



YOUTH AND WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT PLP TECHNICAL NOTE



AUTHORS: Melanie Beauvy-Sany, Education Development Center; Sita Conklin, Save the Children; Ann Hershkowitz, Education Development Center; Radha Rajkotia, International Rescue Committee; Carrie Berg, International Rescue Committee

EDITORS: Stephanie Chen, The SEEP Network; Fiona Macaulay, Making Cents International (PLP Facilitator); Laura Meissner, The SEEP Network

TECHNICAL NOTE

Guidelines and Experiences for Including Youth in Market Assessments for Stronger Youth Workforce Development Programs

Copyright © 2009 The SEEP Network

Sections of this publication may be copied or adapted to meet local needs without the permission from The SEEP Network, provided that the parts copied are distributed for free or at cost—not for profit. Please credit the “Practitioner Learning Program in Youth and Workforce Development: Using 100% Market-Driven Program Design to Achieve 100% Employment” and The SEEP Network for those sections excerpted.

SEEP would like to thank Veronica Torres, Save the Children/Making Cents International, for reviewing this document.

This study is made possible by the generous support of the American people through the United States Agency for International Development (USAID). The contents are the responsibility of The SEEP Network and do not necessarily reflect the views of USAID or the United States Government.

This initiative is carried out as part of the AED FIELD-Support mechanism. For more information, please visit www.microlinks.org/field.

For any commercial reproduction, please obtain permission from

The SEEP Network
1875 Connecticut Avenue NW, Suite 414
Washington, DC 20009-5721
Tel.: 202-534-1400 Fax: 202-534-1433
E-mail: seep@seepnetwork.org
Web: www.seepnetwork.org

Printed in the United States of America.

Table of Contents

About The SEEP Network	v
About The PLP	v
Introduction	v
Guidelines for Making Market Assessments Genuinely Youth Inclusive	1
1. Segment the Youth Market	1
2. Make the Most of Youth as Clients and Participants in Market Assessment	2
Surveying Youth as a Source of Unique and Valuable Data	2
Encouraging Youth to Be Problem-Solvers	2
Empowering Youth	2
3. Challenges of Youth Participation in Market Assessment	3
Inaccurate or Incomplete Information	3
Managing Expectations	3
4. Youth as Members of Market Assessment Design Teams	3
Youth Commitment	3
Community Strengthening	3
Market Analysis Skill-Building	3
5. Challenges of Youth on Market Assessment Design Teams	4
6. Keep the Pulse of the Market: Institutionalizing Assessments	4
Balancing Short-Term and Long-Term Expectations, While Remaining Market-Driven	4
Using a Variety of Straightforward Tools for Market Assessments	5
7. Consider the Breadth of Markets	5
8. Market Assessments in Fragile Environments	6
New Opportunities	6
Social Networks	6
Security	6
Limited Formal Education Opportunities	6
Informal Opportunities	7
Low Levels of Local Training Capacity	7
Conclusion	7
Resources	8
Annex: Organizations and Assessments	9
1. Education Development Center	9
2. Save the Children	9
3. International Rescue Committee	10

About The SEEP Network

The SEEP Network¹ is an association of more than 70 international NGOs that support micro- and small enterprise development programs around the world. SEEP's mission is to connect microenterprise practitioners in a global learning community. SEEP brings members and other practitioners together in a peer-learning environment to produce practical, innovative solutions to key challenges in the industry. SEEP then disseminates these solutions through training, publications, professional development, and technical assistance.

About The PLP

The Practitioner Learning Program (PLP) methodology was developed by SEEP as a way to engage microenterprise practitioners in a collaborative learning process to document and share findings and to identify effective and replicable practices and innovations to benefit the industry as a whole. Practitioner Learning Programs focus on learning at three levels: the individual organization, the PLP group, and the industry at large.

The PLP for “Youth and Workforce Development: Using 100% Market-Driven Programs to Achieve 100% Employment,” funded by USAID through the AED FIELD-Support mechanism, aims to empower practitioners through peer learning to design and measure each element of their youth-serving workforce development programs. It intends to incorporate understanding of and response to market needs and opportunities, and develop the range of skills that youth need to achieve more success more quickly in the areas of employment or enterprise start-up and growth. The objective of this PLP is to identify, encourage, and disseminate replicable strategies for market-driven project designs to improve youth employment success and to measure the effectiveness of these strategies.

The PLP learning products are written by and for practitioners in the field of youth workforce development. For our other learning products, please visit <http://seepnetwork.org/Pages/YouthandWorkforceDevelopment.aspx>.

Other learning products in the Youth PLP include:

- “Monitoring and Evaluation for Youth Workforce Development Programs”
- “Staying Connected: Partnerships That Keep Youth Workforce Development Programs Market Driven”
- “Scaling Up Youth Workforce Development Programs”
- Market-Driven Youth Programs and the Bottom Line: Using Income-Generating Activities to Make Programs 100% Market Driven

Introduction

Youth enterprise and workforce programs want and need to understand the market in which they are operating. Whether these programs are entering a new market or seeking to better understand the current one, there is a range of market assessment methodologies to help define and understand customer audiences and key competitive factors. Many organizations are recognizing that projects developed for young people—whether they are oriented toward providing financial services or job-readiness services—need to take into account relevant market data prior to the formulation of these services.

Experience has shown, however, that conducting market assessments is not as simple as first considered. Factors, such as context, institutional capacity, tools, and resources—as well as the decision whether or how to include youth themselves—play important roles in determining the successful implementation of the assessment and can often influence the results that emerge.

1. www.seepnetwork.org

“Market assessment” refers to the process implemented to understand a current or new market. Market assessment is fundamental to ensuring that a program is *market-driven*, that is, one that finds, reads, and responds to signals from the broad economic market. This includes not only signals on product supply and demand but also the job skills demanded by employers.

The **“market”** refers to the supply and demand (as well as the context) of the good or service being studied. The market includes youth as clients (and prospective workers, sellers, and producers), as well as the formal and informal labor markets that youth enter.

The goal of this learning product is to help the reader better understand how to strengthen market assessments for youth workforce development programs. It considers issues, such as institutional capacity, local context, appropriate tools and approaches, and including youth in these assessments. The learning product is based on the experiences of three organizations, Education Development Center (EDC), Save the Children, and the International Rescue Committee (IRC), that conducted market assessments to develop and maintain market-driven youth workforce development programs. (See the annex for project descriptions and a summary of each organization’s assessments.) It shares the benefits and challenges of different approaches to market assessment and provides lessons learned and recommendations.

The Three Projects at a Glance

Education Development Center’s (EDC) Haitian Out-of-School Youth Livelihood Initiative (IDEJEN)

IDEJEN provides basic education, life skills, job and employment skills, vocational training, and entrepreneurship training to out-of-school youth, ages 15–24, in Haiti. The project also supports youth as they transition to employment, self-employment, or further education (<http://idejen.edc.org>).

Save the Children’s Rural Youth Livelihoods project, New Beginning

New Beginning targets rural youth (ages 13–18) and helps equip them with attitudes, skills, and knowledge to transition to more productive work through life skills and livelihoods training. The program also promotes savings and planning for saving (<http://www.savethechildren.org>).

International Rescue Committee’s (IRC) Legacy Initiative

Legacy Initiative works in partnership with schools and national agencies to improve the quality and relevance of local educational opportunities and bolster national education policies in Sierra Leone, Liberia, and Côte d Ivoire (www.theirc.org).

Guidelines for Making Market Assessments Genuinely Youth Inclusive

The process of conducting market assessments strongly benefits from incorporating the perspective of the youth to understand the complete picture of what products, services, and skills are most in demand. This can help programs determine which opportunities are the most promising and which are the best fit for young people, given their existing skills and preferences.

These market assessments that involve young people also open up a window into the youth market and formal and informal labor markets. They generally pursue one of two main avenues: surveying youth as clients, and/or including youth in assessment—participating on design teams, performing data analysis, or collecting data.

1. Segment the Youth Market

Youth are a diverse population: they have different experiences, responsibilities, and pressures. The market opportunities available for young people can vary based on this diversity, which can be marked by differences across gender, age, literacy, and education levels.

Market assessments must account for the heterogeneity of youth. For example, young women may find it challenging to secure employment outside of traditional female jobs, due to employer bias or self-imposed stigmatization about women pursuing male economic activities, even if traditional female positions tend to be less profitable. Girls in some societies have limited mobility to access formal work opportunities, yet are contributing (and are expected to contribute) to household income. Youth who are heads of households and/or primary caregivers may have difficulty pursuing full-time employment or work that requires extensive travel.

To ensure that the concerns of different young people are addressed during market assessments, one can take a variety of approaches. One approach is to include questions in the market assessment that specifically address potential challenges, such as asking employers about the type of youth they would be willing to hire or asking consumers about perceived benefits of different types of sellers.

A second approach to taking such differences into account can include organizing homogenous focus groups (for example, interviewing girls separately), supplementing focus groups with individual interviews, triangulating information, and/or presenting results in a format that disaggregates and compares different groups of youth.

Specific Challenges with Female Youth

In Liberia, the IRC team recognized that young women faced unique employment challenges. IRC conducted a separate assessment on female participation in technical and vocational education to identify employment and training constraints facing young women. The findings revealed that employers are willing to hire young women for traditionally-male jobs, but that young women are concerned about pursuing these economic activities due to misperceptions about how profitable these trades may be and concerns regarding social stigma. The assessment helped the team better understand that workforce development for young women may need different support components than those for their male peers and enabled it to take steps to address these needs. As a result of the assessment findings, staff working in communities engaged girls in discussions about the trades offered in vocational education and gathered market information on where jobs were available and how much they might be paid. This information resulted in more girls enrolling in the vocational training centers where LEGACY is being implemented...

2. Make the Most of Youth as Clients and Participants in Market Assessment

Why include youth—the program clients—as part of market assessment? There are three fundamental reasons, all of which engage youth as drivers of, and participants in, the development of “their” program and their own success.

Surveying Youth as a Source of Unique and Valuable Data

Successful projects build on *real data* about the strengths and assets of youth, their families, and communities, as well as the actual challenges they face, to address gaps that exist in service provision. These projects aim to fill a niche, rather than provide redundant services, and do so by involving project participants themselves. For example, Save the Children project-design staff assumed that agriculture was a dead-end field. The initial program strategies were to focus on alternatives to this “dead-end” field. However, the research conducted with the youth revealed that agriculture was a significant and untapped resource for future jobs and income generation by youth and their families.

Save the Children implemented a **rapid market research** study of the youth market, based on *MicroSave* Africa’s standard participatory rapid appraisal (PRA) tools, and adapted to have a “youth-friendly” approach. This technique uses facilitator-led focus groups of 6–8 homogeneous people to collect focused, qualitative data. It provides descriptive information, not numbers and figures. For example, Save the Children was able to learn more about young people’s current savings practices and the types of savings mechanisms they used, which helped design activities where young people themselves explored the advantages and disadvantages of using different mechanisms.

Encouraging Youth to Be Problem-Solvers

Projects that view youth as active members of a market can engage young people in the process of problem-solving to address constraints and contribute to the design of interventions. For instance, IRC local staff found in their

early assessment that there was unmet demand in the market for crushed and cubed ice, which youth would be able to fill through micro-franchise businesses. IRC engaged youth to conduct more in-depth analysis of the market and supported them in developing business plans for ice micro-franchise businesses. Through this process, the youth were able to identify emerging challenges to their business initiatives, such as where they would store the ice, and then draw on contacts and information that they had gathered through the assessment process to find solutions.

Empowering Youth

Young people who participate in surveys can feel an increased sense of empowerment and self-worth. This may be the first time they have been asked or considered these kinds of questions, and often the first time they realize that they have valuable experiences and opinions of their own to contribute. Engaging a small group of youth in the early stages of the assessment process gave EDC the opportunity to tap into this group of young people in later stages of IDEJEN’s project design and implementation. These young people played important facilitator roles in continuously reaching out to the hardest-to-reach youth, as well as serving as peer counselors.

Using the Right Tools to Survey Youth

Save the Children has learned that it can be important to have tools that are accessible to both participants and the staff. It uses simple focus groups to discover how young people contribute to household economic well-being, where they get money, how they spend their money, and what kinds of support they see as necessary to be successful in an economic activity. The focus groups are run in an engaging way, using games and toys, to empower youth to drive the process and feel comfortable expressing themselves freely. The over-arching questions are intended to generate information, and encourage the group to organize the information and then analyze it. Once the staff feels comfortable with this methodology, they often find it gives better results and have been surprised by some of the information gathered.*

* For more information, see V. Torres, 2008, “Utilizing Youth-Responsive Market Research,” microLINKS Note from the Field, produced by Save the Children for USAID (Washington, DC: USAID). http://www.microlinks.org/ev.php?ID=25631_203&ID2=DO_TOPIC

3. Challenges of Youth Participation as Clients in Market Assessment

Even though youth bring considerable, tangible benefits to any youth workforce development program, there are also some challenges to be mindful of when young people are clients in assessments. These generally are due to the young age, lack of experience, and perceived peer pressure.

Inaccurate or Incomplete Information

Unless the youth respondents understand why they are being asked the survey questions and how the information will be used, they may find it difficult to provide useful information. They also may not feel free or comfortable sharing their true opinions. For example, they may be hesitant to say something unpopular or “wrong” in a group exercise. Extra effort may be required, such as a sample of one-on-one interviews, if staff thinks group surveys are inhibiting the youth in their answers.

Managing Expectations

Asking young people about what they want in an economic program can raise certain expectations, for example, that they are guaranteed a spot in the program or that the activities they recommend will automatically be selected. It is important, therefore, to explain clearly how program selection is done and to discuss the full range of information used to select program activities or markets.

4. Youth as Members of Market Assessment Design Teams

Giving young people the opportunity to take an active role on assessment teams helps them build new skills and allows programs to truly see the market from a young person’s perspective.

Youth Commitment

Young people develop greater commitment to and ownership of the project as they engage in market assessments. They gain an understanding for the thinking behind the approaches and are given an opportunity to reflect on their own decision-making with respect to economic opportunities.

IRC’s LEGACY Initiative in Liberia trained youth to carry out an employer mapping exercise to identify key skills and trades. Through this process, young people learned how to identify market opportunities, engage and develop relationships with members of their community and potential employers, and commit themselves to developing the skills necessary to secure employment upon completion of their training.

Community Strengthening

Youth establish credibility as assets and leaders within their communities and develop a stronger sense of self-worth. In addition, the community gains a new perspective towards young people as positive actors.

Market Analysis Skill-Building

Participation in market assessments builds the capacity of young people to read and analyze the market independently, once they have completed their training and moved on to employment or entrepreneurial activities. This also helps programs to remain market-driven, as programs and their clients need to stay abreast of changing market conditions and new opportunities, which requires periodic follow-up assessments. It may be easier and less expensive to have youth participants conduct follow-up assessments than to work with outside experts.

IDEJEN and Using Youth Assessment Tools

EDC learned that it is important to build assessment methods that include expert perspectives and also involve local community-based organizations (CBOs), as there is a lack of local capacity to use an externally-prepared assessment report and implement recommendations.

EDC builds the capacity of youth centers that are connected to the community through local Chambers of Commerce, which manage Youth Career Centers. One example is the work of Youth Career Centers with local CBOs and the youth, their families, local entrepreneurs and community leaders: a short tool, the *Market Assessment Tool for Youth and Youth Centers*, helped youth assess business opportunities in their communities. This tool is a good fit for the time and capacity of the CBOs and the low-literate youth they serve, and helps them to continually look for and stay abreast of market information. The information provided from this tool is complemented by labor market studies run by the program (see annex), as well as links to others in the labor market, international donors' economic growth programs, and the government for additional market information.

5. Challenges of Youth on Market Assessment Design Teams



Avoid Participation for Participation's Sake

Youth involvement is not always required at each point for every assessment. The key is to weigh factors and make decisions about what type of youth-inclusive approach is most strategic. Youth participation must be meaningful. Token participation wastes resources, establishes a poor precedent, and discourages youth participation and commitment.

However, programs must consider some challenges particularly relating to a lack of youth's skill levels. Market assessment can be a difficult task and young people with little education may need extra support and appropriate tools to build their capacity to carry out this task. For example, IRC Liberia tapped young people with low literacy and education levels to help conduct the employment mapping exercise. While the assessment provided these youth with an unparalleled opportunity to develop their skills and understanding of the market, the process for conducting the mapping exercise was quite slow.

In this same example, in order to remain inclusive and efficient but also to offset the inexperience of the young assessment team members, IRC decided to let more-experienced youth help train their peers in conducting assessments. For example, they might pair one young person with stronger writing skills with another who had stronger speaking capabilities. Similarly, IDEJEN paired in-school youth with out-of-school youth to conduct the community youth-mapping assessments. An unforeseen positive benefit was that this promoted opportunities for informal mentorship between two groups of young people who would not otherwise have had a "working relationship."

6. Keep the Pulse of the Market: Institutionalizing Assessments

To remain market-driven, programs and their clients need to stay abreast of ever-changing market conditions and new opportunities. Understanding dynamic market opportunities requires that an organization or program access information on a continual basis and remain informed about other labor market studies conducted nationally and locally. At the same time, it must have its own user-friendly tools that allow youth and program implementers to broaden the research for new economic opportunities. Moreover, especially in the case of vocational training providers, it is imperative that the design and implementation strategy be flexible enough to incorporate and act upon new findings from one year to another.

Balancing Short-Term and Long-Term Expectations, While Remaining Market-Driven

IRC has found that setting realistic short-term and long-term expectations for market-driven programming is vital. In post-conflict Liberia, IRC has worked closely with the Ministry of Education and the Agriculture and Industrial Training Board to ensure that vocational education curricula are market-driven and based on existing and potential demand for trades and differentiated skills levels. Along with developing the curriculum, providing revised training requires recruiting instructors, developing their capacity to deliver the training, and investing in the physical infrastructure and equipment.

Given the cost and time required in these interventions, a longer-term view is necessary to ensure that the programs sustain their relevance to the needs of the economy. Through its assessments, IRC therefore looked at the growth sectors within Liberia’s economy, as well as the industries where employment opportunities were likely to arise in the future. While these reconstruction efforts may not respond as closely to short-term fluctuations and variations in the market, they do contribute to the longer-term development of market-driven vocational education programming and afford greater sustainability, both in terms of the resources invested and the labor pool produced.

Using a Variety of Straightforward Tools for Market Assessments

A key lesson from conducting a market-driven assessment is to make tools and approaches user-friendly, adapt them to each context, and ensure they are easily accessible to all staff involved. Assessments do not always have to be complicated. Even a simple questionnaire for sellers in a market can yield powerful information. When the tools and processes are user-friendly, assessments can be replicated and the findings more readily adapted to program design. This also makes it easier for youth to participate.

However, even a user-friendly assessment requires trained staff to conduct it. Save the Children staff needed instruction and coaching on research methodology and good systematic documentation. This was important, not only to produce reportable results and to plan implementation, but also to understanding the full scope of the process—from implementing the tools to analyzing the data.

This table below compares two different types of assessments that Save the Children undertook. The assessment in Egypt, while simpler and less expensive, quite adequately produced all the basic information needed. The second assessment in Azerbaijan was much more in-depth and costly. It obviously produced more information, but the same basics were covered as the Egyptian one.

	Basic assessment: Egypt, 2007	In-depth assessment: Azerbaijan, 2008
Budget	\$3,000	\$20,000
Assessment topic	Adolescent contribution to household income and spending and savings patterns	Youth livelihood pathways, and formal and informal employment
Staff training time	3 days	10 days
Topics covered in training	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Use of research tools - Some practical applications 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Market research process from proposal to assessment and design of interventions - Use of research tools - More practical applications - Data analysis tools - Entry and analysis
Tools used	Focus group research tool	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Secondary desk review - Focus group research tool - Quantitative survey
Time period of research	1 week	3 months
Assessment outputs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Review table of results, key projects, objectives - Includes possible program interventions for design of small pilot in Egypt 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Formal study of results, key projects, objectives, - Includes key recommendations for programming and future youth livelihood development interventions in Azerbaijan

7. Consider the Breadth of Markets

It is also important to develop tools and approaches that help the project look at a wide range of employment and self-employment opportunities. In addition to conducting market analysis for business opportunities, programs should also look for other potential avenues for youth employment and partners which help in understanding the market.

Expanding the Definition of “Market” in Haiti

Due to the small size of the formal private sector in Haiti, EDC had to look beyond its private-sector contacts to assess the labor market and secure job opportunities for youth. First, EDC chose to work with the best-performing local training center partners to give 5–10 youth the opportunity to operate small business activities. Their experiences provide feedback on in-demand services and generate income both for the center and young people.

Second, the IDEJEN project linked with other donor-funded projects, such as construction projects financed by international agencies, to identify the specific trades and skills in demand and prepare the youth accordingly. EDC also looked at linking with other international donor-funded projects that could support promising value chains, such as tourism, specific agriculture value chains, or construction, as additional sources of potential job outlets for young people and as a way to identify promising economic sectors.

Finally, IDEJEN researches government ministry projects that might have employment for semi-literate and semi-skilled young people, such as reforestation and watershed maintenance projects under the Ministry of Environment.

When it comes to market assessments, there is no one-size-fits-all assessment, and no one assessment that provides all the necessary information. Similar to IDEJEN, IRC planned to implement school-based businesses in the vocational training institutions that it supported. It conducted rapid market assessments in these operational sites to check the demand for and feasibility of various income-generating activities. Given changes in costs of raw materials and shifts in supply caused by cross-border movements of suppliers between Liberia and Guinea, it was necessary to re-evaluate the feasibility of the business initiatives one year later. The follow-up assessments not only provided new approaches to the implementation of the activities, but suggested the importance of regular evaluation in quickly evolving environments.

8. Market Assessments in Fragile Environments

In fragile or crisis-affected environments, markets are often in flux and can change substantially very rapidly. This makes it absolutely critical that youth workforce development programs carry out frequent and effective market assessments. EDC and IRC, both operating in crisis-affected environments, have the following lessons to share.

New Opportunities

Sudden employment opportunities, such as a works program to reconstruct a village after a flood, can appear very quickly. Programs may wish to set up a system and/or team that is able to identify and quickly capitalize on these opportunities.

Social Networks

It can be valuable to assess the social assets available to young people in these contexts, as traditional networks and support systems may be fractured or non-existent. Such an assessment may reveal that young people with limited social support can benefit from strong mentoring programs. These mentors are particularly effective if they both know the marketplace and can teach the life and business skills that make youth more marketable to employers and better prepared to work.

Security

In fragile or conflict-affected states, security may affect the type of market opportunities available to youth and special job conditions may need to be incorporated. For example, if it is unsafe for a young woman to walk at night alone, the program should consider training young women for job opportunities they can pursue during the daytime. If young males are at risk of abduction for forced labor or military groups, the program may need to engage the community to protect them.

Limited Formal Education Opportunities

Conflict and its concomitant economic fragility can mean that many young people miss out on years of schooling. When conducting assessment and designing programs, practitioners should identify the knowledge and skills gaps of

youth who are looking for employment and design programs that address these areas as needed, so that youth remain marketable.

Informal Opportunities

In the wake of conflict, there can be delays in rebuilding formal government service structures, including vocational training systems. In the absence of formal training programs, many youth will turn to informal programs run by communities or NGOs. Practitioners need to assess the employability of youth who have no formal training or certificates of training. If employers do not want to hire youth without formal certification, then even the most well-designed workforce development program will not be market-driven because youth will not be able to be employed.

Low Levels of Local Training Capacity

All members of conflict-affected communities miss out on professional development opportunities due to violence, instability, and displacement. The trades that were relevant before the conflict may now be obsolete and skills learned in displacement camps may not be appropriate in post-conflict settings. This can often lead to a knowledge gap across generations. Assessments may reveal particularly marketable skill sets, but local capacity may not exist to train young people to pursue these entrepreneurial and employment activities. In the post-conflict stage, practitioners may need to consider bringing in technical expertise from the outside.

Conclusion

In this brief technical note, three organizations shared key lessons on assessing and implementing youth workforce development programs. First and foremost, for a youth workforce development program to remain market-driven and ensure increased economic opportunities for youth, market assessments cannot stop after the first year. Rather, they need to be imbedded into the design and implementation of such programs. This can only happen if an organization is able to “institutionalize” a process of continuous market appraisal, which includes creating the methodologies and tools that will help fulfill this goal. Although these three organizations shared their early experiences, practitioners should continue looking for efficient and cost-effective ways to institutionalize market assessments. One possibility is to look closer at other relevant industries. An example discussed among the PLP partners was the microfinance industry, where institutions have identified efficient methodologies to keep the pulse of the market.

Furthermore, there is increasing recognition about the value of equipping young people with the expertise—and often the tools—to assess the markets around them and make informed choices about where to invest their time and money. For practitioners, researchers, and funders, their task is to consider how to best develop this capacity at the outset of project cycles to better inform project design and execution. They also need to identify activities to give youth the necessary knowledge, skills, and attitude to read the market to identify and capitalize on opportunities themselves.

Resources

MicroSave Tools and Resources

<http://www.microsave.org/>

MicroSave promotes the development of a market-led and more client-responsive approach to delivering financial services among microfinance institutions.

Market Assessment Toolkit for Vocational Training Providers and Youth

http://www.womenscommission.org/pdf/ug_ysl_toolkit.pdf

The *Market Assessment Toolkit for Vocational Training Providers and Youth* was prepared by Columbia University's School of International and Public Affairs on behalf of the Women's Commission for Refugee Women and Children.

Youth Livelihoods Development Program Guide

<http://www.equip123.net/webarticles//anmviewer.asp?a=660&z=123>

This guide contains a practical set of suggestions and reference materials to improve youth livelihood development practices and to expand programming in this increasingly important area. Additionally, a wide array of youth assessments conducted by the USAID-funded "EQUIP3" program can be found on this site.

Annex: Organizations and Assessments

1. Education Development Center

EDC implements the Haitian Out-of-School Youth Initiative (IDEJEN),² funded by USAID. It identifies and addresses the needs for education and livelihood preparation for out-of-school youth, ages 15–24, who have little or no formal education. The project provides participants with 18 months of employability and skills training, basic and vocational education, transition to further schooling and training, job placement, and small business development.

EDC has used numerous assessments throughout the project to inform program design and to ensure that the training and livelihood opportunities offered to participants are market driven. Below are a few examples of market assessments that EDC has used and/or is still using in its current IDEJEN programming. These different but complementary types of assessments help produce a more complete picture, so that programs remain in tune with market conditions, accordingly.

- » **Community Youth Mapping (CYM):** This rapid participatory assessment method, developed by AED, includes survey and focus groups that involve youth directly in data collection and processing. It creates profiles of out-of-school youth in specific communities to understand their needs and assets, current employment, family situation, and education level, as well as map existing youth services in a targeted community.
- » **Review of Economic Realities and Opportunities for Out-of-School Youth:** This study uses rapid participatory appraisal tools to find out more about the economic situations of out-of-school youth, including what youth think constitutes success in business and why they value specific life and skills attributes over others, and to understand how youth actually participate in the economy.
- » **Local Labor Market Studies:** These targeted in-depth market analyses in three communities are conducted by an international team and a local consultant. Results are used to make vocational training more demand driven and to support the creation of youth-run microenterprises. Youth-friendly tools were created to deepen and expand the results of this initial study.
- » **Market Assessment Tools for Youth and Youth Centers:** This is a three-page questionnaire that local organizations can use to continually assess the market to make vocational training more demand driven and to inform the creation of youth microenterprises.

2. Save the Children

Save the Children's Rural Youth Livelihoods project, "New Beginning,"³ targets rural youth (ages 13–18) and seeks to equip them with attitudes, skills, and knowledge to transition to more productive work. More than 80 percent of youth work and go to school in Egypt, and most rural youth work at low-skilled, low-paying labor, such as agriculture. New Beginning builds on Save the Children's successful life skills programming implemented in schools and youth centers. It takes young people through a journey to develop financial market literacy skills and identify market opportunities. At the end of the training, the youth complete a business plan and are encouraged to try out their business idea in groups in the market. The program also promotes savings and planning for saving. Save the Children employed two main types of assessment tools:

- » Its **rapid market research study** on the youth market is based on *MicroSave* Africa's standard participatory rapid appraisal (PRA) tools, adapted to have a "youth-friendly" approach. This technique uses facilitator-led focus groups of 6–8 homogeneous people to collect focused, qualitative data.

2. <http://idejen.edc.org>

3. <http://www.savethechildren.org>

- » The **Youth Livelihoods Development Index (YLDI)** profiled youth at the beginning and end of each round of training in the course in the project.⁴ This index, filled out by young people themselves, provided Save the Children with valuable information about how youth perceived themselves in terms of human, social, financial, and physical capital, as well as internal and external assets. This index can be used as a profiling tool at the outset of a project for a baseline or as a monitoring tool over time.

3. International Rescue Committee

IRC's LEGACY Initiative in Liberia focuses on bolstering community-driven education programs and expanding market-driven vocational training opportunities to young women and traditionally excluded youth. IRC works with the National Working Group for Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET), a coalition of public and private TVET stakeholders, to engage in national-level policy reform that focus on issues of quality and market-relevance of training and access for girls. The project also supports local implementation of changes through its national-level advocacy efforts.

In order to ensure that vocational programs and curricula are market-driven and that girls may also access market opportunities, IRC conducted the following market assessments:

- » The **employer mapping (labor market) survey** identified trades that are marketable and have potential employment opportunities for youth. The assessment tool was a 10-page questionnaire that combined both multiple choice and open-ended questions to garner better understanding of employers' existing and potential recruitment needs. The survey was designed by local IRC staff with support from IRC headquarters, but data collection was led by youth who were trained in surveying methods.
- » A **rapid market survey** was conducted to help two vocational training centers to identify products/ services to establish school-based businesses. The assessment included questionnaires with retailers, customers and suppliers in local markets and was conducted by IRC staff for 10 days.

4. For more information on the YLDI, see A. Bertrand, S. Cilimkovic, and S. Jahic, 2009, "Monitoring and Evaluation of Youth Workforce Development Programs," Youth Workforce Development PLP Technical Note (Washington, DC: SEEP) or visit <http://www.globalyouthlivelihoods.org>.