



Food and Agriculture
Organization of the
United Nations

RURAL EMPLOYMENT & RURAL FINANCE

Assessing the state of youth financial inclusion in developing contexts

Methodological guidelines



Assessing the state of youth financial inclusion in developing contexts

Methodological guidelines

by Niclas Benni

Required citation:

Benni, N. 2022. *Assessing the state of youth financial inclusion in developing contexts – Methodological guidelines*. Rome, FAO. <https://doi.org/10.4060/cc3272en>

The designations employed and the presentation of material in this information product do not imply the expression of any opinion whatsoever on the part of the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) concerning the legal or development status of any country, territory, city or area or of its authorities, or concerning the delimitation of its frontiers or boundaries. The mention of specific companies or products of manufacturers, whether or not these have been patented, does not imply that these have been endorsed or recommended by FAO in preference to others of a similar nature that are not mentioned.

The views expressed in this information product are those of the author(s) and do not necessarily reflect the views or policies of FAO.

ISBN 978-92-5-137352-1

© FAO, 2022



Some rights reserved. This work is made available under the Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial-ShareAlike 3.0 IGO licence (CC BY-NC-SA 3.0 IGO; <https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc-sa/3.0/igo/legalcode>).

Under the terms of this licence, this work may be copied, redistributed and adapted for non-commercial purposes,

provided that the work is appropriately cited. In any use of this work, there should be no suggestion that FAO endorses any specific organization, products or services. The use of the FAO logo is not permitted. If the work is adapted, then it must be licensed under the same or equivalent Creative Commons licence. If a translation of this work is created, it must include the following disclaimer along with the required citation: "This translation was not created by the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO). FAO is not responsible for the content or accuracy of this translation. The original English edition shall be the authoritative edition."

Disputes arising under the licence that cannot be settled amicably will be resolved by mediation and arbitration as described in Article 8 of the licence except as otherwise provided herein. The applicable mediation rules will be the mediation rules of the World Intellectual Property Organization <http://www.wipo.int/amc/en/mediation/rules> and any arbitration will be conducted in accordance with the Arbitration Rules of the United Nations Commission on International Trade Law (UNCITRAL).

Third-party materials. Users wishing to reuse material from this work that is attributed to a third party, such as tables, figures or images, are responsible for determining whether permission is needed for that reuse and for obtaining permission from the copyright holder. The risk of claims resulting from infringement of any third-party-owned component in the work rests solely with the user.

Sales, rights and licensing. FAO information products are available on the FAO website (www.fao.org/publications) and can be purchased through publications-sales@fao.org. Requests for commercial use should be submitted via: www.fao.org/contact-us/licence-request. Queries regarding rights and licensing should be submitted to: copyright@fao.org.

Cover page: ©IFAD/GMB Akash

Contents

Acknowledgements	iv
Abbreviations and acronyms.....	v
 Introduction	 1
SECTION 1	
Assessing the demand side	5
SECTION 2	
Assessing the supply side	17
SECTION 3	
Assessing the environment	23
SECTION 4	
Final considerations	29
 References.....	 33
 Annex 1:	
Orientational framework for the development of youth financial inclusion assessments	34

Acknowledgements

This publication is the first in a series of methodological guidelines being published under the FAO project “Integrated Country Approach for Boosting Decent Jobs for Youth in the Agrifood System (ICA)”. It was developed by the Rural Institutions, Services and Empowerment (RISE) Team of FAO, part of the Inclusive Rural Transformation and Gender Equality Division (ESP). It was authored by Niclas Benni, Rural Finance Specialist, under the supervision of Azeta Cungu, Rural Finance Officer in the RISE Team.

The guide was produced as part of the Programme of Work of the CABFIN Partnership (“Improving Capacity Building in Rural Finance”). CABFIN is a collaboration between six development agencies (FAO, GIZ, IFAD, UNCDF, WB and WFP) that seeks to promote the agenda for inclusive rural finance

through fostering competencies and capacities, generating and exchanging knowledge among the community of practice. The development of this guide was informed by a series of country-specific studies on youth financial inclusion conducted in 2020-2021 in the frame of the FAO ICA project.

The development of this publication would not have been possible without the essential support and contributions provided by several colleagues. Many thanks to Massimo Pera, Yahor Vetlou, Silvia Storchi, David Berno, Azeta Cungu, Ileana Grandelis and Hitomi Ho for their invaluable inputs and feedback. Many thanks also to Sylvie Lee Baumgartel for proofreading and editing this publication, to Marco Fiorentini for his technical support, and to studio Pietro Bartoleschi for providing the layout design.

Abbreviations and acronyms

AFI	Alliance for Financial Inclusion
ASCA	Accumulating Savings and Credit Association
GIZ	German Agency for International Cooperation
ICA	Integrated Country Approach for Boosting Decent Jobs for Youth in the Agrifood System
FI	Financial Institution
FSP	Financial Service Provider
IFAD	International Fund for Agricultural Development
MFI	Microfinance Institution
MMO	Mobile Money Operator
MNO	Mobile Network Operator
MSMEs	micro-, small and medium-sized enterprise
RISE	Rural Institutions, Services and Empowerment Team of FAO
ROSCA	Rotating Savings and Credit Association
SACCO	Savings and Credit Cooperative Organization
SIB	Superintendencia de Bancos de Guatemala
UNCDF	United Nations Capital Development Fund
VSLA	Village Savings and Loan Association
WFP	World Food Programme



Introduction

In developing and emerging contexts, youth of all ages and backgrounds face **substantial and multidimensional challenges** when seeking to access the financial services they need to take adequate care of several aspects of their personal and professional lives. Some of these situations include: entrepreneurship, employment, education, marriage, child rearing and more. Youth in rural and agricultural areas, which represent the focus of this guide, are particularly affected in this sense, as they show overall higher levels of financial exclusion, vulnerability and marginalization in comparison with their urban counterparts. These barriers to financial inclusion represent a core development constraint that limits the capability of the youth to unlock their true potential as entrepreneurs, business innovators, and – ultimately – as **agents of growth and change** in developing contexts.

These barriers to financial access are usually **complex and interconnected**, the consequence of a variety of political, legal, cultural, social and infrastructural issues affecting a country or region. Furthermore, age-related constraints to financial inclusion often intersect with other barriers related to different aspects of the financial inclusion gap, such as those concerning gender, location (rural/urban), and that are sector-specific (e.g. agriculture).

From the perspective of a financial inclusion practitioner, the ability to assess these barriers with insight and precision – as well as being able **to evaluate the overall scenario** related to youth financial inclusion in a specific context – is fundamental to produce the policy and programme recommendations that policymakers

and development agencies can leverage to design effective strategies to bolster inclusion and entrepreneurship among the youth, promoting their full potential as drivers of development.

One core challenge to carrying out these types of assessments is that public data on youth financial inclusion (as well as entrepreneurship) is often **extremely hard to come by at country level**, due to both the scarce attention given to this category by many governments, as well as the overall weakness of the public data gathering infrastructure. When present, the data available is often unprocessed, generic, and has a low level of granularity. This scenario forces practitioners to either rely on alternative sources to find the information they need to develop inclusion assessments (by leveraging for example the work of international development agencies or private financial institutions), or by collecting the data themselves in a variety of ways, such as through surveys and focus group discussions.

Objective, scope and structure

This guide was created specifically to assist development practitioners, as well as other stakeholders engaged in the financial inclusion domain, to overcome this and other challenges associated to carrying out assessments of the state of youth financial inclusion at country level. The aim is to provide a series of concrete considerations related to carrying out such assessments, drawn from practical experience, while also proposing a set of standardized steps that can be followed to ensure the quality and comprehensiveness of these types of evaluations.

Although carrying out assessments of financial inclusion scenarios can be a complex and multi-dimensional task, especially when a high degree of granularity and sophistication in the analysis is pertinent, the hope is that these methodological suggestions can aid practitioners in establishing a baseline standard of quality for evaluations of this kind.

This methodological guide is meant to act as a complement to the 2022 FAO study: *“Promoting access to agricultural finance for youth in developing countries – A synthesis of lessons and experiences.”* While the study provides the theoretical background required to understand the benefits and challenges associated with the promotion of financial inclusion for the rural youth in developing contexts, this guide focuses on offering a series of **practical considerations** on how to properly assess the country-level scenario for youth financial inclusion.

The **intended audience** for this guide is composed of development practitioners, policymakers, as well as public and private financial institutions (FIs), that are involved in the formulation of policies, programmes, and services that specifically target financially underserved youth. The **ultimate goal** of these guidelines is to promote the development of a range of high-quality, partially standardized assessments that different stakeholders can then use to advance their own agendas regarding the promotion of

youth financial inclusion. Development agencies, for example, can leverage these assessments to design programmes and initiatives aimed at tackling specific constraints limiting financial access for youth. Subsequently, public and private FIs can use the guidelines to tailor their services to better respond to the needs and opportunities associated with youth (and especially rural youth) as a client segment. Policymakers at national and regional levels can draw on the insights generated by these assessments to develop policies better aimed at tackling youth financial inclusion issues.

The guide draws primarily from the **lessons learned** during the realization, in 2019 and 2020, of a series of assessments on the state of youth financial inclusion at country level (in Uganda, Kenya, and Guatemala), in the frame of the FAO programme: “Integrated Country Approach for boosting decent jobs for youth in the agri-food system” (ICA).¹ Note that although the guide’s content has been developed with the intent of being accessible to a wide and diverse audience, it is chiefly intended for practitioners in the financial inclusion domain, and as such a basic degree of knowledge of finance-related terms would be required to make the best use of it.

¹ Please refer to the following sources in the References to find the specific country-level studies: Benni, Berno and del Puerto Soria (2020); Benni, Berno and Ho (2020) and Benni (2020).



The guide is divided into four sections:

1. **Assessing the demand side:** this section focuses on assessing the state of the demand for quality financial services registered among the rural youth in a specific country, indicating both current levels of access and use of financial services, as well as existing gaps and unmet needs. It is meant to support the practitioner in evaluating the complexity and magnitude of this demand through a combination of qualitative and quantitative tools, assessing to what extent the current demand is met by financial service providers (FSPs) at country level;
2. **Assessing the supply side:** this section focuses on assessing the state of the offer for financial services to youth on the part of both formal and informal FSPs. It comprises the identification of both generic financial services provided to youth, as well as financial products expressly designed for this client category.
3. **Assessing the environment:** this section focuses on the identification of those regulatory, political, cultural and social factors that can either constrain or support youth financial inclusion in a specific area. It focuses in particular on the analysis of policies, programmes and other public interventions that aim at fostering access and use of financial services among youth.
4. **Final considerations:** this section provides a series of overall practical considerations on the realization of youth financial inclusion assessments that do not fit into any of the previous categories. These considerations encompass aspects such as team composition, financial and time resource requirements, relationships with ground-level partners, and so forth.

Data checklists to use as reference in the development of an assessment



At the beginning of each section, a **data checklist** is provided to assist the practitioner in gathering, ordering and presenting the information required to accurately portray the scenario related to each of the section's areas of focus (i.e. demand side, supply side, and overall environment). The selection of data elements proposed in each checklist is of course subjective, and will vary depending on the overall assessment's objectives, the narrative structure, and the actual availability of data at ground level, among other factors. Nevertheless,

this kind of reference table can represent a practical aid for practitioners to ensure that the core information required to properly portray the youth financial inclusion scenario has been included in their assessment.

At the end of this guide, Annex 1 combines together the individual checklists introduced in each previous section to provide a **harmonized, orientational framework**, which can be used as a general compass to aid in the development of youth financial inclusion assessments.





SECTION 1

Assessing the demand side

Assessing the demand side for financial services implies both evaluating the current levels of financial inclusion associated to youth – including their financial perceptions, attitudes and behaviours – as well as **identifying the unmet gaps they still face** in terms of access and use of both quality financial services and complementary services, such as financial and digital education.

The following checklist provides an overview of the data that could be included to accurately portray the

demand side, categorized in relation to the individual sub-sections of the assessment and the elements it should ideally contain. Note that the elements presented in this checklist are only meant for reference: the precise objectives to be achieved through the assessment, as well as the resources and time available, will inform the practitioner's decision on the level of depth to be reached by the analysis on the different dimensions of financial inclusion (illustrated in the next page).



TABLE 1

Data checklist for assessing the demand side

SUB-SECTION	ELEMENTS	NOTES
General features of the youth population	■ Number and share of youth in the country; ■ demographic and geographic distribution; ■ frequency in age ranges; gender ratio; ■ main sectors of employments; ■ and several other elements.	This section should provide basic information on the youth population at country level, to inform the subsequent analysis of financial inclusion determinants. Depending on the context and the objectives of the assessment, further analysis could be necessary to disaggregate this data to encompass different sub-groups that intersect with the young population group, who might be facing additional and specific constraints to financial inclusion (e.g. young women, refugees, Indigenous Peoples).
Overview of macro-determinants to youth financial inclusion	■ Main sources of livelihood and income streams; ■ State of youth employment and entrepreneurship, with main trends and constraints (e.g. high informality, low pay, lack of contract enforcement); ■ Mobile penetration (youth vs. adults; rural youth vs. urban youth); ■ Land and property ownership scenario; ■ Breakdown of education levels; ■ Level of financial literacy (youth vs. adults); ■ Youth participation to cooperatives, associations, producers' organizations; ■ Comparative analysis of the above trends from a rural/urban and gender perspective.	Aside from the ones suggested, several other relevant macro-determinants to youth financial inclusion can also be included, depending on the scope and resources of the assessment: levels of access to markets; access to services; social context and lifestyle; asset ownership; the role played by specific value chains; strength of the ICT infrastructure. Depending on the scope of the study, a focus on youth engagement in agriculture or agri-food systems could be required (from the perspective of entrepreneurship, land ownership, main forms of employment, etc.). The level of depth of this section will be dependent on the scope of the assessment and the resources available.
Key data on youth financial inclusion	■ Analysis on access and use of key services (credit, savings, money transfer, insurance), and comparison with adult levels; ■ Dimensions of financial capability (managing money, choosing products, accessing information); ■ Comparative analysis of gaps in youth financial inclusion, e.g. from a gender and location (rural/urban), perspective.	Ideally, the data provided should be categorized according to age categories, i.e. not just youth and adults, but specific age ranges. Based on the scope of the study, consider focusing on data and figures relative to youth in agriculture. Access and use of financial access should be broken down in relation to formal, semi-formal and informal sources. The categorization of financial sources is illustrated in Section 2.
Focus on digital financial inclusion	■ Rates of access to mobile money services and internet banking (youth/adults; male/female); ■ Core constraints to digital financial inclusion; ■ Overall levels of digital literacy (youth and adults).	Unless the digital financial ecosystem of the country under analysis is considerably under-developed, a comprehensive assessment will require to focus on digital financial services as a fundamental enabler of inclusion. Typical constraints to digital financial inclusion include low mobile penetration; weak ICT infrastructure; lack of adequate regulation; and lack of digital financial consumer protection measures; among others. If qualitative surveys were used for data gathering, it can be useful to include some specific perspectives on digital financial services on the part of the interviewed youth.

Source: author's own elaboration

The following points provide recommendations and considerations on the individual elements of the checklist.

Break down the demand side according to age ranges: youth of different ages present widely different necessities (and associated demand) in terms of financial services, depending on which stage of their life cycle they are currently in.² While, for example, some youth aged 15–17 might seek for a safe and convenient way to save money to attend university or some type of vocational training, other young adults in the 18–25 age range might be looking for a loan to invest in their first entrepreneurial venture. Being able to capture these differences in access to – and demand for – services at a granular level is **fundamental for any stakeholder involved in youth-focused financing**. Whether this is, for example, a governmental agency seeking to target youth attending secondary education with a school-based savings programme, or a private FI that wishes to define the target segment of a newly designed financial service to the greatest extent possible.

Obtaining this type of granular information is challenging because of the fact that existing public datasets which collect data on youth financial inclusion usually do not break it down

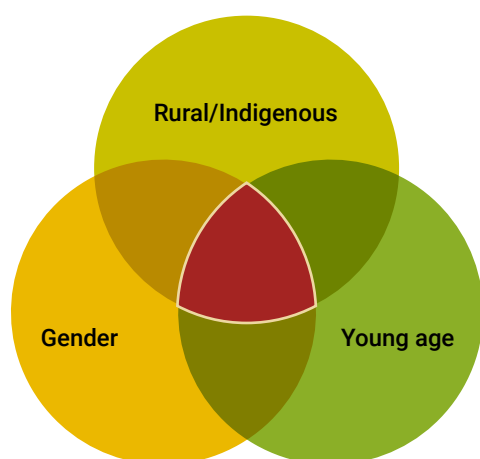
according to age ranges, opting instead to set **a hard threshold** (such as 25 or 35 years of age) below which all financial information is labeled as relating to “youth.” The problem with this approach is that it does not allow for insights which contribute to the most effective policy and programme recommendations, as the “youth” general category remains too broad and diverse. The ability for the evaluator to break down financial inclusion data according to age ranges **becomes critical to establish direct linkages** between specific regulatory constraints and their impact on youth inclusion. This is because policies which affect youth establish different age thresholds beneath which they are applicable (and which can vary considerably depending on the context under analysis). In case that existing datasets do not allow for sufficient granularity of the financial inclusion data in terms of different age ranges, the practitioner should complement and refine the information available with **ground-level data gathered expressly for the purpose of the study**. This point will be discussed more in detail throughout this section.

Refine data on youth financial inclusion by taking into consideration additional and intersecting aspects of vulnerability:

within the category of young financial clients, additional gaps in inclusion can be registered because some youth also belong to other vulnerable and financially underserved categories, which implies a series of **additional and unique challenges** to financial access and usage. Therefore, as part of an assessment, it is essential to be able to identify additional constraints to youth inclusion. For example, these constraints could be due to their gender (young women are often considerably less financially included than men), location (rural/urban), and culture (Indigenous youth being more financially excluded overall). This type of analysis should comprise both quantitative comparisons (e.g. the gap in access rates), as well as qualitative insights

² In the frame of the development of a financial inclusion assessment, the categorization of a specific country's youth population according to age ranges is in part subjective and in part dependent on contextual factors (such as the country's age of majority, and other specific thresholds for financial access imposed by the regulatory framework). With that being said, the following generic breakdown can be suggested: 12–15 years of age (early teens); 15–18 (late teens), 18–25 (young adult). This categorization allows the assimilation of the core financial necessities and relative demand associated with different stages of an individual life cycle (e.g. saving to afford higher education, gain capital to invest in the first business venture, save to marry, etc.), while showcasing eventual gaps in access and use between clear age categories. Nevertheless, note that the choice of how to determine the age taxonomy should be informed, at least partially, by the legal, institutional and cultural context under analysis.

FIGURE 1
Intersecting aspects of vulnerability



The red area represents the unique and specific challenges faced by an individual who belongs simultaneously to different sub-segments of the population (such as a young girl living in a rural area).

Source: author's own elaboration

on how different barriers to financial inclusion associated to young age complement and reinforce each other.

Base the assessment on a clear definition of financial inclusion.

The degree of “financial inclusion” at country level can be measured from different perspectives. The more varied the “lenses” used in the analysis, the more insightful, but also the more resource-consuming and complex. Following the definition employed by the Alliance for Financial Inclusion (AFI, 2010), four core dimensions of financial inclusion can be examined and explained: **financial access, quality, usage, and welfare.**

■ **Access:** this dimension relates to the availability that the local population has to access affordable and appropriate financial services provided by formal financial institutions, facing as few constraints as possible in terms of regulation, infrastructure and physical proximity, among others. It is

closely connected to formal FIs’ capacity to provide and effectively reach multiple actors with a varied offer of services such as credit, savings, insurance, money transfer services, and others. Basic indicators associated with this dimension are often provided by the supply side, and could consist of (as mere reference): the number of FI banking branches per 100 000 adults; the number of point-of-sale (POS) devices per 100 000 adults; or the number of mobile money transactions per 100 000 adults.

■ **Usage:** having access to financial services does not necessarily imply that clients are going to make use of them. That is why this dimension is used to assess the regularity, duration and frequency by which clients make use of financial services. This is assessed by a variety of indicators such as the share of adults with high-frequency use of a formal account; the percentage of individuals/firms with outstanding loans at a formal FI, and saving propensity (i.e. who has saved at a formal FI at least once in the previous year).³ This data can be gathered through a combination of supply- and demand-side surveys.

■ **Quality:** this aspect refers to the capacity of a financial product to closely meet the specific needs of different sub-segments of customers. From the perspective of FIs, this implies both developing products that are more customizable and flexible, as well as making available a more varied suite of products that provide customers with a range of options. It is also related to the actual awareness that clients have of the existing offer of financial services available to them, as well as the understanding they have of the

³ Refer to Sourourian (2019) for a more in-depth analysis of the implications associated with measuring financial usage and some fallacies in which evaluators might fall into when assessing this dimension.

functioning of such services. As suggested by the AFI (2010):

“The measure of quality would [...] be used to gauge the nature and depth of the relationship between the financial service provider and the consumer as well as the choices available and their levels of understanding of those choices and their implications.”

The quality component of financial inclusion can be assessed through both supply- and demand-side surveys, although **considerably more complex information** will have to be captured by such surveys.⁴ For example, what is the ease and comfort of specific sub-segments in accessing and using financial services, as well as the level of understanding that these sub-segments actually have of the products (AFI, 2016; World Bank, 2010).

■ **Welfare:** this component relates to the impact that specific financial services generate for people’s livelihoods, as expressed by the changes registered in a wide range of household- and firm-level outcomes which include, among others, business performance, consumption levels, and human capital investment. It is evident that, in the frame of the proposed definition, **establishing direct causality** makes “welfare” the most challenging to evaluate among the four dimensions. Although carrying out proper impact evaluations would be the state-of-the-art choice to establish such causal linkages, this type of exercise usually requires a range of resources (in terms of funds, capacity and time) that is often not available to neither public nor private institutions.⁵ As expressed by the AFI (2010):

“Distinguishing the role of financial services on the people’s lives, without mistaking it for another concurrent factor, such as increased income, requires careful design when preparing an evaluation. In order to acquire information on quality, usage and welfare, it is critical to have information from the user’s point of view, i.e. data gathered through a demand-side survey.”

As part of any assessment, it is essential to clearly lay out what dimensions of financial inclusion will be evaluated, a selection that is bound to be dependent on the scope and objectives of the study, as well as **the resources and time available**. For example, while data on access is bound to be easier to gather and analyse, as it will require substantially simpler survey questions and less comprehensive coverage, insights on impact/welfare will require a considerably greater degree of investment to deliver adequate results (AFI, 2010). A useful reference for evaluators that seek to establish the core indicators against which to measure youth financial inclusion at country level can be found in the **Core Set of Financial Inclusion Indicators** published by the AFI in 2011, as an intended first step in establishing a common understanding of financial inclusion with respect to data and measurement.⁶

Break down demand data according to regions or departments. Several financial inclusion assessments available in literature nowadays do not provide an adequate level of granularity in terms of the demand registered among youth at the level of the individual department and/or region. While, for example, they do provide a basic description of the rural/urban gap in financial inclusion registered in the country, it has to be mentioned that the determinants of such a gap **are not only the result of nationwide regulatory or structural weaknesses**, they are also caused by more specific bottlenecks

⁴ Refer to AFI (2016) for an analysis of possible indicators of quality in financial inclusion.

⁵ In this sense, refer to a publication by the World Bank (2012): “*Impact Assessment Framework: SME Finance*” for more insights on how to carry out impact evaluations related to financial provision.

⁶ Refer to AFI (2011) in the References for a link to the Core Set of Financial Inclusion Indicators.

that are endemic to particular areas. The example of Guatemala is indicative in this sense: while the Metropolitan Region – the most urbanized and rich in the country – **accounts by itself for 69 percent of the total mobile money accounts registered in the country**, other rural regions in Guatemala only account for considerably lower shares (from 1–5 percent). In this case, assessing the digital financial ecosystem of the country – and producing adequate recommendations to strengthen it – will most likely require a more insightful analysis at the level of the individual region or area (SIB, 2019).

It is evident that the level of granularity of an “intranational” analysis will vary widely depending on the resources available, the scope of the assessment, and the feasibility of gathering data for each region or department. Nevertheless, especially in the case of countries that present a very complex financial-inclusion scenario that shows strong imbalances among different areas, the practitioner should strive to use the resources available to make sure that such imbalances are adequately analysed and illustrated in his/her/their assessment and recommendations. Otherwise, eschewing this aspect of the analysis holds a considerable risk of **weakening the effectiveness of any public or private intervention built on such an assessment**.

Considerations on the use of existing datasets. National and regional datasets on financial inclusion can be a key source of information for an assessment, although their use should be first subject to a critical analysis that identifies, at the very least: 1) the nature and objectives of the institution developing the dataset; 2) the structure and process of the data gathering effort; and 3) the sample, area and time period under analysis. Without carrying out this type of critical evaluation beforehand, it is easy to fall into a **research bias or an incorrect methodological assumption**, which can threaten the solidity of any analysis carried out using the dataset as a source.

Usually, country-level datasets are made available by four different types of providers, described below, with important considerations associated to each of them:⁷

- **Public sector agencies**, such as the national financial sector regulator or National Institute of Statistics, which, in accordance with its mandate, gather and make available data on financial inclusion at country level. It goes without saying that ample differences can be found from country to country in terms of how often these national datasets are updated, how granular and insightful they are, and to what extent they are influenced by political considerations. An example of this category is the *Superintendencia de los Bancos* (the financial sector supervisory agency) in Guatemala, which regularly makes available a “Financial Inclusion Bulletin” every three months, with insightful and granular data on a range of aspects related to financial inclusion in the country;
- **Non-profit organizations** active in the financial inclusion domain, at either national or regional level. This category includes NGOs, international foundations, and research institutions. Datasets provided by these organizations are often **the only source of reliable data on financial inclusion** for those developing countries that cannot rely on their governments to gather the required information, and can often benefit from having a structured and comprehensive approach to data gathering that has been tried and tested through multiple iterations. This is the case, for example, of the **FinScope Survey**, a comprehensive household survey on financial services’ demand and use carried out in more than 30 African countries by FinMark Trust, a

⁷ Refer to Nielsen (2014) for a more in-depth overview of the key financial inclusion datasets available in this domain.



©FAO/Luis Pato

non-profit, independent trust that focuses on promoting access to financial markets for the poor and the financially underserved.

International development agencies whose domain of intervention also encompasses development finance and financial inclusion. This is the case of the **Global Findex**, a worldwide dataset on people's financial behaviours across 140 economies that was developed by the World Bank and is updated through nationally representative surveys carried out every few years (in 2011, 2014, 2017, and 2022). It gathers essential data on socio-demographic conditions and access/usage of financial services. The advantage of such a global endeavor is that it applies the same structured and harmonized procedures for data gathering and processing to every country it covers, allowing for **extensive comparisons** of financial inclusion trends between countries, regions, time periods, and so forth (Demirgüç-Kunt *et al.*, 2022; Nielsen, 2014).

One inherent disadvantage of the Global Findex is that, given its focus on cross-country comparisons, it is not that useful for practitioners or policymakers to derive insights from the in-country scenarios, as

the data lacks granularity. Furthermore, in countries which are rapidly developing from a financial inclusion perspective, the Findex data can become quite outdated before the new round of surveys is published. From a youth perspective, a main issue with the Global Findex dataset is that it does not provide data on **vulnerable sub-categories** within the youth segment, such as on the financial behaviour of young women.

Other development agencies' databases that cover different mandates, such as FAOSTAT and ILOSTAT, can provide a range of complementary, non-financial macro-level data (e.g. on entrepreneurship, employment, social protection, agricultural production and exports) that can be fundamental in understanding the **socioeconomic and market determinants to financial inclusion** in a given country or region.⁸

⁸ FAOSTAT provides free access to food and agriculture data for over 245 countries and territories, covering all of the FAO regional groupings from 1961 to the most recent year available. ILOSTAT is the world's largest repository of labour market statistics, maintained by the International Labour Organization's Department of Statistics. It covers a wide range of labour-related topics, including employment, unemployment, wages, working time and labour productivity, to name a few, with time series going back as far as 1938.

■ **Financial institutions** that gather data on access and usage of financial services among youth – for example through market analyses or their own portfolio analyses. Using FIs' own data to gauge levels of formal financial access and usage can be extremely effective in some regards, as it allows the leverage of concrete, quantitative information regarding the financial behaviours of youth client segments. Nevertheless, an assessment **should never be based exclusively on data provided by the supply side of financial services** (i.e. the FIs), as this won't be able to provide any strong insights on the client's own experience with the service, or the needs of the financially excluded. Any such dataset will need to be cross-referenced and complemented with either existing demand-side datasets, or data expressly gathered for the purpose of the assessment.

Regardless of the type of dataset used, **the importance of using up-to-date data cannot be overstated**. Many developing countries in the past decade have registered considerably rapid advancements in a variety of financial inclusion indicators (especially in rural areas). They have been bolstered by the increasing availability of mobile financial services, as well as the implementation of targeted policy reforms and inclusion campaigns. Through this frame, **employing data that is older than five years** (or even less, in some contexts) as a source for the assessment risks portraying a financial inclusion scenario that is simply not factual anymore, and of no use towards developing concrete policy and programme recommendations.

That is why existing datasets should, in principle, be complemented and cross-analysed with ground-level data **gathered expressly for the purpose of the assessment**. The data gathered directly by the practitioner can be used to guide, enrich, and contrast the insights derived from the analysis of existing datasets, increasing the solidity and precision of the assessment, as well as that of the recommendations derived from its findings.

Carrying out tailored demand-side assessments. In case that existing datasets do not provide the necessary information on financial inclusion trends in a specific country, whether due to lack of quantity, quality or timeliness of the data, it is recommended for the assessor to carry out his/her own data gathering at ground level, to complement and contrast the insights derived from existing sources.

The complexity and scope of the data gathering effort (and overall survey) on the part of the assessor will be dependent on a variety of factors, including the existing capacity that can be found at country level, the resources and time available, and the robustness of the data already available (see figure 2). Although these kinds of exercises won't likely be able to compete with large-scale representative surveys carried out by public or non-profit entities to measure various aspects of financial inclusion at national level (in terms of scope, magnitude or complexity), their inherent advantage is that they allow for a **high degree of customization**. This permits – when designed correctly – to precisely fill the information gaps in the assessment that have been left from the analysis of existing datasets.

FIGURE 2
Factors influencing the scope of the survey



Source: adapted from AFI. 2011. Measuring Financial Inclusion – Core Set of Financial Inclusion Indicators. Financial Inclusion Data Working Group. Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia. (also available at www.afi-global.org/sites/default/files/publications/afi%20fidwg%20report.pdf)

Ideally, an insightful assessment should be able to leverage and combine both of the following types of data:

■ **Quantitative data**, which is structured and statistical. Although the insights that can be drawn from quantitative surveys can be extremely granular and sophisticated (and potentially hold representational value), they will also require **considerable resources to be carried out** (in terms of time, money, prior planning, public support, data processing, and a sizeable surveyor network, etc.), which might be outside of the means of many assessment teams and/or their organizations. Various methodologies seek to collect quantitative data on financial inclusion, such as representative surveys (both at individual and household level), built on a modular approach, as well as the “financial diaries” methodology (see the box at the end of this section).⁹ The FinAccess Household Survey in Kenya, which is developed by Financial Sector Deepening Kenya and has reached its fifth iteration as of 2019, is a well-known example of a nationally representative, quantitative survey that seeks to track developments in financial inclusion from the demand side.

■ **Qualitative data**, which collects information that **seeks to describe a topic**, more than measure it.¹⁰ In the frame of a youth financial inclusion assessment, a qualitative survey would seek to delve deeper into youth’s perspectives as

financial consumers, gaining insights into their experience and approach towards accessing and use of financial services. Nevertheless, while such a survey can bring a depth of understanding to the research question, it will not necessarily hold representational value of young financial consumers as a category, and might even sometimes clash altogether with the results of quantitative surveys. This can happen for example if the target pool for the qualitative survey has not been selected appropriately, and as such, their experience does not match with the broader trends registered among the larger population (at regional or national level), based on what could emerge from a larger-scale quantitative survey. Types of qualitative studies include focus group discussions (FGDs) with young entrepreneurs, as well as individual, semi-structured interviews with these actors.¹¹

A qualitative survey is sometimes carried out when resources and time do not allow for a larger-scale, quantitative exercise, to still generate useful insights for policy recommendations (and possibly helping to inform the questions for a quantitative survey down the road). It can also be carried out as **a complement to a quantitative survey**, by adding a series of questions to the survey that try to capture youth’s perspectives and experiences as financial consumers, while also helping to clarify specific results from the quantitative survey that were not immediately obvious or self-evident (AFI, 2012).

No matter the type of survey methodology selected, it is fundamental, as part of survey design, to complement questions aimed at

⁹ A good reference of assessments developed with a modular survey methodology are those pertaining to the FinScope Survey series, produced by FinMark Trust (see Finmark Trust, 2019b, for an example in the References).

¹⁰ For an excellent example of a series of large-scale surveys that sought to gather a combination of qualitative and quantitative data on smallholders’ experience in relation to specific financial services and products, refer to the Agile Impact Series of evaluations developed by the Busara Center for Behavioural Economics and 60 Decibels, in the frame of Mercy Corps’ AgriFin Programme. It can be found at: <https://www.mercycorpsagrifin.org/2020/12/10/introducing-the-agile-mel-impact-series/>

¹¹ When it comes to assessing the financial inclusion scenario at country level, it’s a good practice to follow up on a quantitative survey with a focus group discussion with a key segment of financial demand (such as MSME entrepreneurs) to clarify and delve deeper into the findings of the quantitative analysis: for example those related to the specific barriers to financial access. See FinMarkTrust (2019a) for an example of the application of this concept.

measuring aspects of financial inclusion with others focusing on **indirect enablers of inclusion**, such as the state of employment, access to market and services, main sources of income, and others.

Assessing the state of digital financial inclusion. Assessing the state of digital financial inclusion in a developing country can prove to be challenging, as **data of this kind is often weak or absent in countries with a still relatively undeveloped digital finance ecosystem**, where policymakers still have not implemented a structured and regular process of data gathering and analysis relative to the state of digital financial inclusion in the country. In this case, the assessor has the option of carrying out interviews with mobile money operators (MMOs, such as commercial banks or telecom companies) to, at the very least, gauge their perspective on the state of youth-focused digital financial inclusion, as well as focus group discussions with groups of young entrepreneurs. If time and resources allow, a quantitative survey holding representational quality could be considered.

At present, there are **two existing global datasets** that can be leveraged to gain useful information

on mobile banking adoption at global, regional and national scales:

■ **The GSMA's Mobile Money Metrics:** an interactive tool that gauges mobile money availability, accessibility, adoption and usage over six macro-regions, from 2011 to 2019. The tool provides a wide variety of indicators related to the four areas of digital financial inclusion, such as the number of registered and active mobile accounts, the number of mobile money agents, mobile-powered international remittance flows, and many more. It also provides a "Regulatory Index" that assesses the state of advancement of the regulatory framework for mobile money at country level.

■ **The Financial Inclusion Insight Surveys:** developed by data-consulting company Kantar in partnership with the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation. This survey series provide an in-depth look at the financial inclusion scenario in Bangladesh, Benin, Côte d'Ivoire, Ghana, India, Indonesia, Kenya, Nigeria, Pakistan, Rwanda, Senegal, the United Republic of Tanzania and Uganda, with a strong focus on mobile money services.





The case of CGAP's "Smallholder Diaries" and "National Surveys for Financial Inclusion"



The research work carried out by the Consultative Group to Assist the Poor (CGAP) of the World Bank is particularly interesting in the way that it employs different data-gathering methodologies to study the financial behaviours of smallholders in developing countries, providing extremely useful insights to both policymakers and private FIs. In particular, two series of datasets developed by CGAP between 2015 and 2018 hold particular interest for the purpose of this guide:

The "Financial Diaries for Smallholder Farmers": the Financial Diaries are the result of biweekly interviews carried out in 2015 among 270 smallholder families in Mozambique, Pakistan and the United Republic of Tanzania, over an entire calendar year, to track their income, expenses, agricultural production, and financial behaviours. They provide an in-depth look at how smallholder families in different contexts use their different revenue streams and available financial services to manage agricultural production, save, invest, smooth their consumption, and take care of emergency expenses (Anderson and Ahmed, 2016).

The "National Surveys of Smallholder Households": these are nationally representative surveys that sought to analyse smallholder families' financial lives

in Bangladesh, Côte d'Ivoire, Mozambique, Nigeria, Uganda and the United Republic of Tanzania. Each country's survey involved a nationally representative sample of about 3 000 families who indicated that agriculture provides a meaningful contribution to their household livelihood, income, or consumption, and who had up to five hectares of land and a certain number of livestock. (Anderson and Sobol, 2018).

In countries where both datasets have been developed, the **combination of these two sources allows for an extremely insightful and nuanced analysis of smallholders' financial habits**, as it provides both a nationwide, representative overview of smallholders' financial lives, as well as a ground-level snapshot of their everyday financial habits. This can prove invaluable to public agencies that aim to target these smallholders with interventions aimed at fostering financial inclusion, as well as to private FIs that seek to capture this clientele segment with a tailored offer of financial services. Refer to Benni, Ciacci and Kaaria (2020) for an example of an assessment that leverages both datasets to analyse the gender gap in financial inclusion in Mozambique and the United Republic of Tanzania.





©FAO/Luis Sanchez Diaz

SECTION 2

Assessing the supply side

Assessing the side of the supply for financial services' provision implies gathering and analysing information related not only to formal and informal FSPs' engagement with youth client segments in purely quantitative terms (e.g. share of financial portfolios destined to youth, design of financial products tailored for the needs of vulnerable categories, such as rural youth and women), but also accurately capturing their **perspective and overall attitude towards financing this clientele**, as this kind of qualitative information is essential to bring to light a series of constraints (social, cultural) to youth financial provision that might exist in the national financial industry.

The following checklist should be kept in consideration when gathering and structuring the data required to assess the offer side for youth finance at country level. As explained before, the elements presented here are only meant for reference: the precise objectives to be achieved through the assessment – as well as the resources and time available – will inform the practitioner's decision on the level of depth to be reached by the analysis on the different dimensions of financial inclusion (outlined in Section 1).



TABLE 2

Data checklist for assessing the supply side

SUB-SECTION	ELEMENTS	NOTES
Brief overview of the financial sector	■ Number, type and size of FIs according to type/category; ■ Total credit and savings portfolio at country level; ■ Rural/urban gap in general financial provision.	A useful categorization of FIs is between formal, semi-formal, and informal institutions (see below), although only formal and informal might suffice, depending on the context.
Overview of the offer for financial services for youth	■ Main categories of FSPs providing financial services to youth (formal, semi-formal and informal), both urban and rural; ■ Analysis of the formal financial sector's portfolio destined to young clients (including youth-focused financial products); ■ Core formal FIs' requirements to access credit and other services, categorized according to FI type; ■ Specific barriers to access and use that are product-related; ■ Potential predatory behaviour on the part of financial institutions.	Providing some cases of successful value-chain financing arrangements involving young entrepreneurs could be relevant, depending on the scope of the study. This would imply analysing the key value chains (both agricultural and non-agricultural) where the current offer for formal financial services concentrates. In the same line, it is useful to provide a description of the most frequent typologies of community-based savings and lending groups in the context under analysis (e.g. ASCAs, ROSCAs, <i>chamas</i>, <i>xitiques</i>, etc.), together with an estimate of the breadth and outreach of their involvement in rural areas. When analysing the share of formal credit destined to young clients, a wide variety of information should be included: main credit destinations (whether to a specific agricultural activity or more broadly to the rural activities); average individual and group loan size; frequency of repayment; loan duration; default rates; collateral required; interest rate; among others. In relation to the point above, it is important to have a clear distinction in mind between policy-related barriers (which are an issue of the overall environment) and product-related barriers (that are linked to the supply side).
Examples of FIs providing youth-tailored financial services	Analysis of the most relevant cases at country level of FIs providing youth-specific financial products (both analogic and digital), showcasing main results, as well as bottlenecks to implementation.	This sub-section should be devoted to providing examples of pioneering FIs (such as banks, MFIs or financial cooperatives/credit unions) that have offered financial services specifically designed to overcome youth-specific limitations, along with examples of specific youth-tailored financial services (e.g. school savings accounts). An important component of this list are financial services that are complemented with capacity-building specifically aimed at overcoming youth capacity gaps, such as in financial literacy or business management. It is always useful to provide a few key data on the FI in question, to help the reader gain an idea of the nature of the institution in question. Data of this kind include: the size of the general and youth-specific financial portfolio; total assets; quality of portfolio/PAR; client base; the size and outreach of its banking branch and agent network.

SUB-SECTION	ELEMENTS	NOTES
Analysing the offer of digital financial services to the youth	■ Analysis of digital financial products and platforms developed specifically for young clients; ■ Analysis of relevant, non-youth-specific fintech innovations that had a positive impact on youth financial inclusion.	Unless the digital financial ecosystem of the country under analysis is considerably under-developed, a comprehensive assessment is bound to have a focus on digital financial services as a fundamental enabler of inclusion.
Relevant public-private partnerships	■ Description of core collaborations between public/non-profit agencies and private financial institutions to foster youth financial inclusion; ■ Assessment of potential entry points for future public-private partnerships.	These can encompass a wide variety of collaborative initiatives: financial literacy programmes; school banking programmes; capacity building for alternative livelihoods; partial credit guarantee schemes; and so on. It is useful to underline what the main motivating drivers are for both the private and non-profit stakeholders analysed, in order to highlight the potential for the alignment of incentives and the possible creation of partnerships.

Source: author's own elaboration

In relation to the above checklist, the following considerations apply.

Categories of providers: When assessing the supply side for financial services at country level, it is essential to make a **first fundamental distinction** between three main categories of Financial Service Providers (FSPs) that provide their products to rural clients, which will inform any subsequent analysis:¹²

- **Formal financial service providers:** these are FSPs whose core line of business and specialization is the provision of financial services, whose business falls under the financial regulatory framework of the country

they are active in, and whose activities fall under the supervision of the national financial regulatory authority. This category includes, among others, commercial banks, deposit-taking and non-deposit-taking microfinance institutions (MFIs), insurance providers, and mortgage companies;

- **Semi-formal financial service providers:** these are entities that were created to provide financial services to their clients/members, but which are usually only loosely regulated by a country's regulatory framework. The existence of such a category is dependent on the degree of sophistication of the specific national regulatory framework, and could be absent altogether. In developing countries, membership-based, self-help organizations such as Savings and Credit Cooperatives (SACCOs) usually fall into this category. Moreover, Village Savings and Loan Associations (VSLAs) could be included in this category as well, although, as discussed below, this will depend on whether they are regulated

¹² Note that this categorization of FSPs has only a representational value and can be easily adapted depending on the context and scope of the study. Several publications on financial inclusion-related themes, for example, only make a distinction between formal and informal services, with VSLAs being included in the latter category.

by the national financial regulatory framework, at least partially. Even though these FSPs can represent a **fundamental enabler for youth financial inclusion**, especially in rural areas, it has to be said that, given their lack of in-depth specialization on financial service design and provision, the products they offer will tend to be quite basic and homogenous. Furthermore, the associated weak or absent regulation (whether prudential or supervisory) carries an inherent threat for the concerns and the protection of financial consumers.

■ **Informal financial services:** these are individuals or organizations that are not regulated by the national framework for the financial sector, and for which the provision of financial service does not usually represent a core line of business or specialization.¹³ These agents usually provide financial services to rural dwellers either because they see a profit opportunity stemming from the strong rural demand for financing and lack of involvement on the part of formal FSPs, and/or because it is in the interest of their own core business to provide finance to rural actors (e.g. providing input credit to agricultural producers). The inherent weaknesses associated with this type of financial provision are that the lack of specialization and outreach -on the part of these informal agents- results in financial products that are on average **more expensive, more basic, and less flexible** (i.e. customizable), compared to those provided by specialized FSPs. This usually results in a financial provision scenario of sub-optimal quality, where financial needs are satisfied only partially, and where due to the lack of regulation, strong power imbalances exist between informal FSPs and clients. Several

agents fall into the informal FSP category: informal moneylenders, value chain actors such as input suppliers or retailers and family and friends.

Note that the proposed distinction is arbitrary; the evaluator could decide to modify it depending on the context under assessment. In some countries, for example, VSLAs are not regulated at all and might fall under the category of informal financial services. In others, the financial regulatory framework can be quite sophisticated and the category of “semi-formal” financial services could be eschewed completely.

Differentiate between generic and youth-focused products: an important distinction that has to be made as part of an assessment is the one between financial products (availed by youth) that have been made available by FIs with the general population in mind (i.e. without a specific youth focus), and those that were explicitly designed with youth as clients in mind. While the private financial sector of a country can sometimes show relatively high levels of provision of “generic” financial services to youth, that does not necessarily imply that any major effort was carried out by FIs to include them as clients, but rather that other contextual factors (such as considerable public support or a strong economy) have allowed the youth to avail these services. The presence of a **variety of youth-specific financial products** offered by FIs, on the other hand, showcases that the private financial sector has begun to grasp the importance of this category as a profitable customer segment, deliberately targeting it with express market analyses and tailored product design.

Considerations on product-related barriers: as will be further illustrated in the next section, it is important to make a distinction between policy-related barriers that limit rural financial inclusion – which are due to the regulatory environment – and product-related

¹³ This “usually” refers to the fact that at least in the case of one category of informal financial providers, i.e. village moneylenders who usually provide credit near or at usury rates, the provision of financing does in fact represent their core line of business.

barriers, which stem from the financial sector not taking into adequate consideration youth-specific impediments during product design and delivery. In this sense, **examples of product-related barriers** which specifically constrain youth financial access include: high opening or minimum balance requirements, fees on withdrawals and deposits, inconvenient brick-and-mortar FI branches located too far from communities where youth reside, and unclear and costly transaction charges (UNCDF, 2012).

Evaluate FIs' bias towards providing services to the youth: when interviewed, most FIs in developing contexts put forward a business philosophy by which youth are considered “as any other client,” meaning that, from the FI's perspective, there is no inherent prejudice against – or predisposition towards – providing them with financial services. This kind of answer, evidently, is not enough to state in an assessment that local FIs don't share a prejudice against financing youth. The inherent weaknesses of youth as financial clients, compared to adults (e.g. low savings, weaker financial education, lower access to collateral), will inevitably result in higher rates of exclusion, an issue that is compounded by the unwillingness on the part of

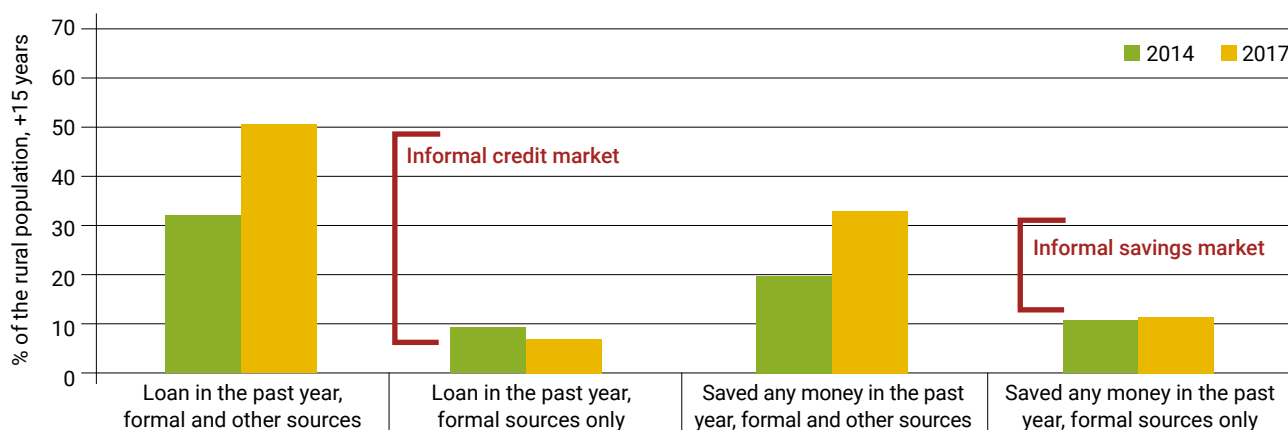
the FI to try and develop a customized financial service that deliberately **aims to leverage youth's strong points – and to overcome their limitations – as financial clients.**

Therefore, to properly evaluate FIs' bias towards financing the youth, it would be better to structure the survey questions in a way that brings to light the FIs' perception of youth as a riskier and less reliable client segment, while gathering supply-side data that shows the actual share of their financial portfolios destined to younger age categories.

Gauging the size of the formal vs. informal financial market for youth:

a useful exercise to assess the quality of overall savings and credit provision to youth is to use data from the Global Findex (or other equivalent database, if available) to assess the share of youth that have availed a loan or savings product – in the period under analysis – against the share of youth that have availed a loan or savings product **provided by a formal FI.** The difference between overall provision and “formal provision” can provide the assessor with an estimate of the size of the **informal market for credit and savings products to youth.** Figure 3 provides an example of this exercise, using Kenya as reference.

FIGURE 3
Share of the credit and savings market for youth, Kenya



Source: Global Findex, 2014 and 2017. Model adapted from Hernandez (2017)

Analysing the offer of digital financial services for youth: focusing part of the supply-side analysis on the digital finance industry is bound to represent a key component of a youth financial inclusion assessment in almost any scenario, with the notable exception of those developing countries and contexts in which this industry is still considerably underdeveloped. It is important to highlight that digital financial services tailored specifically for youth as a target client segment **are bound to be few and**

far between in developing countries, aside from those contexts where the digital finance market is already considerably developed (e.g. Kenya). Hence, the assessor should focus on analysing the offer of digital financial services designed either for the general population, for targeted sectors (e.g. agriculture, manufacturing), or for specific use cases (e.g. e-commerce, digital remittances). The job of the assessor would be to evaluate the specific relevance that these financial products hold for youth, as well as the main barriers that prevent this client segment from using these services.





©CIAT/Neil Palmer

SECTION 3

Assessing the environment

For the purpose of this guide, we refer to the “environment” as the combination of structural and contextual factors – present at country and regional levels – that allow for the provision of both general and youth-specific financial services to the population. This concept not only encompass the legal and regulatory framework that manages the provision of formal services, but also the range of cultural, social, political and infrastructural variables that can influence the provision or uptake of

these services. By “influence” we refer to both positive and negative effects, as this type of analysis aims at identifying **both the enabling as well as the constraining factors** in the overall environment where the assessment takes place that can have an impact on youth financial inclusion.

The following checklist can be a useful reference when carrying out an assessment of the environment for youth financial inclusion at country level.



TABLE 3

Data checklist to assess the environment for youth financial inclusion

SUB-SECTION	ELEMENTS	NOTES
Core barriers to youth financial inclusion	Analysis of the core regulatory, political, social and cultural bottlenecks that limit youth financial inclusion.	Such constraints can ideally include: lack of access to standard collateral or formal ID; scarce financial literacy; FIs' possible bias against lending to youth; weakness of the rural banking infrastructure; weakness of the agent banking network; among several others. It is important to devote a full section to the analysis of financial consumer protection regulation in the country, highlight specific gaps affecting youth in particular, as this is often a contentious point in developing and emerging contexts. It might be useful to include in this section a brief assessment regarding the level of technical capacity at State level, for what concerns financial inclusion matters, especially if substantial gaps are present. Similarly, it would be useful to assess the state of the financial infrastructure at country level, highlighting structural constraints to access (e.g. the functioning of the credit bureau system and the overall regulation on credit profiling). Depending on the scope and size of the assessment, this section could be ideally inserted as part of Checklists n.1 or n.2 (i.e. the demand or supply side assessments).
Key agencies, policies and facilities promoting youth financial inclusion	■ Overview of key public agencies whose work bolsters youth financial inclusion (e.g. Ministries; Central Bank, financial sector regulator, apex financial cooperative and MFI organization); ■ Most relevant policies, programmes and facilities implemented by these stakeholders, in recent years, to boost youth financial inclusion.	These should include policies and programmes that promote youth financial inclusion both directly (e.g. reforms to the mobile banking sector, national financial education strategy) and indirectly (e.g. programmes to promote youth entrepreneurship in agribusiness: digital literacy campaigns). Where applicable, this section should also include an overview of non-profit institutions, both international and local (such as NGOs, foundations, research centers) whose work has been focused on youth financial inclusion. If not already covered in the supply-side assessment, it could also be useful to provide an overview of private FIs whose mission or expertise is strongly connected to rural financial provision.
The digital finance ecosystem	Overview of the digital finance ecosystem: regulation, main stakeholders, state of the ICT infrastructure and core bottlenecks to digital finance expansion.	This section should not only cover mobile money but, where the context allows, internet banking, D4Ag (fintech for agriculture) solutions, fintech startups incubators, and any other relevant innovation.

Source: author's own elaboration

Considerations on policy-related barriers: we can suggest the following basic categorization of two main groups of policies (or, rather, policy gaps) that act as important constraints to youth financial inclusion at country level, and that have to be identified as part of an environmental analysis:

- **Finance-specific constraints to access:** these are the barriers and impediments that stem directly from the features of the regulatory framework regulating access to finance in the country. Several examples of such barriers are: the need for a parent or tutor to co-sign to open a savings account or avail credit when the youth is underage; rigid age and ID restrictions to access financial services; rigid blacklisting measures in case of credit default; the absence of a credit reference bureau; the lack of recourse and redressing mechanisms for finance-related grievances (or such mechanisms not being used by youth due to lack of awareness or sociocultural barriers); a weak agent banking network; and other factors. When undertaking such an analysis, it is fundamental to differentiate between general barriers to financial access affecting rural dwellers in general, and those affecting mainly (or exclusively) youth.
- **Indirect constraints to access:** these are policy barriers that are not linked to the financial regulatory framework per se, but that can still result in critical impediments to the youth's ability to access finance. Examples of such constraints include a possible lack of access to conventional forms of ID for youth; regulatory issues related to land titling and ownership; weaknesses in the contract enforcement regulation; weakness of the financial literacy curriculum in the public education system; the absence of a national strategy on financial

education; low levels of mobile ownership¹⁴ and a weak ICT infrastructure (especially in rural areas); and other reasons.

It is important to underline that identifying and assessing such indirect constraints will require **substantial research and lateral thinking** on the part of the evaluator, as many of the barriers are bound to be context-dependent (and quite different from one country to another). A common limitation we identified in the current body of



¹⁴ Related to this specific constraint, it must be underlined that youth, being early adopters of technological innovations, can actually present higher levels of mobile ownership than adults in some specific national contexts. For example, as illustrated by data from the Pew Research Center (2015), in several sub-Saharan African countries youth under 35 years old have registered smartphone ownership rates that are up to 10 percent higher than those of adults.

The importance of interpreting official data when analysing programmes' results



When analysing the results and impact of a youth-focused policy, programme or similar intervention, it is always useful to check the results provided by the official source, e.g. Ministry, Central Bank, apex body) against:

- 1) Other (preferably) **non-partisan sources** that have analysed the same results in the data and arrived at very different conclusions, for example from the academia or the media.
- 2) The **expected outcomes** set out by the programme or policy under analysis at the start of implementation.

Given that public institutions have a vested interest in presenting the data under the most flattering light possible, while skirting over a wide variety of issues (such as lack of service

uptake, embezzlement, elite capture, and so on), **triangulating different sources** becomes fundamental to separate fact from fiction when evaluating a programme's results. Even when the result data is correct, **how it is presented** is also key: an intervention of this kind could be presented as wildly successful even though it completely missed the mark in terms of the outcomes it had set out for itself at the beginning; hence the need for sources with "fewer stakes" in the programme's success.

Fieldwork, in this sense, is fundamental to really take the pulse of the actual impacts generated by a public intervention on youth livelihoods, which might have evolved in completely unexpected ways (both positive and negative) that are not captured by official data.

literature about financial inclusion assessments is the tendency among evaluators to focus their analysis on a set range of traditional constraints to inclusion, such as lack of collateral and low financial literacy levels, while skirting over other critical, indirect constraints to access. In Kenya, for example, as of 2018, **only 39.3 percent of rural people had access to electricity** (either through on-grid or off-grid solutions), which is a critical barrier to accessing mobile financial services for the majority of people.

Enabling factors: in addition to considering the constraints, it is also essential to evaluate the presence of different kinds of **enabling contextual factors and stakeholders** whose presence could be leveraged to promote youth financial inclusion in the country. Here are several possible examples:

- **High levels of digital literacy** among younger age categories in the country, which is not necessarily as common a scenario as it often is in higher-income countries.
- Recent policies or programmes **that have specifically targeted youth financial inclusion** (or critical determinants to inclusion), such as national financial education strategies, financial literacy campaigns, school savings account programmes, as well as – more broadly – agribusiness incubation programmes.
- The presence on the field of **non-profit stakeholders with a strong mandate to foster youth financial inclusion** and empowerment overall (e.g. NGOs, international foundations), which could act as potential partners for interventions in this domain.

■ The presence of both **private FIs** (e.g. commercial banks, credit unions) and **public apex financial institutions** (e.g. umbrella bodies of MFIs and financial cooperatives) whose mission or expertise is closely linked to rural financial provision, and thus might be more amenable to collaborate with the development of financial services expressly tailored on the needs and strengths of rural and agricultural youth.

In general, private and non-profit stakeholders whose mission relates to the promotion of youth livelihoods (such as private foundations, FIs, MFIs, NGOs) can prove to be a formidable ally for public agencies when it comes to promoting initiatives targeting youth financial inclusion at country level. As such, the evaluator should assess both the potential inherent to **existing public-private partnership** at ground level to promote financial inclusion, as well as possible future partnerships that could be unlocked to these ends between key private and public stakeholders.

The **identification of potential partners** (whether public, non-profit or private) for collaborative interventions in the domain of youth financial inclusion is one of the greatest assets that an assessment of this kind can provide. Given that the vast majority of successful initiatives that foster youth financial inclusion are public-private in nature, developing a comprehensive mapping exercise that identifies all relevant public and private stakeholders – both at country level and on the international stage – that have the potential to collaborate on such an initiative represents a fundamental first step to show how different interests could be aligned.

Analyse key financial facilities dedicated to fostering youth financial inclusion:

governments, development agencies, and other public stakeholders might seek to promote youth financial inclusion (or associated, relevant

development aspects, such as youth entrepreneurship) through the establishment of dedicated financial facilities, such as investment funds of different kinds, partial credit guarantee schemes, start-up incubators and accelerators, as well as credit lines. Examples of facilities of this kind include the Youth Enterprise Development Fund in Kenya and the Youth Venture Capital Fund in Uganda.

Obtaining up-to-date information **on the actual performance** of the financial facility is essential, as these types of mechanisms are often marred by institutional inefficiencies, as well as design and implementation flaws. Hence, before recommending any type of collaboration or linkage with an existing financial facility, the evaluator should ensure that he/she/they has a clear view on the actual returns, from a financial inclusion perspective, that could be generated by tapping into an existing mechanism of this kind.

Assess the competition model for digital financial services: as part of the analysis of the digital finance ecosystem, it is essential to focus the analysis on: 1) the current scenario at country level for what concerns competition in the mobile money market among different categories of Mobile Money Operators (MMOs, such as commercial banks and telecom companies);¹⁵ and 2) **the existing gaps in the regulatory framework that supervises competition** among different categories of MMOs. This is critical as unbalanced and unfair competitive models result in key bottlenecks to the expansion and accessibility of mobile money services, especially in rural areas, and this impacts youth.

¹⁵ Note that the focus is placed on MMOs as mobile money services are usually the core medium of delivery for digital financial services in developing countries. If other channels for such services could be leveraged in the country under analysis (such as online banking), these should be included in the assessment as well.

Several developing countries have yet to implement strong regulatory reforms for their digital finance sector, leaving specific categories of MMOs only loosely regulated and **providing them with unfair competitive advantages over other classes of FSPs**. In Nigeria, for example, until recently, only commercial banks were allowed to provide mobile money services, barring Mobile Network Operators (MNOs) and fintech companies from entering the market and strongly limiting the diversity and outreach of the services offered. In Kenya, on the other hand, fintech companies and MNOs are subject to a substantially looser regulation than commercial banks for what concerns the provision of mobile money services, which gives them a strong competitive advantage in the market, especially when it comes to reaching financially underserved, rural clients. These common scenarios in developing countries can translate into a number of market and regulatory distortions that especially affect the most vulnerable (the rural youth being a case in point), such as uncapped and predatory interest

rates set by certain types of MMOs; a lack of contract and disclosure clarity; and weak or absent mechanisms to redress grievances associated with digital financial services.

The access to and usage of digital financial services will be ultimately dependent on the complexity and sophistication of the existing digital finance scenario at country level. Evaluators that seek a starting point can refer to the **Second Tier Set of Financial Inclusion Indicators**, published by the AFI in 2013, which cover access and usage of mobile money services.¹⁶ The Second Tier Set of Indicators are a broader set of financial inclusion indicators considered important (but not “core”), which were developed to allow evaluators to select the most useful indicators for their particular country context and level of development.

¹⁶ Refer to AFI (2013) in the References for a link to the Second Tier Set of Financial Inclusion Indicators.





©FAO/Tony Karumba

SECTION 4

Final considerations

This section provides a last series of general considerations that did not fit in the rest of the guidelines and that can aid interested readers in the development of youth financial inclusion assessments.¹⁷ While assessments can vary widely in terms

of scope, objectives, available resources and ground-level conditions, these general reflections are meant to remain valid under the most common scenarios that assessors will face in this particular domain.

¹⁷ Note that Annex 1 at the end of this guide provides an orientational framework for the development of youth financial inclusion assessments, which is a combination of the checklists presented in the previous sections, together with a few additional points related to the presentation of the objectives and methodology of the assessment to be developed.



Considerations on team composition:

a two-person team is recommended to run a basic financial inclusion assessment. One team member would be tasked with carrying out the **remote desk research** required to collect and process all publicly available data required by the checklist, including recent demand and supply-side surveys, regulatory reforms, an overview of existing programmes to foster youth financial inclusion, and so forth. The other team member would be **based in the country or region under assessment** and tasked with a variety of ground-level responsibilities: such as collecting publicly unavailable data among various stakeholders, carrying out interviews with relevant FIs and public agencies, acting as a reference point with local partners, and potentially supervising the realization of a survey or focus group discussions. This specific combination has been found to work considerably well for these kinds of assessments, although it is of course dependent on actual resource and time availability. It is also important to ensure that at least one of the assessors has an expertise on youth as a target category that goes beyond the financial inclusion domain, touching on different youth-related areas such as underage labour in the context of the assessment, the features of the national educational system, the school-to-work transition process, and so on.

Depending on the context under analysis, consider including **a trained statistician, econometrician, or similar profile**, in the team, capable of processing and analysing raw data that might be available for different aspects of youth's livelihoods (e.g. financial behaviours, consumption patterns, income flows), in order to extract useful insights that can inform the assessment. Oftentimes, the data on financial inclusion provided by public datasets is in a raw format; therefore, having the capacity to process and extrapolate information in order to fill specific gaps in the assessment can prove to be invaluable.

In case that the assessors plan to conduct a survey (or similar exercise) to expressly gather data on financial inclusion for the assessment itself, the required resources in terms of technical staff will rise exponentially. In this instance, **being able to leverage an existing network of data collectors**, either from the government's side (e.g. the agricultural extension network or the National Institute of Statistics) or from a non-profit stakeholder (such as an NGO, university or research centre) can be a considerable boon to save time and resources.

If the agency or group developing the assessment does not have the required technical capacity to carry out a quantitative survey of the extent and granularity required by the analysis, it is also possible to rely on **a private survey company or survey house** to do the work in its stead, provided that adequate resources are available. In any case, it is fundamental that the research house selected has substantial experience on financial topics and in carrying out representative surveys.





Considerations on budgeting:

budgeting requirements can vary widely depending on the extent of the complexity of the scenario under analysis, the target degree of data granularity, the eventual need for tailored data gathering exercises, and several other factors. Among these elements, the realization of a representative survey on the demand side for financial services – to fill the gaps in the already existing data – **can quickly become one of the most expensive items on the budget.** To this end, funds could be raised among government sources, private FIs and other industry players, as well as by international development agencies and local non-profit institutions.

It has to be remarked that acquiring valuable insights on the demand-side for financial services **is still feasible even when constrained by a small budget.** It is fundamental though, to take into careful consideration the available resources during the design of the survey exercise, and to manage expectations accordingly. Apart from the funding that can be employed in such an exercise, the data already available and the research capacity in-country should also be considered when defining the scope of the demand-side exercise, so as not to duplicate efforts or waste resources on a data collection effort that is beyond the capabilities of researchers in the country. (AFI, 2012)



Considerations on timing:

the timing required to realize such an assessment **will vary considerably depending on a variety of factors**, including: the amount and quality of data already available from secondary sources; the need to carry out quantitative or qualitative assessments at ground level; the degree of collaboration showed by the government and other public stakeholders; hindering factors and events such as civil unrest, political tensions, natural disasters; the diversity in financial inclusion scenarios registered at regional/ departmental level; the complexity of the supply side for financial services (i.e. the formal and informal financial sectors); and the need to establish field-level collaborations with other stakeholders (whether public, private or non-profit) in order to unlock specific components of the assessment.

Carrying out a **comprehensive pre-assessment analysis** of the existing enabling and constraining factors at country level will be fundamental to establish a reasonable timeline for the realization of the study, which will also have to account for the risk of possible high impact events (such as civil unrest) that might threaten to critically delay the evaluation process.





Obtaining a buy-in from national and local authorities:

depending on the size and scope of the intended assessment, as well as the complexity of the context at hand, the importance of obtaining a buy-in for this initiative from national and local authorities (e.g. Ministries, Central Bank, regional authorities, public agricultural extension network) usually ranges from “quite useful” to “absolutely critical.” One of the core incentives that can be put forward to encourage public backing is that the data collected through the assessment can become quite useful for decision-makers to inform financial inclusion-related policies, especially when considering that the assessment aims to **fill gaps in data** that has not been already gathered by public agencies (such as the National Institute of Statistics). The forms of public support can vary widely, ranging from a simple authorization to carry out the assessment (if such is demanded by the context), to active support in the form of agricultural extension officers to carry out data collection, necessary introductions to local authorities (e.g. at village level), logistic assistance, financial backing, and so on.



©FAO/Yasuko Ose



Comparability between assessments:

if the planned assessment is part of a series, it could be useful to design and employ a template framework for data collection, measurement, processing and exposition. By applying this same model to all assessments in the series, it would allow a comparison of the results and findings under a wide range of indicators. This becomes particularly important when the series is developed with a regional focus, in which case, having a common frame of comparison is essential to illustrate **how and why specific financial inclusion indicators (or other relevant elements) might differ** among countries. This is the case, for example, of the Global Findex surveys, which are designed specifically with cross-country comparisons in mind, although the tradeoff in this case is a loss of granularity in the data, as survey questions have to be abstracted from the specific context under analysis to ensure homogeneity in data collection.



©FAO/Ileana Grandelis

References

- Alliance for Financial Inclusion (AFI).** 2010. Financial inclusion measurement for regulators: Survey design and implementation. Policy paper. Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia. (also available at www.asbasupervision.com/es/bibl/ix-inclusion-financiera/991-if03/file)
- AFI.** 2011. Measuring Financial Inclusion – Core Set of Financial Inclusion Indicators. Financial Inclusion Data Working Group. Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia. (also available at www.afi-global.org/sites/default/files/publications/afi%20fidwg%20report.pdf)
- AFI.** 2013. Mobile Financial Services – Indicators for Measuring Access and Usage. Guideline Note No. 11. Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia. (also available at www.afi-global.org/sites/default/files/publications/mfswg_guideline_note_no.11_lo.pdf)
- AFI.** 2016. Indicators Of The Quality Dimension Of Financial Inclusion. Guideline Note No. 22. Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia. (also available at www.afi-global.org/wp-content/uploads/publications/2016-08/Guideline%20Note-22%20FID-Quality.pdf)
- Anderson J. & Ahmed, W.** 2016. *Smallholder Diaries: Building the evidence base with farming families in Mozambique, Tanzania and Pakistan*. Consultative Group to Assist the Poor (CGAP) Perspectives No. 2. Washington, D.C.
- Anderson J. & Sobol, D.** 2018. Executive Summary – CGAP National Surveys of Smallholder Households. Washington, D.C.
- Benni, N.** 2020. *La inclusión financiera de los jóvenes rurales en Guatemala*. FAO, Rome.
- Benni, N., Berno, D. & del Puerto Soria, M.** 2020. *Agricultural finance and the youth – Prospects for financial inclusion in Uganda*. FAO, Rome.
- Benni, N., Berno, D. & Ho, H.** 2020. *Agricultural finance and the youth – Prospects for financial inclusion in Kenya*. FAO, Rome.
- Benni, N., Ciacchi, R. & Kaaria, S.** 2020. *Deconstructing the gender gap in rural financial inclusion: The cases of Mozambique and Tanzania*. FAO, Rome.
- Demirguc-Kunt, A., Klapper, L., Singer, D. & Ansar, S.** 2022. *The Global Findex Database 2021: Financial Inclusion, Digital Payments, and Resilience in the Age of COVID-19*. Washington, D.C., World Bank
- FinMark Trust.** 2019a. Finscope, Malawi 2019: Micro, Small and Medium Enterprise (MSME) Survey. Johannesburg, South Africa.
- FinMark Trust.** 2019b. FinScope Consumer Survey Highlights – The Gambia 2019. Johannesburg.
- Hernandez, E., ed.** 2017. *Innovative risk management strategies in rural and agriculture finance: The Asian experience. Issue paper*. FAO, Rome.
- Nielsen, K.** 2014. *10 Useful Data Sources for Measuring Financial Inclusion*. CGAP, Washington, D.C.
- Pew Research Center.** 2015. *Cell phones in Africa: Communication lifeline*. Washington, D.C.
- Superintendencia de Bancos de Guatemala, C.A. (SIB).** 2019. Boletín trimestral de inclusión financiera. Guatemala City.
- Soursourian, M.** 2019. *How useful is “usage” in measuring financial inclusion’s impact?* CGAP, Washington, D.C.
- United Nations Capital Development Fund (UNCDF).** 2012. *Insights from UNCDF’s YouthStart Programme: Policy opportunities and constraints to access youth financial services*. New York.
- World Bank.** 2010. *Financial Inclusion Strategies Reference Framework*. Washington, D.C.

ANNEX 1

Orientational framework for the development of youth financial inclusion assessments

Assessing the demand side

SUB-SECTION	ELEMENTS	NOTES
General features of the youth population	■ Number and share of youth in the country; ■ demographic and geographic distribution; ■ frequency in age ranges; gender ratio; ■ main sectors of employments; ■ and several other elements.	This section should provide basic information on the youth population at country level, to inform the subsequent analysis of financial inclusion determinants. Depending on the context and the objectives of the assessment, further analysis could be necessary to disaggregate this data to encompass different sub-groups that intersect with the young population group, who might be facing additional and specific constraints to financial inclusion (e.g. young women, refugees, Indigenous Peoples).
Overview of macro-determinants to youth financial inclusion	■ Main sources of livelihood and income streams; ■ State of youth employment and entrepreneurship, with main trends and constraints (e.g. high informality, low pay, lack of contract enforcement); ■ Mobile penetration (youth vs. adults; rural youth vs. urban youth); ■ Land and property ownership scenario; ■ Breakdown of education levels; ■ Level of financial literacy (youth vs. adults); ■ Youth participation to cooperatives, associations, producers' organizations; ■ Comparative analysis of the above trends from a rural/urban and gender perspective.	Aside from the ones suggested, several other relevant macro-determinants to youth financial inclusion can also be included, depending on the scope and resources of the assessment: levels of access to markets; access to services; social context and lifestyle; asset ownership; the role played by specific value chains; strength of the ICT infrastructure. Depending on the scope of the study, a focus on youth engagement in agriculture or agri-food systems could be required (from the perspective of entrepreneurship, land ownership, main forms of employment, etc.). The level of depth of this section will be dependent on the scope of the assessment and the resources available.
Key data on youth financial inclusion	■ Analysis on access and use of key services (credit, savings, money transfer; insurance), and comparison with adult levels; ■ Dimensions of financial capability (managing money, choosing products, accessing information); ■ Comparative analysis of gaps in youth financial inclusion, e.g. from a gender and location (rural/urban), perspective.	Ideally, the data provided should be categorized according to age categories, i.e. not just youth and adults, but specific age ranges. Based on the scope of the study, consider focusing on data and figures relative to youth in agriculture. Access and use of financial access should be broken down in relation to formal, semi-formal and informal sources. The categorization of financial sources is illustrated in Section 2.
Focus on digital financial inclusion	■ Rates of access to mobile money services and internet banking (youth/adults; male/female); ■ Core constraints to digital financial inclusion; ■ Overall levels of digital literacy (youth and adults).	Unless the digital financial ecosystem of the country under analysis is considerably under-developed, a comprehensive assessment will require to focus on digital financial services as a fundamental enabler of inclusion. Typical constraints to digital financial inclusion include low mobile penetration; weak ICT infrastructure; lack of adequate regulation; and lack of digital financial consumer protection measures; among others. If qualitative surveys were used for data gathering, it can be useful to include some specific perspectives on digital financial services on the part of the interviewed youth.

Source: author's own elaboration

Assessing the supply side

SUB-SECTION	ELEMENTS	NOTES
Brief overview of the financial sector	■ Number, type and size of FIs according to type/category; ■ Total credit and savings portfolio at country level; ■ Rural/urban gap in general financial provision.	A useful categorization of FIs is between formal, semi-formal, and informal institutions (see below), although only formal and informal might suffice, depending on the context.
Overview of the offer for financial services for youth	■ Main categories of FSPs providing financial services to youth (formal, semi-formal and informal), both urban and rural; ■ Analysis of the formal financial sector's portfolio destined to young clients (including youth-focused financial products); ■ Core formal FIs' requirements to access credit and other services, categorized according to FI type; ■ Specific barriers to access and use that are product-related; ■ Potential predatory behaviour on the part of financial institutions.	Providing some cases of successful value-chain financing arrangements involving young entrepreneurs could be relevant, depending on the scope of the study. This would imply analysing the key value chains (both agricultural and non-agricultural) where the current offer for formal financial services concentrates. In the same line, it is useful to provide a description of the most frequent typologies of community-based savings and lending groups in the context under analysis (e.g. ASCAs, ROSCAs, <i>chamas</i>, <i>xitiques</i>, etc.), together with an estimate of the breadth and outreach of their involvement in rural areas. When analysing the share of formal credit destined to young clients, a wide variety of information should be included: main credit destinations (whether to a specific agricultural activity or more broadly to the rural activities); average individual and group loan size; frequency of repayment; loan duration; default rates; collateral required; interest rate; among others. In relation to the point above, it is important to have a clear distinction in mind between policy-related barriers (which are an issue of the overall environment) and product-related barriers (that are linked to the supply side).
Examples of FIs providing youth-tailored financial services	Analysis of the most relevant cases at country level of FIs providing youth-specific financial products (both analogic and digital), showcasing main results, as well as bottlenecks to implementation.	This sub-section should be devoted to providing examples of pioneering FIs (such as banks, MFIs or financial cooperatives/credit unions) that have offered financial services specifically designed to overcome youth-specific limitations, along with examples of specific youth-tailored financial services (e.g. school savings accounts). An important component of this list are financial services that are complemented with capacity-building specifically aimed at overcoming youth capacity gaps, such as in financial literacy or business management. It is always useful to provide a few key data on the FI in question, to help the reader gain an idea of the nature of the institution in question. Data of this kind include: the size of the general and youth-specific financial portfolio; total assets; quality of portfolio/PAR; client base; the size and outreach of its banking branch and agent network.

SUB-SECTION	ELEMENTS	NOTES
Analysing the offer of digital financial services to the youth	■ Analysis of digital financial products and platforms developed specifically for young clients; ■ Analysis of relevant, non-youth-specific fintech innovations that had a positive impact on youth financial inclusion.	Unless the digital financial ecosystem of the country under analysis is considerably under-developed, a comprehensive assessment is bound to have a focus on digital financial services as a fundamental enabler of inclusion.
Relevant public-private partnerships	■ Description of core collaborations between public/non-profit agencies and private financial institutions to foster youth financial inclusion; ■ Assessment of potential entry points for future public-private partnerships.	These can encompass a wide variety of collaborative initiatives: financial literacy programmes; school banking programmes; capacity building for alternative livelihoods; partial credit guarantee schemes; and so on. It is useful to underline what the main motivating drivers are for both the private and non-profit stakeholders analysed, in order to highlight the potential for the alignment of incentives and the possible creation of partnerships.

Source: author's own elaboration

Assessing the environment

SUB-SECTION	ELEMENTS	NOTES
Core barriers to youth financial inclusion	Analysis of the core regulatory, political, social and cultural bottlenecks that limit youth financial inclusion.	Such constraints can ideally include: lack of access to standard collateral or formal ID; scarce financial literacy; FIs' possible bias against lending to youth; weakness of the rural banking infrastructure; weakness of the agent banking network; among several others. It is important to devote a full section to the analysis of financial consumer protection regulation in the country, highlight specific gaps affecting youth in particular, as this is often a contentious point in developing and emerging contexts. It might be useful to include in this section a brief assessment regarding the level of technical capacity at State level, for what concerns financial inclusion matters, especially if substantial gaps are present. Similarly, it would be useful to assess the state of the financial infrastructure at country level, highlighting structural constraints to access (e.g. the functioning of the credit bureau system and the overall regulation on credit profiling). Depending on the scope and size of the assessment, this section could be ideally inserted as part of Checklists n.1 or n.2 (i.e. the demand or supply side assessments);
Key agencies, policies and facilities promoting youth financial inclusion	■ Overview of key public agencies whose work bolsters youth financial inclusion (e.g. Ministries; Central Bank, financial sector regulator, apex financial cooperative and MFI organization); ■ Most relevant policies, programmes and facilities implemented by these stakeholders, in recent years, to boost youth financial inclusion.	These should include policies and programmes that promote youth financial inclusion both directly (e.g. reforms to the mobile banking sector, national financial education strategy) and indirectly (e.g. programmes to promote youth entrepreneurship in agribusiness: digital literacy campaigns). Where applicable, this section should also include an overview of non-profit institutions, both international and local (such as NGOs, foundations, research centers) whose work has been focused on youth financial inclusion. If not already covered in the supply-side assessment, it could also be useful to provide an overview of private FIs whose mission or expertise is strongly connected to rural financial provision.
The digital finance ecosystem	Overview of the digital finance ecosystem: regulation, main stakeholders, state of the ICT infrastructure and core bottlenecks to digital finance expansion.	This section should not only cover mobile money but, where the context allows, internet banking, D4Ag (fintech for agriculture) solutions, fintech startups incubators, and any other relevant innovation.

Source: author's own elaboration

In developing and emerging contexts, youth of all ages and backgrounds face substantial and multidimensional challenges when seeking to access the financial services they need to take adequate care of several aspects of their personal and professional lives. These barriers to financial inclusion represent a core development constraint that limits the capability of the youth to unlock their true potential as entrepreneurs, business innovators, and – ultimately – as agents of growth and change in developing contexts.

From the perspective of a financial inclusion practitioner, the ability to assess these barriers with insight and precision – as well as being able to evaluate the overall scenario related to youth financial inclusion in a specific context – is fundamental to produce the policy and

programme recommendations that policymakers and development agencies can leverage to design effective strategies to bolster inclusion and entrepreneurship among the youth, promoting their full potential as drivers of development.

These Methodological guidelines were created to assist development practitioners, as well as other stakeholders engaged in the financial inclusion domain, in overcoming a series of challenges associated with carrying out assessments of the state of youth financial inclusion at country level. The aim is to provide a series of concrete considerations related to carrying out such assessments, drawn from practical experience, while also proposing a set of standardized steps that can be followed to ensure the quality and comprehensiveness of these types of evaluations.

Inclusive Rural transformation and Gender Equality Division – Economic and Social Development Stream

Rural Institutions, Services and Empowerment (RISE) Team

Decent Rural Employment (DRE) Team

www.fao.org/policy-support/policy-themes/access-to-finance

www.fao.org/rural-employment/en

Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations

Rome, Italy

CABFIN
PARTNERSHIP
CAPACITY BUILDING
IN RURAL FINANCE

ISBN 978-92-5-137352-1



9 789251 373521

CC3272EN/1/12.22