

Chapter 15

Conducting a Youth-centric Analysis

This chapter elaborates on:

- detailed steps and examples in conducting a youth-centric analysis
- implications for quantitative and qualitative analysis.

15.1 What is youth-centric analysis?

Youth-centric analysis involves assessing legislation, policy and national/sectoral development frameworks from a youth perspective. It helps define the implications for young people of a specific policy and related programmes in ways that enable and empower young people. This analysis would ideally be integrated into a fuller age/demographic cohort analysis for children, youth, adults and senior citizens within a national/local development framework, or within your specific sector.

A youth analysis should occur during the stages of formulation, review and revision for policies and programmes at all levels.

15.2 What are 'youth interests'?

What, then, are 'youth interests?' Which youth define this term? And how do some interests gain precedence over others in policy processes? In gender mainstreaming, 'interests' have been defined as the 'shared understandings and articulations of concern of an individual or group'.¹ They constitute both:

1. the objectives of the individual or group; and
2. the power of the individual or group to attract attention to those objectives.²

In the recent past, the focus has shifted towards increasing collectivisation of advocacy efforts. Refer to Part 1: Chapter 7 for points to consider with youth representation. Good YM approaches will always recognise diversity within the collective group, including in assessing interests.

15.3 Components of a youth analysis

The following factors³ are necessary to ensure that a youth lens is applied in all analysis:

$$\begin{array}{c}
 \text{youth-centric analysis (qualitative)} \\
 + \\
 \text{data disaggregated for youth (quantitative)} \\
 = \\
 \text{a youth lens}
 \end{array}$$

A youth-centric analysis is not possible without the involvement of young men and women themselves.

15.3.1 Youth-centric qualitative analysis

Let's look at different forms of analysis that may be either more or less empowering for young people. This discussion will reflect the deficit and asset-based approaches to youth development that we discussed in Part 1: Chapter 1 (Box 15.1). See also Annex 7 for other analytical frameworks.

Table 15.1 looks at two different forms of analysis for the same issue: unwanted teenage pregnancy.

The analytical option in the second column is often considered more enabling for young women facing early, unplanned pregnancies. Such an approach will help develop more responsive programmes, leading to reduction in unwanted teenage pregnancies and attendant problems. Consultations with young mothers facing unwanted pregnancy has often, in fact, resulted in informed policy interventions of this nature.

The second analysis sees young people as 'assets' rather than 'problems': it perceives the importance of external structures in determining young people's realities, and young people as



Box 15.1 An asset-based approach and structural/environmental factors

An asset-based approach includes a focus on the structural and environmental factors that can lift up or push down young people's rights and capabilities. By contrast, a 'deficit' approach only focuses on the individual and places sole responsibility for life circumstances on that individual.

Table 15.1 Analysis issue: Unwanted teenage pregnancy

| Analysis 1 – Deficit | Analysis 2 – Asset-based |
|---|--|
| <p>Young, unmarried women face unwanted pregnancies because:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • they are permissive and do not respect social decorum around sexual practice; • they are stubborn and do not listen to adults' advice. | <p>Young, unmarried women faced unwanted pregnancies because:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • they did not have access to information and affordable, accessible services on reproductive health; • the unequal power relations between young women and both young men/adult men hampered young women's decision-making around sexual activity. |
| Perceived policy solution for Analysis 1 | Perceived policy solution for Analysis 2 |
| <p>There should be education programmes to highlight the ill effects of permissive sexual behaviour and the positive role of sexual abstinence before marriage. Young women need programmes that influence their attitudes on, and abstinence from, sexual activity.</p> | <p>Young women need to be better consulted on their reproductive health needs in programme development, with higher levels of information provision and better access to healthcare needs to be provided. There should be programmes that highlight the gender perspective of decision-making around sexual activity between young men and women.</p> |
| Analytical framework | Analytical framework |
| <p>This analysis would relate mostly to a deficit and functionalist model, where youth are required to conform to a specific, predetermined social order with its own codes of sexual practice. In many cases, these assumptions can also have detrimental impacts on youth people's right to information and services, and exacerbate the issue they set out to resolve.</p> | <p>This analysis would relate predominantly to asset- and rights-based frameworks, where unequal power relations between men and women are analysed, and the rights of young women as rights-holders are acknowledged to information and services from duty-bearers.</p> |

rights-holders who can claim entitlements from duty-bearers (including for information and services, primarily from the state, but also from other duty-bearers).

15.4 Data disaggregation for youth and quantitative analysis⁴

Data disaggregation for youth is an indication that youth are explicitly recognised as a specific cohort, with specific programme considerations, receiving the benefits of services. Data disaggregation facilitates both a) planning for young people and b) monitoring and evaluating the outputs and outcomes of sectoral programmes and national development planning. The Youth Development Index (YDI) is a good example of how measuring development outcomes for youth has been possible thanks to data disaggregation.

Data disaggregation/data analysis for youth occurs in several typical ways:

- **youth cohort involvement** in a specific sector that enables a comparative analysis across all generational/social cohorts;
- **outputs for young people**, disaggregated also for different youth age subgroups and marginalised youth groups: for example, access to services such as health and credit, which enables a comparative analysis of outputs across all generational/social cohorts; and
- **outcomes for young people**, disaggregated also for different youth age subgroups and marginalised youth groups: for example, health and employment outcomes such as lack of disease, the employment rate etc., which allow comparative analysis across all generational/social cohorts.

It is important to note that vulnerabilities for younger youth (those below 21, or 24, as relevant) are *generally* far greater than for older youth within all social categories, just as they are greater for other marginalised groups.

15.4.1 Youth cohort: who is active/inactive in a sector

A critical step in integrating a youth lens would be to assess how important the youth cohort is, compared with other age cohorts in the sector; for example, youth involved in employment, in agriculture, in conflict with the law, in drug use etc. If we take the example of youth unemployment, this would typically involve the employment sector asking: How significant is youth cohort involvement in relation to other groups in employment/seeking employment (i.e. the unemployed)?⁵ Table 15.2 is an illustrative example.

15.4.2 Data to measure young people's access to resources (outputs)

Agencies also need to assess differences pertaining to young people's *access to* resources, time, space, information and money, political and economic power, qualifications, transport, use of public services etc. How far are young people's resource needs,

Table 15.2 Youth cohort data: Illustrative example

| General data | Data disaggregated for youth cohort |
|--|---|
| A recent study demonstrated that there was an 8 per cent unemployment rate in Country X. | A recent study demonstrated that, of a total of 8 per cent unemployed in Country X, 5 per cent were young people between the ages of 15 and 29; and of that 5 per cent, 55 per cent were youth between 15 and 24. |

and an analysis of access to needs in health, education and social welfare, incorporated into planning processes in relevant departments? Table 15.3 provides an illustrative example.

Table 15.3 Illustrative general data and data disaggregated for youth

| General data for access to resources | Data disaggregated for youth access |
|--|---|
| The Employment Bureau of Country X recently released a report indicating that 60 per cent of small business owners did not have access to micro-credit programmes. | The Employment Bureau of Country X recently released a report indicating that, out of a total of 60 per cent reporting lack of access to micro-credit programmes, 40 per cent were young people below the age of 29; of these, 70 per cent (of the 40 per cent) were below 24; and of the 40 per cent, 75 per cent were youth from ethnic minority group x (i.e. disaggregation for youth age and ethnicity). |

15.4.3 Data disaggregation to measure inequality and inequity for youth (outcomes)

We also need to be able to express equality/equity for youth through data (see Table 15.4).

Table 15.4 Data disaggregation for inequality and inequity

| General data | Inequality for youth |
|--|---|
| In Country X, the unemployment rate is 8 per cent. | In Country X, the unemployment rate for young people under 29 is three times the rate for adults, four times the rate for adults for youth under 24, and four times the rate of adults for youth living with a physical disability (i.e. disaggregation for youth age and social groups). |
| | Inequity for youth |
| | In Country X, young people constitute 30 per cent of those in the job market, but only 12 per cent of those who are employed. Out of the 70 per cent adults in the job market, 60 per cent are employed. |

The budget consideration here is the way in which social sector allocations and spending reflect resourcing programmes and projects for young people, considering the rate of their involvement in the sector and the gravity of issues for youth in the sector. In Part 3 of this document, Case Study 4 examines youth budgeting and Case Study 6 examines youth participation in urban planning – both entry points for YM into different types of resources.

15.4.4 Assessing data availability

Prior to beginning data disaggregation processes, it is important to assess what disaggregated data are available with census departments, governments ministries and departments, and other research and data agencies, including practical possibilities of expanding the scope of existing disaggregation (see Box 15.2).

Box 15.2 Data disaggregation

- Do national census departments/sectors/organisations disaggregate data for youth?
- What type of data for youth already exist?
- Which statistics and other data institutions can support this process?
- How can data disaggregation be globally co-ordinated as far as possible to report effectively for youth at an international level?
- How do we harmonise data categorisation across sectors and organisations by:
 - harmonising age subgroups within the youth cohort⁶ (adolescents, older youth etc.) across sectors, including harmonising for global youth categories, and
 - harmonising disaggregation for marginalised youth (as relevant) across sectors, so that data from all organisations/sectors are disaggregated in such a way that they can serve national/sectoral planning and reporting?
- Do we have sufficient data on youth to report on:
 - youth cohort involvement in a sector?
 - outputs for youth, including in relation to other generational groups?
 - outcomes for youth, including in relation to other generational groups?
- If not, can we do this? What are the resource and financial implications?

Box 15.3 Data disaggregation initiatives – Barbados

Barbados, at the time of writing, was in the process of assessing existing youth data and developing improved youth data mechanisms. Initial assessments in the country found that:

- primary data sources had inadequate information for disaggregation for youth;
- there was a lack of human resource capacity for data disaggregation;
- data sources were outdated;
- there systematic reporting cultures were lacking; and
- there was a lack of linkages between national strategies and data collection.

Interventions proposed have included identifying and filling data gaps, mapping training needs and training delivery, including training on appropriate software, and establishing data collecting agencies and end-users. A national youth survey has also been proposed to collect data. Additionally, proposed interventions include mainstreaming the YDI framework to monitoring and evaluation design.⁷

Box 15.3 contains analysis from Barbados that provides an example of an initiative taken in the Commonwealth for data disaggregation.

Notes

- 1 Rai 2003, 23.
- 2 Ibid.
- 3 Much of this analysis section is based on the gender analysis section in *Gender Mainstreaming in Practice: A Toolkit* (Niemanis 2007), 88–90.
- 4 See also Chapter 9.
- 5 Tools such as the one used in the Mexico Youth Participation Index are in fact youth cohort analysis indices, which help determine the number of young people in each institutional setting. From a Commonwealth perspective, this can be considered a youth cohort involvement index.
- 6 Marshall 2016. This youth-inclusive indicators document points out the complexity of this exercise in terms of ensuring the reporting on harmonised and globally agreed-on age ranges.
- 7 Information on data disaggregation in Barbados has been derived from a presentation at a symposium on data disaggregation organised by the Commonwealth in Kingston, Jamaica, in 2016. The Barbados experience was presented by Cleviston Hunte, Director of Youth, Government of Barbados.

References

- Marshall, C (2016), *Critical Agents of Change in the 2030 Agenda: Youth-Inclusive Governance Indicators for National-Level Monitoring*, Plan International, available at: <http://restlessdevelopment.org/file/critical-agents-of-change-youth-inclusive-governance-indicators-for-national-level-sdg-monitoring-pdf>

Niemanis, A (2007), *Gender Mainstreaming in Practice: A Toolkit*, Regional Bureau for Europe and the CIS, United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), Bratislava.

Rai, SM (2003), *Mainstreaming Gender, Democratising the State*, Manchester University Press.