

2010 CONFLICT ANALYSIS & PREVENTION MANUAL

(EXCERPT)

INFORMATION SHEET #1

MEDIAN AGE

There is inherent danger within any nation with a population that has a median age under 30 years; this is particularly true in instances where the primary decision-making is left in the hands of males alone. Currently, in Tajikistan, the median age is 21. Sustainability of cooperation in terms of natural resources, etc. depends upon how much each person values the future relative to the present. Individual decision-makers, especially males in their early 20s, are largely unable to make well-reasoned decisions regarding the future. Many young men prefer to fight rather than negotiate as a way to identify with their fathers, demonstrate that they can protect their mothers, or to seek status. As a group, their overall lack of experience and intense interest in the present over the future leave them ill-equipped to contribute to, and take advantage of, essential long-term planning for their communities. Neither do they have the ability to catalyze consensus, identify priorities, emphasize shared needs, manage expectations, or determine mutual drivers. When these roles are left to only a few in the community, and the majority of the population is made up of young males expected to follow the example, the community is at a significant disadvantage. Youth will always desire to be in charge of something, to have some sense of control. This dynamic must be thoroughly understood carefully addressed.