

Implementing, Monitoring and Evaluating a National Youth Policy

“It is not enough to formulate national youth policies. What is more important is their implementation. It is therefore necessary that member Governments should develop national plans of action for youth, consistent with the policies. Resources should also be made available to ensure that this plan of action is fully implemented”.

Working Group on Youth Policy Development,
Commonwealth Ministers of
Youth Meeting,
Trinidad and Tobago,
1995

(A) Implementation structures

The national youth policy should outline a range of organisational mechanisms and activities required for effective implementation and co-ordination. These organisational arrangements need to be put into place as early as possible, with an appropriate budget allocation assigned to each. As discussed within Section 2 above, these mechanisms could include the following:

- ★ Lead agency responsible for youth affairs. The importance of this agency should be underscored through the endorsement of appropriate status, commensurate with the importance of young women and men in the life of the nation. *Information Sheet No. 7* in the Tool Kit provides the range of possible options.
- ★ Appointment and structures to ensure more effective co-ordination and collaboration, which could include any or all of the following:

designation of a particular minister with responsibility for co-ordinating a whole-of-government approach to youth issues;

Inter-ministerial committee on youth affairs;

Inter-departmental committee on youth affairs;

National Youth Council;

National Youth Forum;

Focal youth officers in each ministry;

- ★ Organisations to ensure more effective networking e.g. professional association or network or workers with young men and women.

“I keep six honest serving men, they taught me all I know. Their names are What and Why and When and How and Where and Who”.

Rudyard Kipling

(B) Formulating a National Action Plan

A national youth policy should provide a focus and direction for all groups and individuals concerned with young women and men within the country. In addition, it seeks to provide a framework for action over a specific time-frame.

However, as a matter of priority it is important that a national action plan be developed to accompany the national youth policy. The national action plan should be designed as a cooperative expression of all key government and non government agencies concerned with youth development. The national action plan

should be gender sensitive and provide a practical statement on the implementation of the national youth policy, reflecting the directions, priorities and strategy areas of the policy.

A national action plan should build upon the goals and objectives of the national youth policy and demonstrate a holistic and synergistic response of all relevant agencies to the needs of young men and women. The plan should clearly define the specific actions that will be undertaken; when they will be undertaken and by whom. It should also indicate what resources will be required to effectively undertake these actions.

Such a document should clearly state expected outcomes and the performance indicators through which success will be assessed. The following structure for a national action plan is suggested:

1 Specific policy objective

Each policy objective in the national youth policy should be clearly identified with a specific set of actions (ie. programmes, projects or strategies) assigned to it. Thus, the policy objectives provide the rationale for each action.

2 Programmes, projects and strategies

Initiatives may take the form of formal programmes, individual projects or specific strategies. They represent a set of actions which, when implemented, will help achieve policy goal(s) and objectives. These should be described in detail to demonstrate how they will work to address objectives of the national youth policy.

3 Action steps

This involves a detailed description of the actual activities and tasks that will be undertaken to implement the programme, project or strategies. Action steps represent the 'to do' list regarding successful implementation of the strategy.

4 Target group(s)

Each action will be directed at a specific group. These groups need to be clearly identified (e.g. young women, the girl child, young people with disabilities, out of school youth).

5 Expected outcomes

It will be necessary to describe the outcomes that will be anticipated from these actions. That is, what will the action achieve.

6 Responsible agency

The agency responsible for the overall implementation and co-ordination of the action should be identified. This may be a government or non government agency.

7 Support agencies

Whilst one agency may hold responsibility for the co-ordination and implementation of the action plan, there may be a number of other agencies involved. These should be identified.

8 Time frame

It is necessary to indicate when the action will occur and over what period of time.

9 Resource implications

Each action will require resources, be they finance, personnel, equipment, support management, supervision or buildings. These will should be quantified.

10 Performance indicators

Each action should have a set of performance indicators that can be used to evaluate and monitor the degree of success. These indicators need to be measurable within the time period of the action.

© Key indicators of effectiveness

National youth policies are formulated and implemented to create positive outcomes. Identification of such outcomes as targets for success is vital.

The National Youth Policy of Jamaica clearly states the following major outcomes which that country expects to achieve as a consequence of the policy:

- ① *"An appropriate institutional framework which will effectively co-ordinate, promote and ensure implementation of approved policies and programmes.*
- ② *An education system and training opportunities that are relevant and sufficient to enable young people to fully participate in the socio-economic life and develop their optimum potential.*
- ③ *Adequate opportunities for employment, and/or gainful economic activity, including access to land and capital by all youth.*
- ④ *A youth population with positive self and societal values/attitudes, such as patriotism, discipline, selfless service and honesty.*
- ⑤ *Youth participating in a lead role in finding solutions to the main problems affecting their age group, and in providing leadership to the process of developing themselves and the society.*
- ⑥ *Unity of all youth and their organisations, regardless of class, race, gender, religion, political persuasion or disabilities, in creating or widening the opportunities for participation in their own development and that of the nation.*
- ⑦ *Adequate facilities and opportunities for leisure activities, inclusive of games, sports, cultural events and entertainment, to improve the psychological and physical development of young people.*
- ⑧ *Full participation of youth in all aspects of community and national life, and appropriate means of recognising such contributions."*

At a National Youth Policy and Programme Regional Consultative Meeting for Asian Commonwealth countries in Colombo, Sri Lanka (October 1995) the following were identified as key gender-disaggregated indicators of effectiveness for a national youth policy:

- ★ improvement in qualitative and quantitative indicators related to key priority strategy areas, e.g. unemployment, health, literacy;
- ★ greater degree of youth participation;
- ★ youth satisfaction levels as evidenced by such indicators as less anti social behaviour, greater youth usage of services, etc.;
- ★ stakeholder satisfaction level;
- ★ improved co-ordination and cooperation between stakeholders;
- ★ enhanced commitment by government as evidenced by:
 - greater financial commitment;
 - recognition of the importance of youth issues;
 - setting of targets;
 - greater awareness and resource allocation by various ministries;
 - creation of new institutions and services;
 - enhanced status for key lead youth agency;

- ★ improved equity and access for youth sub groups identified as disadvantaged, particularly by young women;
- ★ increased awareness in society of youth issues as evidenced by:
 - increased participation and support;
 - more media focus on young people;
 - recognition by international community and donors in terms of youth initiatives.

The above statements provide a useful basis for both defining performance indicators for each policy objective (see above) and for assessing overall policy outcomes.

④ Regular review

As stated in Part 2, it is important that mechanisms are designed for the regular review of the national youth policy. The Working Group on Youth Policy Development (Commonwealth Ministers of Youth Meeting, 1995) simply stated -

"There is a need for constant review of national youth policies to ensure that they continue to address the needs and concerns of young people."

Many policies incorporate a statement that outlines the processes of review, including a time scale. The following examples from Malta and Botswana illustrate good practice in this regard:

"The Ministry responsible for youth shall have the primary task to see to the implementation of the National Youth Policy. The Ministry shall constantly assess and periodically review this Policy, in consultation with the National Youth Council. In the course of this assessment and review, the Ministry responsible for youth shall, at least once every three years, call a national conference on youth policy and youth affairs. The National Youth Council shall be given the opportunity to be directly involved in the organisation and agenda-setting of the conference."

National Youth Policy of Malta

"The National Youth Policy requires periodic monitoring, review and assessment to ensure that it remains responsive to the needs, aspirations and capacities of young women and men, and the directions of Botswana's broader development objectives. With this purpose, a mechanism for Policy review will be created; one which involves those organisations involved in youth development and one which integrates with the country's development plans as articulated through the National Development Plan."

The Department of Youth Affairs, within the Ministry of Labour and Home Affairs, will be responsible for a periodic review of the National Youth Policy. This will occur every three years and will coincide with the period in which the National Development Plan is being revised, or undergoing its mid-term review. In this way, the National Youth Policy will remain complementary to the broader development objectives as outlined in each National Development Plan.

When conducting this review, the Department of Youth Affairs will work closely along side the Botswana National Youth Council so that the consultation with non-government youth

organisations is adequate. The Department will also utilise the proposed Inter-Ministerial Co-ordinating Committee on Youth Affairs to receive inputs from all relevant ministries into the review process."

Draft National Youth Policy, Republic of Botswana

The instigation of an Annual Youth Audit is another useful mechanism to monitor the implementation national policy and programme initiatives. Such an audit requires all relevant agencies to report on the success or otherwise of the implementation of the National Youth Policy and National Action Plan. Use of external evaluators is vital to ensure an objective approach.