**Guidance Note: Incorporating a Gender Lens in Rapid Market Assessment**

**Why Conduct a Rapid Market Assessment?**

A Rapid Market Assessment (or Appraisal)—RMA—is a tool to help youth livelihood and employment projects assess the supply and demand for labor and skills within specific occupations or sectors of the local labor market. RMA data are collected using a variety of methods including: direct observation, questionnaires and surveys, focus group discussions, competency assessments and performance examinations. As its name infers, the RMA is a quick tool that is meant to complement and supplement other information sources, including nationally-representative labor market survey data. RMAs provide basic information about the local labor market, such as:

* Numbers of workers available at present in specific occupations in a predetermined area;
* Numbers of workers are required in specific occupations in a predetermined area;
* Additional skills of the workers preferred by employers;
* Present occupational interests of local youth;
* Existing technical training providers available in the local area.

A well-conducted RMA can inform the design of skills training programs and improve their market relevance. The RMA can help determine the appropriate profile of youth to target, ensure that skills training is concentrated in occupations and sectors with growth and employment potential, and inform the content of skills training such that it is responsive to the specific needs of local employers.

**Why Is a Gender Lens Important in an RMA?**

Youth—and young women in particular—face specific and unique challenges to entering the labor market. Young women are typically underrepresented in formal work and bear a disproportionate share of unpaid work. To help close these gender gaps in the labor market, skills training projects should attempt to diagnose the specific constraints young women face in accessing productive work in a particular context and identify new demand-driven entry points into the labor market. Unfortunately, many existing interventions promoting economic opportunities for young women tend to focus on what are traditionally considered female—and often less lucrative—trades (such as crafts, beauty, cooking, sales, microenterprise, and so on). Implementing an RMA through a gender lens can help projects challenge traditional gender biases and channel young women into higher productivity and higher wage employment opportunities.

**How Can a Gender Lens be Incorporated into an RMA?**

1. Develop appropriate gender-sensitive data collection tools, surveys, and protocols that allow data to be disaggregated by sex and age. It is particularly important to not consider young women as a homogenous group. Even within subgroups—single, married, disabled—there may be significant differences in education and skills levels, which have implications for programmatic and training design. Survey questions about employment status/occupation should consider several response options to account for the many roles young women may play, including their unpaid household work and farm labor.
2. Adopt a gender-inclusive data collection methodology that ensures the inclusion of young respondents (aim for at least 50% of responses from women). When conducting interviews or focus groups, it is important to inform participants well in advance of meetings, and choose meeting places and times that are convenient for young women who have mobility constraints. It may be necessary to conduct additional outreach to young women participants, and/or to hold separate focus groups for men and women to help ensure that women’s voices are heard. In some contexts, it may be beneficial to ensure buy in from gatekeepers (usually parents or husbands or mothers-in-law) to support the participation of young women in the exercise.
3. Train enumerators on gender issues, and if possible, use local female enumerators to collect and the data. To collect accurate data, it is crucial that young women feel comfortable and at ease answering questions.

The inquiries made in a traditional RMA can be modified to assess constraints and opportunities through a gender lens as follows:

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| **Key Informants** | **Information you may gather in traditional RMA** | **Information to collect in gender-sensitive RMA** |
| Employers | * Existing numbers of workers working at present * Required numbers of workers needed at present * Required numbers of workers needed for coming years * Major competencies needed for the organization * Present salary of the workers * Types of workers (gender, caste, age and ethnic groups) | * Existing types of workers disaggregated by age and gender * Present salaries disaggregated by gender and age * Number of current and future jobs/positions for which they would be willing to hire young women * Specific skills training and support employers would need to hire more young women into their workforce |
| Employer’s Associations | * Overall numbers of workers working at present in the industry at local level * Tentative required numbers of workers in the industry at local level * Most appropriate group in terms of age, sex, ethic group for the particular occupation | * Overall numbers of workers working at present in the industry at the local level, disaggregated by sex and age * Tentative required numbers of workers in the industry at the local level, disaggregated by sex and age; * Most appropriate group in terms of age, sex, and ethic group for the particular occupation, and qualitative information about (1) why and (2) what training and support systems can be put in place to open opportunities in this sector to young women. |
| Local Youth | * Current occupation of youth * Job preference of the local youth * Type and level of skills (self-reported and tested) | * Current occupation of youth disaggregated by sex * Current occupation of youth, including response options for informal, unpaid, temporary or seasonal employment, and home-based work * Industry preferences of young women relative to male peers and older women * Perceived barriers to entry to preferred trades and nontraditional trades (such as child support, lack of skills, confidence, security) * Specific supportive interventions young women would need to feel comfortable entering the workforce. * Best time and location to conduct training to meet the needs of young women |
| Technical Training Providers | * Numbers of existing technical training providers * Trend of training demand * Interest/attitude of youths by caste, gender and age * Place the youth prefer to work * Wage/Salary/Piece work/Job order basis * Types of work (self/wage) youth prefer to work | * Target demographic for training, and numbers of youth trained, disaggregated by sex and trade * Trends (skills training and job placement), disaggregated by sex and age * Places young women prefer to work and why * Types of work young women prefer (wage/self-employment) relative to male peers and an understanding of what drives those preferences |

**References**

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