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# Youth Marker

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User's Guide to the YM



## THE UN-HABITAT YOUTH MARKER (YM)

The overall goal of the YM is to strengthen programmatic synergies while ensuring that project outcomes reach all intended beneficiaries, particularly persons in vulnerable situations. As a result, an effective integration of cross-cutting issues will also increasingly enable the replication and up-scaling of projects.

While mainstreaming of youth is a responsibility for all staff-members, project managers retain primary responsibility for ensuring mainstreaming throughout the UN-Habitat project cycle. The Youth Unit stands ready to provide training and advisory services upon request.

The **YM is a mainstreaming tool** that serves two main purposes:

- **Quality assurance.** The YM assures the quality of projects at the level of the Project Advisory Group (PAG), and thus increase accountability and transparency through its monitoring function.
- **Capacity-building.** The YM builds the capacity of UN-Habitat to integrate cross-cutting issues in the project cycle by providing guidance and sharing knowledge, including through staff self-assessment.

At the project planning and design stage, a self-assessment rating should be recorded in the Projects Accrual and Accountability System (PAAS) by the project manager prior to submitting the Project Document to the PAG for review and approval. A UN-Habitat project for consideration of the PAG must receive a final rating of '1' or more by Youth Unit in order to be approved. This final rating will be recorded in PAAS. Projects rated '0' (i.e. blind/negative rating by the respective cross-cutting teams) will be disallowed to move to the UMOJA stage to access funding.

### FAMALIARISING YOURSELF WITH THE YM

1. **At what stage should I familiarise myself with the YM?** Read through YM before beginning a project proposal to familiarise yourself with the requirements.
2. **Where can I find the YM?** The YM is available on the Intranet under Cross-cutting Issues and PAG pages and on PAAS.

## 1 YOUTH AWARE

### Analysis of youth situation in the context of the project

- ✓ A youth analysis can help uncover linkages between the project and youth within the targeted community. Conducting a youth analysis entails collecting data relevant to youth, either qualitative or quantitative. Analyzing an issue from the standpoint of youth is the first step towards addressing the youth dimensions of urban development. This analysis interprets data and information about a situation from a youth perspective, i.e. the issues specific to youth in their given roles, activities, needs and available opportunities.
- ✓ The youth analysis can facilitate mapping the skills, capacities and roles of both young women and men in communities, enabling the project to draw upon these for successful implementation.

### **Youth recognized as stakeholders, experts and/or target group** in the different stages of the project

- ✓ Youth often fall into the categories of both adults and children in terms of national legislative frameworks. Furthermore, youth are often not recognized as having the experience and knowledge required to meaningfully contribute due to their age.
- ✓ Youth do however have a well of knowledge and experience that can have an important impact on project implementation. Recognizing youth as stakeholders, experts or a target group is the first step towards addressing barriers to youth's development such as lack of access to decision-making and unequal access to resources and opportunities.

### Plans to collect **age disaggregated data** in project document or logical framework

- ✓ Youth are most often defined by their age, and constitute the majority of the population in developing countries. In order to uncover disparities and tailor project interventions to address existing needs in the population it is critical to ensure the data collected is age disaggregated.
- ✓ The age definition may however vary from country to country, and may not match that of cultural norms in a given context. The United Nations uses 15-24 years old as a standard statistical definition for youth.

## 2a YOUTH SENSITIVE

*Include criteria from 1*

Youth Strategy is linked to the log frame with specific activities, outputs, indicators, addressing **youth rights**

- ✓ There is no convention or charter on youth rights per se, however as youth fall into the categories of both adults and children in terms of human rights, youth mainstreaming should aim for the realization of their universal human rights on equal basis to that of others.
- ✓ A youth analysis will help identify issues that the project can address with regards to youth. It is important that these are integrated into the project in a way that goes beyond the project document itself and translate into real life as tangible and measurable actions.

### **Financial inputs assessed** to ensure youth benefit as intended

- ✓ This is where you are likely to identify issues that may need to be addressed differently with respect to young people, a process which is useful to ensure the project will not aggravate existing age inequalities and that barriers and constraints preventing youth from benefitting the project have been addressed.
- ✓ To this effect, project objectives should reflect the youth analysis and state the changes in terms of youth empowerment and equality. Activities (and budgetary provisions) can be used to reflect youth's inclusion and participation, such as for example youth-led activities and initiatives to engage young people.

### Monitoring and Evaluation strategy includes a **youth perspective**

- ✓ To effectively monitor aspects related to youth during project implementation and evaluation, youth indicators developed in planning process should be used to measure progress while consulting with youth and adults separately to obtain their specific perceptions of impacts. Data should be disaggregated by sex as well as age, while consultations with actors working on and with youth should be held regularly.
- ✓ For evaluations, an impact assessment on youth specific issues and dynamics as related to the project should be a component of the evaluation's terms of reference. It may be worthwhile to monitor youth's and adult's access to and control over resources and access to services as well as changes in youth's and adult's participation in decision-making processes.

## 2b YOUTH TRANSFORMATIVE

*Include criteria from 1 and 2*

Project is designed based on principles of **youth-led development**, with youth effectively empowered to design, plan, implement, monitor, and evaluate project activities

- ✓ Empowering youth to become agents of change within the city, has the power to transform attitudes, mentalities and actions, particularly the regional and local governments who are closer to them, into a positive and productive influence for the city. It can help cities become more inclusive in addressing socio-economic barriers, reducing social isolation of neighbourhoods and communities, and allowing youth to access opportunities.
- ✓ A youth transformative project effectively empowers youth to define their own development goals and objectives through consultative methods or mechanisms that encourage youth to take the lead and implement their own projects.
- ✓ The project should support the development of youth's capacity for participation, leadership, self-esteem, confidence and self-organization; and can be undertaken in collaboration with youth-led civil society organizations. This supports long-term capacities being built at the local level, providing youth with the tools needed to affect long term change as agents for sustainable urban development.

### CONTACTS FOR FURTHER INFORMATION

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### LINKS AND FURTHER READING

1. Youth Empowerment for Urban Development: Mainstreaming Youth in UN-Habitat Programmes (UN-Habitat, 2012)
2. Cities of Youth, Cities of Prosperity (UN-Habitat, 2013)
3. The State of the Urban Youth Report 2012/2013 (UN-Habitat, 2013)

## CASE STUDIES

Projects that are technical of nature may not seem to be of any relevance to youth, thus leaving out an analysis of how your intervention may or may not impact this group.

Although this assessment can save you from initial headaches, you may want to reconsider based on the two following scenarios:



### CASE 1:

*A project seeks to upgrade housing in a slum area of Nairobi, focusing solely on construction of shelter. The project concludes successfully, having reached its target of 100 upgraded houses. However, as one of the side-effects of the project, because of the improved standard of living the rents increase drastically, leaving significant impact on youth who no longer can afford to pay the rent.*

How can this problem be avoided? Conduct an analysis inclusive of youth when designing the project to avoid a negative side-effect. Youth on average have lower incomes than the remaining population, and linking the project on housing to other initiatives and contextualizing within a framework of economic development could help ensure youth also benefit.

### CASE 2:

*An intervention by UN-Habitat has invested several million dollars in improving access to clean water in an informal settlement in Bangladesh. However, a few months after completion, the evaluators come back to the area only to find the water pipes having been removed. The local inhabitants share a story of young men who took the pipes with no law enforcement in place to react.*

Young people are an integral part to any community, and may play informal roles that go beyond being a student, a job seeker or a new vote to the local democracy. These roles are often overlooked by formal structures, including the UN, making it difficult to assess how a project will really impact youth. One way of going about this is to directly involve young people to have a voice throughout the project cycle, ensuring ownership is in place and helping the intervention target the root causes of problems it seeks to address.