

Assessing the Goals, Needs and Strengths of Your Program

We suggest that you look at the goals, needs and strengths of your program; the goals, needs and strengths of your learners; and then look at the curriculum descriptions and reviews with this information in mind. This section takes you through a quick program assessment. The following questions will help you assess the curriculum needs of your program. Select all answers that apply to your program.

An electronic version that generates curriculum suggestions can be found on <http://preparing4work.org/guidance/assessing-goals-needs-and-strengths-your-program>.

Potential Participants

When choosing an instructional model and related curriculum, it is important to know as much as possible about the types of participants you hope to attract to the program.

Age: What is the target group's age range?

- Youth 13-17
- Youth 18-28

To consider: Materials that have been developed for older youth may not be appropriate for younger participants.

Gender: Will you be targeting only female or male youth?

- Young men
- Young women

To consider: Are there specific cultural or religious practices relating to youth, women, or mixed gender groups that you need to take into account?

Location: What is the geographic location of the program?

- Rural / small villages
- Medium-size towns
- Urban

Education Level: What is the level of education of the potential participants?

- No formal schooling
- Some primary school
- Some secondary school
- Secondary school graduates or
- College/university level

Literacy Levels: What is the literacy level of your participants?

- Minimal or no literacy and numeracy skills
- Functionally literate (having the reading, writing and math skills that are needed to get by in everyday life)

To consider: Even if you are not concerned with formal schooling, it is still important to have a general sense of the reading, writing and math abilities of participants. You may need to adapt the curriculum

materials to meet the literacy and numeracy levels of your group.

Work: What is the employment and/or livelihood status of targeted participants?

- Unemployed with no source of income
- Employed by a business or another person
- Self-employed
- Working in family livelihood (such as agriculture or small business)
- Working and in school

To consider: We know that most youth, whether in-school or out, are economically active. That is, they contribute to the economy of their family household, either through family chores and responsibilities in the family livelihood, through part-time paid employment, or income-generating activities in the informal economy.

Skill Areas: What are the targeted youth's skill area needs in the four broad areas used by *Preparing for Work*?

- Life skills* – focus on personal development and leadership, health and general well-being, financial literacy, and interpersonal communications skills
- Employability or work readiness skills* – focus on the same life skills as above in addition to work-related skills including health and safety at work, work habits and conduct, worker rights and responsibilities, customer service
- Entrepreneurial skills* - include conducting market analyses, planning, managing, and sustaining small businesses or income-generating activities
- Technical/vocational skills* - focus on sector-specific skills needed for specific occupations or small businesses

To consider: Potential participants may be strong in one or two areas, and need focused training in one of the other areas. For example, youth who are enrolled in a straight technical course may be looking for an entrepreneurship course or a work readiness course to help them with post-technical course employment.

Goals: What do your target participants seek to gain from the training? What are the broad goals and objectives that are common to some of them?

- Gain or improve basic literacy and numeracy skills
- Complete primary or secondary school
- Develop employability skills and gain employment/access to career opportunities
- Gain entrepreneurial and small business skills
- Gain specific technical skills

Program Approaches

Selecting a curriculum is also a process of finding a good match for the strengths of your program and the skills of your staff.



In what setting/context do you currently work with young people?

- Upper primary or secondary schools
- Colleges or universities
- Government-sponsored vocational/technical schools
- Local nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) or Community Based Organizations (CBOs) through community based learning centers
- Private sector schools or training centers

What is the timing of your courses?

- Short courses (1-3 months)
- Medium length courses (3-6 months)
- Longer courses based on academic calendar (6-12 months)

How would you describe your program's approach to teaching and learning?

- Traditional teacher/trainer led
- Learner Centered using participatory and experiential learning activities
- Transitioning from traditional teaching methodologies to active, participatory approach
- Learned self-directed using online/web-based modules

How would you describe the facilitators?

- Experienced in formal school settings
- Experienced in out-of-school settings
- Experienced working with youth
- Strong facilitation skills
- Flexible and able to adapt instructional guides and materials to the group
- Need guidance, help and structure

Community Needs and Opportunities

Selecting an appropriate curriculum is also a process of matching education and training courses to the opportunities and needs of the community at large and of the local economy. The following questions will help you determine the broader needs.

Do you know the market opportunities and needs in the communities in which the program will work?

- Yes
- Somewhat
- No

Do you know the market opportunities and needs in the surrounding region?

- Yes
- Somewhat
- No



Where do youth already go/congregate in the community?

How can you build upon this?

- School
- Place of worship
- Market
- Places of entertainment
- Youth group/club meetings
- Other

What opportunities are youth not taking advantage of that already exist?

- Training institutions
- Projects
- Lending opportunities
- Existing jobs

What are the primary barriers for youth gaining employment or developing livelihoods in the community?

- Limited job opportunities
- Limited training opportunities
- Youth are under qualified and under experienced
- Youth expectations are not aligned with workplace realities
- Employers have poor perceptions of youth
- Cultural norms or stigmas that prevent youth from pursuing certain available jobs

To consider: How can you direct them to these opportunities or assist them in successfully taking advantage of them?

To consider: How do employers perceive youth? How do youth perceive employers? If there is a gap in perception, how can this be addressed?