

Building the Evidence Base: Recent Learnings in Positive Youth Development Research



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LEARNING AND EVALUATION

Webinar Objectives

Objectives

- To describe key recent learnings related to YP2LE's [PYD Learning Agenda](#) based on a literature scan
- To gather input from the YP2LE Learning Network on literature scan findings and inform updates to the [PYD Learning Agenda](#) and related evidence pages



Webinar Agenda

9:00 a.m. Welcome and Introductions



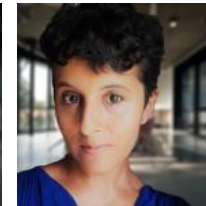
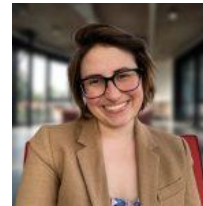
Nancy Taggart (she/her/hers)
YP2LE COR, Senior Youth and Workforce Advisor, USAID
and
Christie Scott (she/her/hers)
Project Director – YP2LE, Making Cents International

9:03 a.m. Overview of Activity



Rebecca Povec Pagel (she/her/hers)
Senior Monitoring, Evaluation, and Learning Advisor, USAID

9:10 a.m. Activity Methods and Findings



Dr. Chelsea Pallatino (she/her/hers)
Senior Specialist, Research, Evaluation, and Learning,
Making Cents International
and
Dr. Sharika Bhattacharya (she/her/hers)
Technical Advisor, Research, Evaluation, and Learning,
Making Cents International

9:40 a.m. Q&A Session and Conclusion

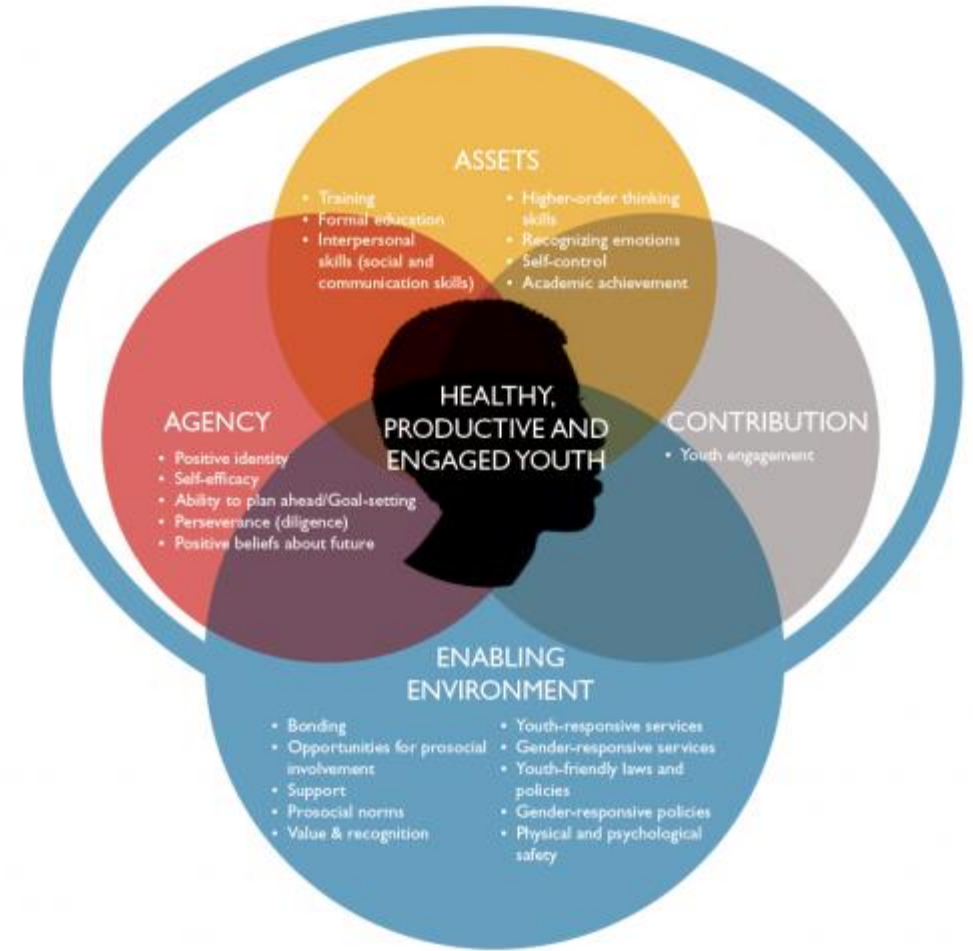


Stephanie Schmidt (she/her/hers)
Advisor, Learning and Innovation, Making Cents International

Overview of Activity

Goal

- Synthesize emerging evidence-based research and best practices on what works in youth development related to five PYD LA Themes:
 - Understanding how PYD programs achieve positive impact in LMICs
 - Cross-sectoral impact of PYD programs
 - Measurement of PYD constructs
 - PYD for vulnerable or marginalized populations
 - Youth engagement in PYD programs



Activity Methods

Development of literature scan inclusion criteria

Targeted outreach to YP2LE research partners and Learning Network

Identification and review of evidence-based research resources (YP2LE and external)

Dissemination of preliminary literature scan findings via webinar

Continued review of identified research resources

Initial Findings: Key Themes

Coverage of themes varies across YP2LE and external resources.

Identified resources are primarily related to work in Africa or were not specific to one region.

Resources with more rigorous research activities involve primary data collection or systematic literature review.

Dominant sectors include health and gender.

Cross-cutting themes include youth participatory approaches.

Few resources exist on relevant COVID-19-related learnings.

Findings by Theme:

Understanding how PYD programs achieve positive impact in LMICs

Promising practices included applying systems level approaches (e.g., education) and a social ecological framework to target outcomes across sectors.

In general, identified resources provided evidence on impacts of PYD in health, agriculture, education, or across sectors.

How PYD programs achieve positive impact in LMICs: Study Details and Examples

- Schools offer a foundational setting for promoting health, particularly relevant in the COVID-19 context.
- Whole-school approaches that incorporate health and PYD can positively affect social and emotional well-being, improve soft skills and learning outcomes, and reduce health risk behaviors.
- PYD programming that includes focus on the enabling environment may be more promising for influencing youth outcomes.

Health Promoting Schools (developed by WHO) has been shown to improve student health in both low-income and high-income settings.

School-based Ag education initiatives can involve youth as early adopters of Ag innovations, empowering them to be change agents within larger communities.

A resilience-oriented intervention (Our Family Our Future) seeks to engage families in prevention of adolescent HIV and depression. An initial study of accessibility, feasibility, and preliminary efficacy yielded promising results.

Need for evidence: Examples of PYD programming that effectively incorporate systems-level approaches.

Findings by Theme:

Cross-sectoral impact of PYD programs

Youth needs identified through CSYAs: access to education relevant to job market, SRH/FP knowledge, access to youth-friendly health services.

Impactful cross-sectoral programs: take a comprehensive PYD approach, provide opportunities for interaction and learning, and address enabling environment.

Few studies with clear findings on benefits and effectiveness of cross-sectoral PYD programs in achieving positive youth outcomes.

Cross-sectoral impact of PYD programs: Study Details and Examples

- CSYA findings indicated similar youth needs across contexts:
 - Access to quality and relevant education for productive engagement in the workforce
 - SRH/FP knowledge and access to youth-friendly services
 - Experiences and needs are often framed by lack of enabling environment

Need for evidence: Effectiveness of cross-sectoral PYD programs in achieving positive youth outcomes.

Comprehensive PYD approach of effective cross-sectoral programs (e.g., WfD and FP/RH) can include financial literacy, access to financial services, nutrition education.

Effective cross-sectoral programs also address enabling environment; engaging families, community members, and key stakeholders to shift norms.

Impact evaluation of Skills to Succeed – intervention with integrated WfD and FP/RH components led to inconclusive findings on sustained outcomes; qualitative findings were promising.

Findings by Theme:

Measurement of PYD constructs

There are noted differences in global approaches in PYD measurement (e.g., Western vs. Eastern) and a need to further localize and contextualize approaches.

Newly developed measurement instruments largely focus on mental health outcomes and soft skills development.

While PYD measurement has improved, advancements have been sector-specific (e.g., health).

Measurement of PYD constructs: Study Details and Examples

- Research and related tools are primarily led by researchers, institutions, and approaches from Global North and designed with a focus on youth from the Global North.
- PYD measurement-related resources focused on the complexity of adverse youth experiences and impacts on youth outcomes at all stages of measurement.
- One article on tools for measuring Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment, but most studies were collected data at one time point and focused on GBV-related outcomes.

Need for evidence: Youth-specific indicators focused on outcomes and impact, interdisciplinary research collaboration on measurement tools, collaboration between researchers and practitioners to inform measurement.

UNICEF's Gender Toolkit on Integrating Gender in Programming for Every Child in South Asia provides guidance on gender mainstreaming and applying GESI approaches across the program cycle as well as outcome-related indicators.

Youth Thrive Survey measures the five protective and promotive factors: youth resilience, social connections, knowledge of adolescent development, concrete support in times of need, and cognitive and social-emotional competence.

Passages Project's Social Norms Exploration Tool outlines process for participatory exploration, measurement, analysis, and design of social norm interventions.

Findings by Theme:

PYD for vulnerable or marginalized populations

Frameworks targeting vulnerabilities consider individual characteristics, experiences, norms, and contextual factors.

Addressing vulnerabilities, requires incorporating inclusive practices at key entry points of program cycle in partnership with youth in vulnerable situations.

Existing studies focus primarily on health outcomes.

PYD for vulnerable or marginalized populations: Study Details and Examples

- Approaches to measuring, addressing, and understanding vulnerabilities considered individual characteristics, experiences, and contextual factors including COVID-19, conflict and post-conflict zones, disabilities, and homelessness.
- The most common population of focus was adolescent girls and young women (AGYW).
- Addressing vulnerabilities requires incorporating inclusive practices at key entry points of program cycle and direct involvement of youth in design, implementation, and analysis activities.
- Additional promising practices: collaboration between systems (e.g., education and health) to provide housing for youth experiencing homelessness during COVID-19 to address housing insecurity, health resource and service access, nutrition, testing, etc.

Need for evidence: Studies targeting barriers and facilitators beyond the individual level (e.g., youth), specifically related to interpersonal, community, and systems levels.

Some studies had success with a family vs. an individual-based approach to improving youth outcomes. Lack of male family member inclusion was a notable gap.

Studies highlighted how sector-specific activities can improve cross-sectoral outcomes such as providing Menstrual Hygiene Management supplies, SRH and GBV prevention education to support AGYW to stay in school as well as address social norms to support AGYW empowerment.

Findings by Theme:

Youth engagement in PYD programs

New studies highlight the need for prioritizing youth-led approaches in research and policy-making as well as sector-specific strategies (e.g., in DRG)

Emerging sub-themes include promoting safe spaces, peer mentorship, use of youth centers and youth-specific decisionmaking bodies (e.g., councils).

There is increased focus on meaningful youth inclusion, but there is a lack of research-oriented sources, including resources on measuring youth engagement.

Youth engagement in PYD programs: Study Details and Examples

- Studies tended to focus on engaging AGYW specifically, including in activities related to social and gender norms and gender equity.
- In recent years, there has been a clear increase in resources related to youth engagement but not all were research-oriented and thus not included in the review.

Need for evidence: Studies on engaging additional sub-populations of youth in vulnerable situations, research tools for measuring youth engagement.

A resource on working with girl researchers noted challenges with time needed to build mentors' and girls' confidence and skills, and gain community acceptance of adolescent girls leading research. Promising practices included collaborating with local female research mentors; providing time for training research mentors and girl researchers; stipend provision for mentors and researchers; and instilling trust in the direction of girl researchers.

A study focused on measuring adolescent participation in Cote d'Ivoire and Indonesia broke down participation via Adolescent Participation Questionnaire, which included (a) self-esteem, (b) self-efficacy, (c) social connectedness, (d) mattering, (e) decision making, (f) civic attitudes, and (g) civic engagement.

Question and Answer Session

- Which of these new findings do you think is most significant?
- What's missing? What were you expecting to see based on research from the last five years?
- Put any questions that you have for the YP2LE team in the chat!

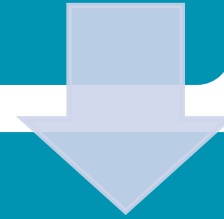
Share your feedback by answering our Mentimeter questions!

Use your phone to scan the QR code or go to www.menti.com and use the code **4485 9084**



Next Steps

Continued review of identified resources based on webinar learnings



Development of updated PYD thematic page content



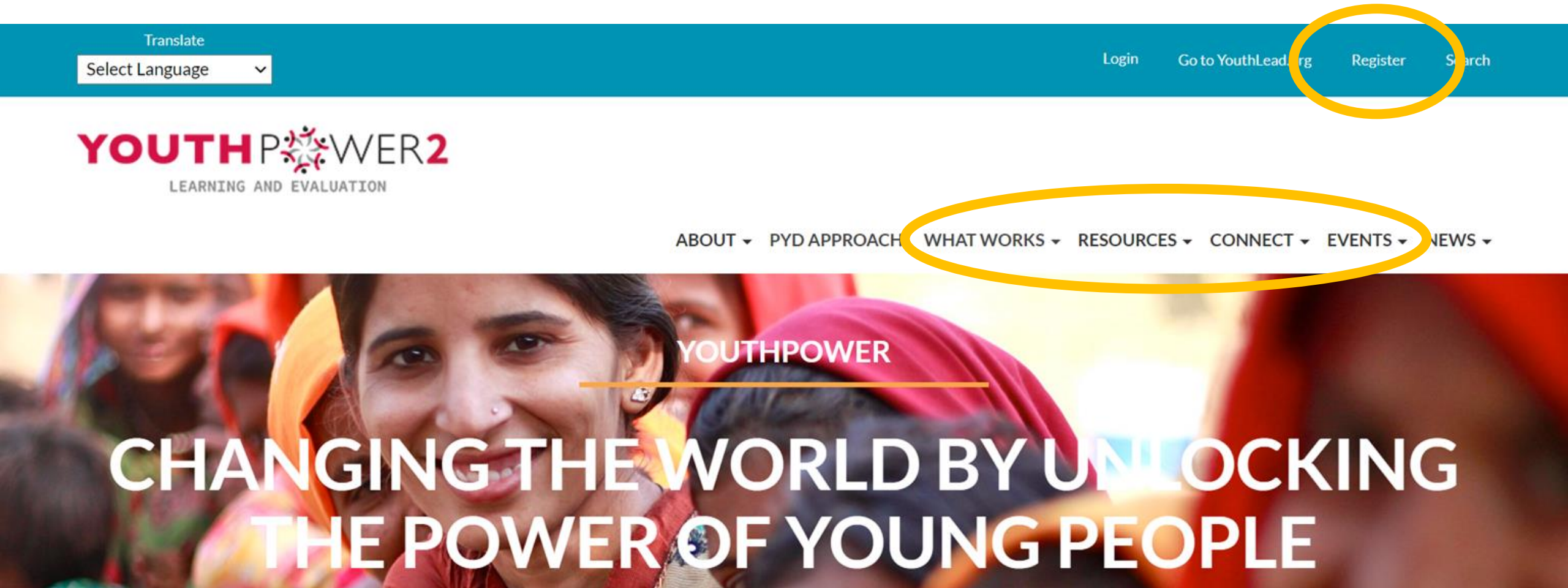
Incorporation of updates to PYD Learning Agenda

Share Your Resources with YP2LE!

- What other existing resources should be considered for inclusion in the literature scan activity?

Email any other resources to
Chelsea Pallatino
(Chelsea@makingcents.com)
by March 16th.

Reminder of YouthPower.org Resources



Join our Upcoming YouthPower Events

Find details, register, and see all events at <https://www.youthpower.org/events>



- March 9, 7-8am ET: [Engaging Young Women in Climate Change Adaptation and Mitigation: Experiences from the Middle East and North Africa](#) (MENA Community of Practice [CoP])
- March 9, 9-10:15 ET: [New Frontiers in Labor Market Assessments: Reaching the Last Mile](#) (Business, Entrepreneurship, and Private Sector Engagement CoP)
- Tuesday, March 22, 9-10am ET: [Community Resilience Interventions and Health Outcomes for Youth](#) (YP2LE Learning Network Event)



Thank You!

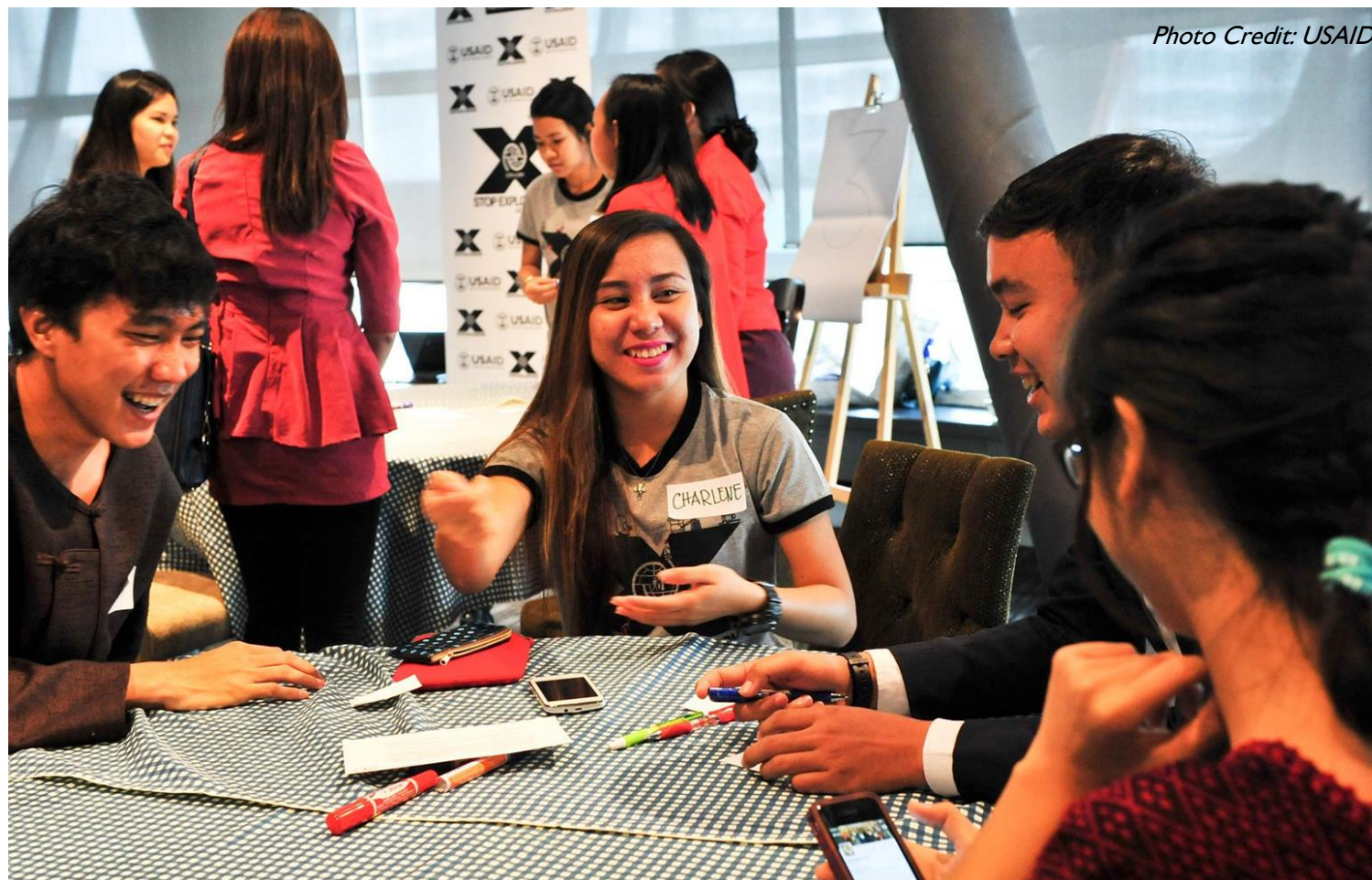


Photo Credit: USAID