: Niger and its unstable neighbors, 2017 https://www.brookings.edu/blog/order-from-chaos/2017/06/13/in-the-eye-of-the-storm-niger-and-its-unstable-neighbors/.

[14] Ibid 13

Livelihoods
- RISE I identified key barriers to livelihoods diversification efforts: *insufficient literacy, education, training, and access to credit, skills, and networks to productively engage in micro- or small enterprises outside of traditional farming and livestock activities.*
- There is a need for increased training and support for aspiring entrepreneurs, including improving access to credit, apprenticeships, and information to expand opportunities.
- Many youths from RISE I programs dropped out of trainings in Burkina to pursue informal work at mining sites or because they didn't think they would find employment after trainings.
- There is also a feeling that most opportunities are clustered in the regional capital; meaningful training opportunities in the more rural/satellite towns may offer opportunities where employment services support could make a clear difference.[15]
- All respondents surveyed in Burkina Faso, regardless of demographics, said they depended on **word of mouth as the primary or only source of information about livelihood opportunities**. Other sources in rural areas tended to be local community groups. In general, young men and women expressed frustration about a lack of information about job opportunities.
- In Niger, radio has been found to be the most effective method to disseminate information for youth. Potential for use in employment/development information.[16]
- More entrepreneurial youth reported not being able to meet the collateral requirements to obtain a loan, even from NGOs, which intend to target their demographic. Youth relied instead on community loan groups or family and friends to lend them small amounts of cash when needed, enabling them to keep small business activities going, but not to expand.[17]
- Migration is a common livelihood strategy for youth, yet most programming does not address the reality of migration or support migration strategies. While circular migration in West Africa has existed for many years as a livelihoods strategy, more youth are traveling without support or connections to jobs, are vulnerable to traffickers, gangs, and VE organizations, and often lack safe and productive opportunities once they reach their destination.
- An increasing number of young Burkinabé migrate to Côte d'Ivoire alone, without using Burkinabé social networks because they consider it an oppressive social system in which tribal elders make decisions. Without networks, they often fail to find a job. Should a migrant fail, reasons of social stigma can make return difficult.[18]
- As increasing numbers of young people attempt to migrate abroad, more commercial trafficking networks have moved in. Males pay traffickers thousands of euros, leaving them in debt for years. There is evidence of trafficking Burkinabé women into Europe for prostitution
- Migration flows in Niger provide some insight into skills gaps among male youth. For example, group discussions indicated that in-migration in the RISE ZOI is common from countries such as Togo, Benin, Côte d'Ivoire, Burkina Faso, Mali and Nigeria. It was noted that immigrants fill a variety of jobs, such as in carpentry, artisanal work, mechanical repair, plumbing, barber shops, masonry, sewing, dyeing, auto sales, hospitality, livestock, and petty trade.
- There is an opportunity to improve skills of youth to increase economic competitiveness. Low skill attainment and literacy, currently stifle job growth. Nigerien youth prioritize socioeconomic growth and opportunity, but lack network support, demand-driven, quality training and in some cases literacy/math skills.

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[15] USAID, *Livelihoods Diversification Analysis*, 2017.

[16] International Relief and Development Inc. "USAID Peace Through Development II", April 2015. http://blumont.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/01/PDev-II-Jan-Mar-2015-Qly-Rept_FINAL-4-29-2015.pdf.

[17] USAID, *Livelihoods Diversification Analysis*, 2017.

[18] Brad Kess, Burkina Faso: Testing the Tradition of Circular Migration, 2007 https://www.migrationpolicy.org/article/burkina-faso-testing-tradition-circular-migration.

SUMMARY OF RECOMMENDATIONS

The following section gives a broad set of recommendations based on the above findings. All recommendations should be considered through a positive youth development lens, which guides USAID's approach to youth development. PYD engages youth, along with their families, communities and/or governments, so that youth are empowered to reach their full potential. PYD approaches build skills, assets and competencies; foster healthy relationships; strengthen the environment; and transform systems.

Sample log frame using a Positive Youth Development approach:
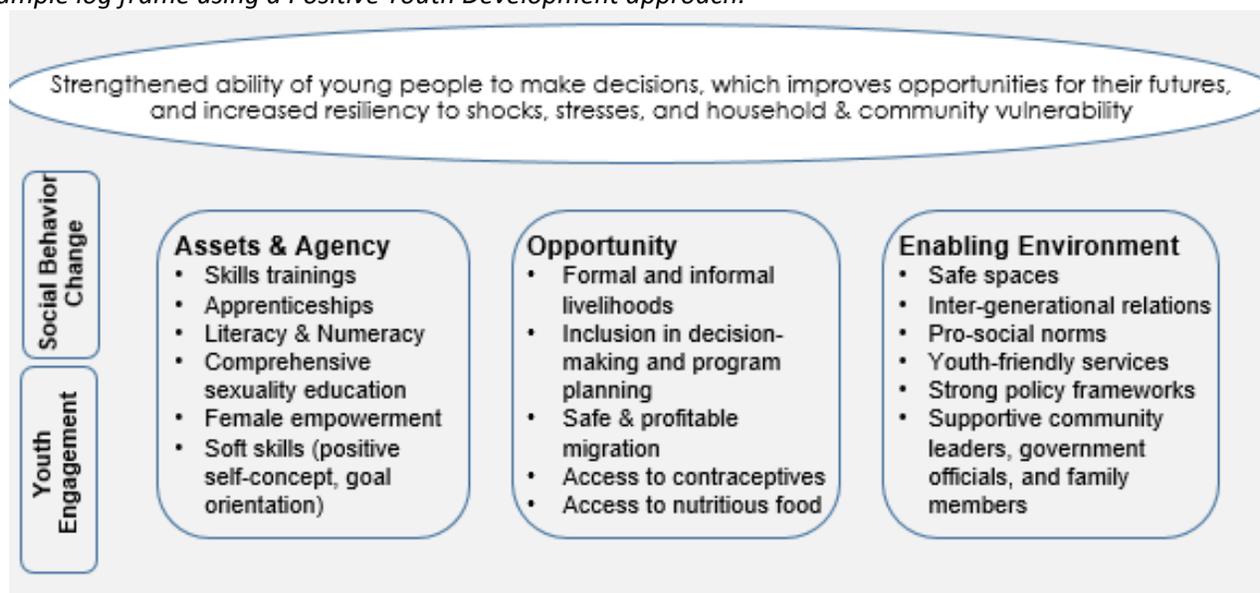
Youth Engagement
- **Engage youth throughout the program cycle** including research, program design, implementation and feedback loops via monitoring and evaluation.
- **Youth targeting** and programming approaches must address different groups of youth and not treat youth as a homogenous entity (age, ethnicity, religion, gender, region, migration status, education level, rural and urban, LGBT, disability, etc.).
- **Collect disaggregated data** by stages of development (age brackets) and gender.
- **Conduct focus groups and youth-led surveys** of youth, relevant stakeholders, families, employers, health workers, etc. to find out if youth participated in programs, which youth participated, why they did or did not, and what would attract them to future programs.

Health and Nutrition
- Desired age at marriage and family size reflect deeply rooted socio-cultural norms, e.g., that large families equate economic security, and these norms take time to evolve. The demographic transition theory says that for fertility to decline, mortality must decline (from) increased health, nutrition and medical advances) concurrently with economic growth.[19]
- This suggests that programming must take a holistic approach combining health and nutrition improvements with economic opportunity before we see true decline. Programming should strive to give girls alternatives to building economic security (outside of children), such as vocational skills, farming knowledge, and financial literacy if we expect to see norms change.[20]

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[19] Ibid 9
[20] Ibid 9

- Access to contraceptives must be improved and the legal age of marriage must be raised, especially in Niger, but young women often need permission from their husband/family to access health services and husbands must also agree to use contraceptives. Laws must be accepted and enforced on a community level and husbands should be included in FP talks.
- Focus on social behavior change, as access alone will not be enough to affect desired family size. Include women, men, and youth throughout programming, influencers such as local authorities, religious leaders, husbands and mother-in-laws are especially important to work with around family planning.
- Engage boys and young men from the very beginning in food security, nutrition, and health interventions. Address the power and gender dynamics that prevent youth and especially girls from being able to make decisions about their own health or nutrition.
- Target married girls, pregnant girls, and young mothers who are often left out of programming geared towards women or children and do not have access to livelihood or educational opportunities. Target adolescent girls (10-14) before they are sexually active with information about puberty, fertility awareness, nutrition, contraception, relationships, gender dynamics, and opportunities to develop communication, decision-making, and negotiation skills.
- The Sawki program sought to empower girls, aged 10 to 18, beyond the roles they are expected to play, and program data supports the hypothesis that providing livelihood training and income generation opportunities for girls will increase their confidence and aspirations for a better future, but did not seem to translate into influence in families. Improving girls' influence requires targeted interventions aimed at girls' gatekeepers and the wider community to change cultural and social norms to value girls and their opinions more.[21]
- Other findings from the study support the hypothesis that livelihood training and income generation opportunities increase girls' confidence and aspirations for a better future, but demonstrates the difficulty increasing girls' actual or perceived influence in the home and community. Programming needs to make links between building knowledge and income generating opportunities (i.e., knowledge is necessary but not sufficient for improved lives).

Reducing Violence/Peace & Security
- CVE programming should take a PYD approach, especially focused on the community and working across sectors to engage youth in peacebuilding process including human rights, economic, socio-political, and socio-cultural approaches.
- Programming requires a long-term strategy addressing *education, entertainment, engagement and empowerment.* Rural youth pose different instability risks than those in urban areas – programs must contextualize for different communities and regions.[22]
- Look at youth livelihoods to reduce vulnerability, especially youth from extremely poor households who are susceptible to gangs or VE organizations who offer motorcycles and cash.
- Work with local contacts to identify stakeholders that would benefit from and support skills-based training for at-risk youth, connected to available employment opportunities.
- Identify and partner with local NGOs to build capacity for aiding reintegration of BH (or other) recruits into society, including education and livelihoods opportunities, social reintegration, psychosocial support, health assistance, and family tracing if needed.
- Given the particular political, social and economic dynamics of the northeast quadrant of Burkina Faso (particularly Oudalan Province), this area should, despite its relative low population density, be a priority for youth programming. This is a long-neglected and marginalized part of the country where heavy reliance on increasingly erratic rainfall creates high risk for local economic activity (agriculture and livestock herding). Its political sensitivity (proximity to Mali and Niger) is also a risk.

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[21] Ibid 9
[22] USAID, Regional Risk Assessment, Violent Extremism in West Africa, 2015.

- Youth in this region of the Sahel should be encouraged through the provision of vocational programs designed to boost self-sufficiency and food security. To the extent possible, these activities should be married with larger economic growth efforts as a means of providing more sustainable economic opportunities for youth. Providing training may raise unmet expectations unless it is accompanied by broader economic development activities.
- In Niger, there is significant distrust between the youth and government and security forces; programs should work to build relationships and open communication between these groups.
- The national government must start consulting with local civil society in Niger's regions and meaningfully engaging with local governors. Credible institutional development, including police reform and military accountability to elected civilian leaders are needed.[23]
- Consider ways security forces can positively engage with youth to build trust, such as the soccer tournament Nigerian forces are holding for young people in Northeastern Nigeria to foster civilian-military cooperation.[24]

Livelihoods
- Livelihood diversification efforts will need to consist of different strategies and targeting in more rural areas relative to urban centers, with stronger programming focus for urban and more educated youth. This may require a shift in priorities from more rural areas, with recognition that diversification efforts in rural areas will likely meet poverty alleviation objectives, while in more urban areas they may have stronger potential to also meet economic and employment expansion objectives.[25]
- In both the short- and medium-term, the immediate needs of both the economy and the stock of unschooled/unskilled workers, in particular the youth, will require the following:
  o Implementation of programs to help labor market insertion or offset the short and long-term consequences of temporary income shortfalls for vulnerable groups.
  o Improvements in quality of the skills development systems for youth - traditional apprenticeships, literacy/numeracy training programs - so that they can provide skills recognized and needed by employers and open opportunities for further education.
  o Providing second chance programs that reinsert out-of-school youth into the formal education system or non-formal programs like accelerated learning programs.
- *Programs should focus on opportunities that have the following:*
  o Expansion opportunities and demand are identified
  o Youth are interested in them
  o It is feasible for youth to attain the required skills
- Targeting along multiple tracks:
  o Youth with "potential" to generate civic & economic opportunity
  o Vulnerable youth identified through early warning systems and supported with wraparound intensive services for youth and family
  o Soft skills as the connective fiber in all programming to increase the potential of both groups of youth
- Identify livelihoods opportunities for girls and young women, especially those who are already married or have children who are frequently isolated and left out of livelihoods programming.
- More productive entrepreneurship can be supported and expanded through effective skills training for young entrepreneurs. Training can help bridge two of the three key primary constraints commonly faced by young entrepreneurs: insufficient business skills and professional networks. When coupled with facilitated access to credit, such programs address all three of the major constraints to productive

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[23] Ibid 13

[24] Yomi Kazeem, Nigeria's army set up a soccer league to stop Boko Haram from radicalizing youth, 2017 https://qz.com/1120625/boko-haram-nigerias-army-using-soccer-to-stop-radicalization/.

[25] USAID, *Livelihoods Diversification Analysis*, 2017.

entrepreneurship at the micro level: business skills, effective networks, and sufficient capital to start and expand enterprises.
- o Access to credit: youth-specific or intergenerational Village Saving and Loan Associations, working with Islamic banks who tend to have lower interest rates, microfinance, and app technologies that help youth prove their financial worth by keeping records
- Consider scholarships and recruitment support for bringing more rural and less literate or educated youth into peri-urban training centers, recognizing that such students may also need additional mentoring and curriculum support.
- Programs should primarily consider the informal economy and household enterprises, given the lack of formal sector opportunities in rural areas.   It is important to note that livelihoods opportunities are location and population specific and require deeper analysis to identify the best options for particular communities and individuals. However, USAID's Livelihoods Diversification Study (publication forthcoming) provides examples of some opportunities:
  - o In Burkina Faso, common livelihoods included the dominant agricultural and livestock work, in addition to petty trading, often seen a diversified complement to agricultural and livestock activities. Work in auto and motorbike mechanics/repair and market gardening were also seen as potentially profitable, especially in areas that are closer to more peri-urban and urban towns.
  - o For preferred livelihoods, urban respondents indicated demand is strong for small business and petty trading. In more rural villages, less climate-dependent activities cited by both men and women included raising poultry, animal fattening, small-scale agro-processing, and market vegetable gardening. Non-climate-dependent activities highlighted by men included petty trading opportunities and mechanical work such as auto and motorbike repair. Women in more rural areas mentioned an interest in petty commerce across a range of small activities, including tie-dying and *tissage* (weaving).
  - o In Maradi, Niger, changes in non-climate-dependent activities included the expansion of diverse trades such as carpentry, tailoring, sewing, and taxi driving, some employment opportunities in the solar industry. Youth also mentioned opportunities in market vegetable gardening, woodworking, metalworking, and even filming.
  - o In Dakoro and Madarounfa, in Maradi region, participants mentioned growth in petty trading, mechanical work, sewing, artisanal work such as soap making, and cell phone repair. Newer activities included poultry and pigeon rearing, and fattening of small ruminants. Madarounfa respondents said animal fattening brought a positive change to their income sources, and helped overcome challenges related to climate change.[26]
- There is interest among programs and firms to include youth in livelihood opportunities, including in agro-processing expansion activities. But before this is feasible, youth need to have increased vocational expertise, business savvy and required equipment.
- Other Considerations: financial literacy for young women and young men, use livelihoods programming to bridge across social divides in communities through youth, and make migration safer and more productive.

Cross-Cutting Issues
- **Youth Agency in Decision-Making**
  - o Use intergenerational dialogue and projects to ensure youth voice in local decision-making
  - o Identify already existing youth group structures such as fadas, and identify which youth are being left out of these structures
  - o Ensure that youth are included in community issues mapping, consultation, setting community agendas, and community "score cards" on youth services.

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[26] USAID, *Livelihoods Diversification Analysis*, 2017.

- **Consider Opportunities for Cross-Sectoral Programming**
  - Family planning + Youth Employment
  - Workforce Development + CVE
  - Family Planning + Nutrition programs
  - Integrated Youth-Friendly Services
  - Investments across sectors
  - Graduation Model: *health, livelihoods, skills training, safety net, savings promotion, and coaching*
- **Social Behavior Change will be a key strategy**
  - Understanding the target group, their drivers, and their influencers
  - Valuing youth and youth voice
  - Family planning (desired family size, delayed first birth, birth spacing)
  - Delayed first marriage
  - Working with the whole community, whole family, who has the power?
- **Gender-Transformative Approach**
  - Raise awareness about unhealthy gender norms
  - Question the costs of adhering to these norms
  - Replace unhealthy, inequitable gender norms with redefined healthy ones
  - [Gender transformative programs](#) (see checklist) often take an [ecological approach](#). The forces acting on the development of an adolescent's sense of gender include:
    - Parents, family, peers, partners/spouse, in-laws, other wives
    - School, community, healthcare, workplace, faith community
    - Media, religious doctrine, laws and policies, government and politics, business and marketing
- **Engaging Religious Leaders**
  - Family planning – regardless of education levels, perceived religious constraints prevented FP use among Niger participants (male and female). Islam also promotes a 2-year breastfeeding period so it is useful to solicit support of religious leaders and promote this notion of spacing per Islam and for the health of mother/baby.
  - Where formal schooling is not available, Quranic schools can integrate literacy, numeracy, soft/life skills, and comprehensive sexual education. Currently many Quranic schools do not help youth achieve French literacy. Work with religious leaders to improve curriculum and teaching.
    - [Nigeria Quranic schools case study](#)
  - Identify and amplify with moderate voices in religious communities, especially in areas where VE groups are targeting youth for recruitment.
- **Education**
  - **Challenges**
    - Distance to schools, insecurity getting to and from school, especially for girls
    - Nonexistence of local schools, especially for secondary school
    - High cost and hidden fees, as well as poor quality of schools
    - Not a priority for families, especially for girls
  - **Opportunities**
    - Quranic education – can integrate basic numeracy and literacy
    - CSE education outside of formal schools, since the majority of female and male youth are out of school.
    - Educational opportunities can help girls in delaying marriage and first birth
    - Intergenerational support from influential family members, i.e. [The Grandmother Project in Senegal](#), also a consideration to address FGM/C
    - Identify local NGOs who have been working on '2nd chance' schools in Niger

- **Youth Groups as an Organizing Principle**
  Work through local existing networks and popular points of aggregation for youth, such as youth *fadas*, regional youth councils, youth centers and cybercafés; it may be beneficial to include more active participation of religious leaders in social support and integration projects.
  Key factors contributing to more successful livelihood diversification activities included:
    - Working through group structures rather than individuals
    - Program requirements that group members/beneficiaries put some small percentage of their earnings back into a community enterprise
    - o **Livelihoods** – youth cooperatives or savings and loan associations
    - o **Governance** – civic action groups, fadas, how can young women be involved?
    - o **CVE** – peace clubs, youth theater, civic engagement or youth working together through livelihoods activities
    - o **Safe Spaces** – youth centers/community centers, as identified by young people
- **Migration is Reality**
    - o Migration is a reality and may be part of the solution as a tool for development in the region. Migration can counter negative economic shocks for those whose livelihood depends on unpredictable climates and land fertility.
    - o Programs should: set expectations for migration, reduce the stigma, build relevant skills development, increase financial literacy for young women and men, help identify opportunities and make migratory work more productive, and include considerations on trafficking and gender based violence (GBV).
    - o There are also wider security concerns suggesting that migrants would be disproportionately involved in criminal activity than natives.[27] Providing support mechanisms for youth at risk, and ensuring proper integration of migrants can diminish the risk of violence and manage the development impact of migration.
    - o Consider creation and use of portable certifications. Institutions such as mutual recognition agreements between countries or regional certification systems can improve portability of skills at the international level.[28]
    - o Returnees can be a helpful resource for other young people considering migration, to tell their stories and let others learn about their experience, but there is a stigma around discussing migration in many communities that must be addressed.

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[27] Mattes et al. 2000, Danso & McDonald 2001, Quirk 2008.
[28] International Labour Organization, Portability of Skills, 2007
http://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/@ed_norm/@relconf/documents/meetingdocument/wcms_gb_298_esp_3_en.pdf.

CONTEXT

YOUTH PROFILE AND TARGETING YOUTH

USAID Youth Policy: While youth development programs often focus on young people in the 15-24-year age range, the policy recognizes that USAID youth programs likely engage a broader cohort of 10 to 29 year olds; with the critical understanding that the transition from childhood to adulthood is not finite or linear and varies across and within countries. The USAID Youth in Development policy asks all USAID missions to consider how they can mainstream youth across their portfolios, and provides guidance on when and how to prioritize and target intentional youth development efforts.[29]

Burkina Faso Youth Policy: The national youth policy of 2008 defines youth as those between 15-35, and recognizes their different needs. The definition corresponds with those of the African Union and Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS). Burkina Faso has also ratified the African Youth Charter.
- National youth policy objective: to contribute to "the wellbeing of young people by making them actors and beneficiaries of national development."
- It seeks to build a sense of "citizenship and patriotism" among young people and to strengthen youth participation.
- The policy builds on the recognition of the rights of young people and sees them as active partners in the planning, implementation and evaluation of youth programs.
- The policy emphasizes that young people must be involved in policy through associative movements and civil society, and the concerns of young people should be taken into account in budgets and programs of local communities.[30]
- The Ministry of Youth, Professional Education and Employment is in charge of implementing the national youth policy. The National Youth Council (CNJ), a consultative body of and for young people, was founded in 2004. It is a non-political platform for youth organizations and movements.
- The National Youth Policy must allow through an iterative consultation to ensure that young people actively contribute to the formulation, implementation and the evaluation of policies, programs and action plans, as well as local economic and social development.[31]

The large majority of Burkinabé youth are faced with the problems of unemployment, underemployment and poverty stemming from the economic structure of the country and demographics. In urban areas, 69.4% of the unemployed are in the age group from 15 to 34 years. In rural areas, 40% of the workforce is underemployed. 64.7% of informal sector workers are under 25 years of age. In contrast, in the group of employees in the modern sector, youth under the age of 25 represent a mere 8% of workers.[32]

Youth Development Index: 0.43, 134 out of 170 countries
Literacy Rates: Both sexes (15-24) 45.43%, Male (15-24) 47.56, Female (15-24) 43.24%
Net Enrollment Rate: (Secondary School) Both 19.74%, Male 21.53%, Female 17.88%

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[29] USAID, *Youth in Development Policy,* 2012
https://www.usaid.gov/sites/default/files/documents/1870/Youth_in_Development_Policy_0.pdf.

[30] Youthpolicy.org, Burkina Faso, 2014, http://www.youthpolicy.org/factsheets/country/burkina-faso/.

[31] Youthpolicy.org, Burkina Faso, 2014, http://www.youthpolicy.org/factsheets/country/burkina-faso/.

[32] Youthpolicy.org, Burkina Faso, 2014, http://www.youthpolicy.org/factsheets/country/burkina-faso/.

Niger Youth Policy: Niger's National Youth Policy (PNJ), also called "National Youth Charter", was adopted in 2011.[33] Youth are defined as between ages 15-35, in line with the African Youth Charter.

- The objective of the PNJ is to "promote the insertion of youth in social and cultural life and in economic activities, by developing education programs to that end and by supporting initiatives for socio-economic integration".
- The Ministry of Youth and Sports is the main governmental agency responsible for youth in Niger. The National Youth Council of Niger (CNJN) is an independent, non-partisan advisory body under the supervision of the Ministry of Youth and Sports. It undertakes capacity-building projects with its members in areas as diverse as conflict management, climate change advocacy, and anti-corruption.

Youth are classified as among the most vulnerable groups since they face problems in health, education, sports, leisure, employment, socio-economic integration, and progressive loss of national cultural values. In terms of demographic weight, young people represent an asset and enormous potential that can be mobilized for the country's economic and social development.56.5 percent of the Nigerien population is under the age of 15 and the annual youth growth rate over the period 2001-2010 is estimated to average 3.81 percent per year. The number of young people aged 15-35 is estimated at 4,914,140 in 2011, with 3,766,415 in rural areas and 1,147,725 in urban areas. However, these numbers are changing and show an upward trend for urban youth compared to youth in rural areas.[34]

Youth Development Index: 0.38, 144 out of 170 countries
Literacy Rates: Both sexes (15-24) 26.56%, Male (15-24) 36.43, Female (15-24) 17.15%
Net Enrollment Rate: (Secondary School) Both 12.20%, Male 14.69%, Female 9.71%

Scott Dobberstein/ USAID/Sahel

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[33] UNESCO, Politique Nationale Jeunesse Niger, 2016
http://www.unesco.org/new/fileadmin/MULTIMEDIA/FIELD/Dakar/pdf/PolitiqueNationaleJeunesseNiger.pdf.
[34] Youthpolicy.org, *Niger,* 2014 http://www.youthpolicy.org/factsheets/country/niger/.

TARGETING YOUTH

Adolescents and youth are a complex and heterogeneous population with different characteristics that influence their needs and vulnerabilities, including:

- **Age:** Differentiate youth by age brackets for development (e.g., 10-14, 15-19, 20-24, 25-29).
- **Gender:** Empowering young women without sidestepping young men; young men are often considered at-risk for radicalization, but the vast majority have no desire to turn to extremism.
- **Life stage** (e.g., unmarried, married, parenting): Catering to girls' different needs based on marital status; Transition to adulthood for young men who struggle with traditional "measures" of adulthood such as jobs and families.
- **Type of relationship:** e.g., casual serial partnerships, multiple concurrent partnerships, monogamous marriage, polygamous marriage.
- **Sexual orientation**: LGBT youth are stigmatized and essentially hidden from public view.
- **Disabilities:** e.g., hearing, vision, mobility impaired, learning disabilities.
- **CVE-affected youth:** Preventing vulnerable, especially jobless/financially struggling, youth; Reintegration of returnees; Empowerment of affected, whether victims, family members, etc.
- **Health status:** e.g., young people living with HIV, malnourished youth, young anemic mothers.
- **Education level, schooling status** (in or out of school): Focusing not just on educated youth and emerging leaders, but also on empowering the uneducated and overlooked.[35]
- **Employment status**: young people face chronic unemployment and underemployment, which can affect their transition to adulthood, vulnerability, and empowerment.
- **C-TIP**: Trafficked girls are used as domestic servants, beggars, and prostitutes while boys work as miners (particularly in gold mines), wood and metal workers, and domestics. Older youth are vulnerable to trafficking while migrating.
- **Vulnerability status:** e.g., street-based/ homeless, refugee, illiterate.
- **Migration**[36]: Low levels of education; From neighboring countries; Why are they leaving and where are they going? Can programming encourage them to stay and serve as agents of change in their home countries? Refugees: 50,000 refugees displaced by Malian crisis living in three camps in Burkina Faso. Within the country, for example, Burkina Faso, what does youth migration look like toward ventures like artisanal mining, etc.?
- **Access and control over financial resources**: are male and female youth empowered to make household decisions around finances, land, nutrition, etc.?
- **Household composition:** e.g., living with both parents, single-parent household, orphans, adolescent-headed household.
- **Geographic location** (urban, rural, slums, peri-urban): Rural youth are especially affected by land quality, drylands, drought etc. while urban youth have often migrated from other areas in search of opportunities that might not exist.
- **Religious groups**: Engaging youth in interreligious dialogue not just religious/community elite.

The same service delivery model is rarely able to serve all cohorts and subpopulations of adolescents and youth, so program designers should identify and prioritize the subpopulation(s) of young people that they wish to serve.

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[35] Bhulai, Rafia Barakat, Naureen Chowdhury Fink, and Sara Zeiger. *The Roles of Families and Communities in Strengthening Community Resilience Against Violent Extremism*. PDF. Abu Dhabi: Hedayah, May 2014. 5.
[36] Devilolard, Alexandre, Alessia Basschi, and Marion Noack. *A Survey on Migration Policies in West Africa*. PDF. International Centre for Migration Policy Development, March 2015.

USAID Youth Approach

What is USAID's Positive Youth Development approach? Positive Youth Development (PYD) is both a philosophy and an approach to adolescent development. While there are several definitions of PYD, YouthPower Learning (USAID Youth IDIQ) has defined it as follows:

> *Positive youth development engages youth along with their families, communities and/or governments so that youth are empowered to reach their full potential. PYD approaches build skills, assets and competencies; foster healthy relationships; strengthen the environment; and transform systems.*

Positive Youth Development (PYD) Framework
This framework illustrates that to achieve the vision of healthy, productive and engaged youth. PYD programs, practices and policies must work with youth to improve their:

• *Assets:* Youth have the necessary resources, skills and competencies to achieve desired outcomes.
• *Agency:* Youth perceive and have the ability to employ their assets and aspirations to make or influence their own decisions about their lives and set their own goals, as well as to act upon those decisions in order to achieve desired outcomes.
• *Contribution:* Youth are engaged as a source of change for their own and for their communities' positive development.
• *Enabling environment:* Youth are surrounded by an environment that develops and supports their assets, agency, access to services, and opportunities, and strengthens their ability to avoid risks and to stay safe, secure, and be protected and live without fear of violence or retribution. An enabling environment encourages and recognizes youth, while promoting their social and emotional competence to thrive. The term "environment" should be interpreted broadly and includes: social (e.g., relationships with peers and adults), normative (e.g., attitudes, norms and beliefs), structural (e.g., laws, policies, programs services, and systems) and physical (e.g., safe, supportive spaces).
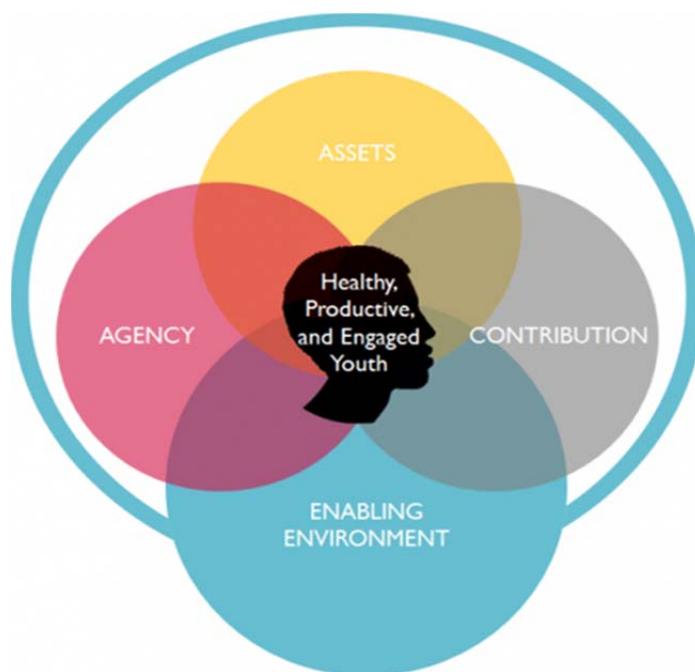
PYD Framework with Program Features
Seven features of PYD are essential for strong programs. These features link directly to the four domains presented in the PYD Framework. Like the domains, these features are grounded in the literature, particularly the work of the National Research Council and Institute of Medicine, but are tailored for the context of a developing country. The PYD features can help to define what activities can be incorporated within each of the four PYD domains. There are often gender-based differentials within PYD, and thus all strategies and reviews of our efforts need to be examined with this in mind.

What does PYD mean for USAID and its Missions/Country Offices in the Sahel?[37]
Both the PYD field and USAID's Youth in Development Policy recognize youth participation as vital to development. Youths' full participation in development efforts can contribute to more sustainable investments to end cycles of poverty; to build resilient, democratic societies; to improve health and nutrition outcomes; and to strengthen economies. USAID Missions can enact and reinforce the broader Agency's efforts to empower youth by advancing programs which:

1. *Recognize that youth participation is essential for effective programming;*
2. *Invest in youth's assets;*
3. *Foster healthy relationships by involving mentors, families and communities;*
4. *Account for differences and commonalities among youth;*
5. *Pursue gender equality and female empowerment;*
6. *Harness youth innovation and technology; and*
7. *Create second-chance opportunities for youth. Investments in youth translate to benefits for society by increasing youth's connections to civil society and helping youth make successful transitions to adulthood.*

The PYD approach can inform evidence-based design of future USAID youth-focused programing, and it can inform evaluation design for such programs.

What does PYD mean for implementers of USAID programming?
Programs that utilize a PYD approach have increasingly demonstrated that building the intellectual, physical, social, and emotional competence of youth is a more effective development strategy than one that focuses solely on correcting problems. Incorporating a PYD approach during program design and using indicators of positive development to evaluate the program can help to assess trends in positive outcomes over the life of a project. When applied across multiple projects and sectors, implementers can ensure PYD program effectiveness within and across sectors, provide evidence for increased funding, and set the stage for program sustainability and scale-up. Implementers can incorporate and measure PYD in youth programming to improve program performance over time, contribute to the body of evidence on PYD, and ultimately influence multi-sector outcomes and impact.[38]

PYD Resources
Positive Youth Development Measurement Toolkit
PYD Illustrative Indicators

Integrating Youth throughout the Program Cycle
EFFECTIVE YOUTH PARTICIPATION IN THE USAID PROGRAM CYCLE

- Youth are consulted in policy development.
- Youth have specific roles in assessment, program design, implementation and evaluation.
- Youth--serving and youth--led organizations are supported.
- Youth have dynamic platforms for voice and innovation.
- Strategies are informed by youth input, research on what works, and life conditions of young people.

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[37] YouthPower, PYD Framework, 2017 http://www.youthpower.org/positive-youth-development-pyd-framework.
[38] YouthPower, PYD Framework, 2017 http://www.youthpower.org/positive-youth-development-pyd-framework.

Annex 1

Systems, Approaches, and Tools

General Youth
- Youth in Development Policy
- Positive Youth Development
- Youth Engagement Guide
- Collaborating, Learning and Adapting toolkit
- Youth Compass: A Strategic Guide to Strengthen Youth Activities
- Assessment of Integrated Workforce Development and Sexual and Reproductive Health Interventions
- Key Soft Skills for Cross-Sectoral Youth Outcomes
- Positive Youth Development Illustrative Indicators
- Positive Youth Development Measurement Toolkit
- USAID Youth in Development policy
- Youth Participation in Development
- Global Youth Development Index
- Advocating for Change for Adolescents!

Health and Nutrition
- Gender Transformative Approach
- Addressing Child and Early Forced Marriage
- Nutrition in adolescence – Issues and Challenges for the Health Sector
- Adolescent Nutrition Policy and Programming
- Capacity and Consent: Empowering Adolescents to Exercise their Reproductive Rights
- The Sexual and Reproductive Health Needs of Very Young Adolescents Aged 10–14 in Developing Countries
- Engaging Men and Boys for Gender Equality and Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights
- Youth Family Planning Policy Scorecard
- Assessment of Integrated Workforce Development and Sexual and Reproductive Health Interventions
- Addressing early marriage and adolescent pregnancy as a barrier to gender parity and equality in education
- Adolescent Research Briefs
- Toolkit: Involving Young People as Researchers in Sexual and Reproductive Health Programs
- Engaging Men and Boys to Address the Practice of Child Marriage
- Ending Child Marriage & Meeting the Needs of Married Children: The USAID Vision for Action
- Addressing early marriage and adolescent pregnancy as a barrier to gender parity and equality in education
- Capacity and Consent: Empowering Adolescents to Exercise their Reproductive Rights
- Communicating Research to Policymakers
- Community Group Engagement: Changing Norms to Improve Sexual and Reproductive Health
- FP2020 Burkina Faso, FP2020 Niger
- Girlhood, Not Motherhood: Preventing Adolescent Pregnancy

- Guide for Promoting SRH Products and Services for Men
- Increasing contraceptive use in Niger
- Monitoring and Evaluating Adolescent Reproductive Health Programs
- Thinking outside the separate space: A decision-making tool for designing youth-friendly services
- University Leadership for Change in Sexual and Reproductive Health in Niger
- Working with Young Men to Promote Sexual and Reproductive Health
- Youth Contraceptive Use: Effective Interventions, a Reference Guide

Conflict and CVE
- Preventing Violent Extremism in Burkina Faso
- Promising practices in engaging youth in peace and security/PVE
- Young People's Participation in Peacebuilding
- Development Assistance and Counter-Extremism: A Guide to Programming
- 6 ways to successfully engage youths in peacebuilding
- Guide to the Drivers of Violent Extremism
- Preventing violent extremism through promoting inclusive development, tolerance and respect for diversity
- Youth Education in Crisis and Conflict

Livelihoods and Food Security
- Youth Engagement in Agricultural Value Chains across Feed the Future: A SYNTHESIS REPORT
- Youth Livelihoods Development Program Guide
- Rural Youth Employment
- GFSS Technical Guidance Diversifying Livelihoods, Resilience, and Pathways Out of Poverty
- Youth Global Food Security Strategies Volumes I and II - forthcoming
- Livelihood Diversification Analysis - forthcoming

Migration
- Distress migration and youth in protracted crises
- Mainstreaming Migration into Development Planning
- Integrating Youth and Migration into Development Strategies