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CLIMATE-RELEVANT EDUCATION PROGRAMMING INVENTORY ANALYSIS

OVERVIEW AND METHODOLOGY

In April 2022, USAID launched a new, whole-of-Agency 2022-2030 Climate Strategy. The strategy highlights education - across the education continuum - as a key sector in advancing climate action, resilience, and mitigation. As part of the Center for Education’s (EDU) work to develop sector-specific technical guidance for education staff at USAID Missions and implementing partners, the Center conducted an analysis of ongoing and past interventions to investigate the ways in which climate is integrated into education-related programs.

This analysis provides an overview of USAID’s climate-relevant, education-relevant programming. The analysis aims to elucidate how and where USAID is advancing climate action in and through education. The guiding question of this inquiry was, “How is the education sector supporting climate action?”

To answer this question, EDU used a keyword search of the 2020 Performance Plan and Report (PPR) key issue and program narratives on basic education, higher education, engagement of higher education institutions, inclusive development, and youth programs. EDU developed and refined an inventory of activities with both climate-relevant and education-relevant interventions from the data generated. Next, EDU conducted a thematic analysis of activity descriptions in the inventory. While this analysis includes relevant examples reported in the 2020 PPR key issue and program narratives, it is important to note that there may be additional activities that supported climate action in 2020 that were not captured in this analysis.

FINDINGS

The initial inventory produced by the key word search included more than 200 activities. After a review to verify that all activities demonstrated climate integration with education, 79 were determined to meet the criteria for inclusion in the analysis.

BASIC EDUCATION	HIGHER EDUCATION	YOUTH DEVELOPMENT	ENGAGEMENT OF HIGHER EDUCATION INSTITUTIONS	INCLUSIVE DEVELOPMENT
7	10	36	24	2

The following findings were derived from an analysis of the final activities in the inventory. An [illustrative activities list](#) provides more detail on some of the activities that supported these findings.

USAID HIGHER EDUCATION INSTITUTION (HEI) PARTNERSHIPS ARE PROMOTING GREEN SKILLS DEVELOPMENT AND OTHER CLIMATE-RELEVANT SKILLS.

- USAID is partnering with HEIs and youth organizations (existing and newly developed) to ensure learners gain the green skills (e.g., water and waste management, sustainable and natural resource management, agribusiness, and biodiversity conservation) needed for climate adaptation and to gain employment.
- HEI partnerships often include the development of undergraduate, graduate, and post-graduate diploma courses to strengthen comprehensive, integrated planning, mainstream climate resilience, expand students' climate literacy, and build green skills to address environmental and climate challenges sustainably.
- Secondary objectives of many activities include promoting green behavior and climate literacy to foster greater awareness of climate change and environmental issues and enhance an individual's climate resilience and climate advocacy skill sets.

USAID-SUPPORTED HEIS ARE INVESTING IN CLIMATE MITIGATION RESEARCH AND CLIMATE-RELATED INNOVATION.

- HEIs serve as key thought partners with government ministries to research and develop innovative resources for countries to mitigate and adapt to the impacts of climate change. Primary research sectors include renewable energy, biodiversity conservation, and water.
- HEIs are creating, sharing, and strengthening local capacity to better understand climate impacts that challenge development interventions across multiple sectors.
- HEIs are awarding scholarships to students to gain or enhance their green skills to develop innovative solutions to address climate impacts.

YOUTH ARE CHAMPIONED AS ENVIRONMENTAL STEWARDS AND CLIMATE ADVOCATES.

- USAID's climate action activities engage youth by working to build their capacity to advocate for climate justice and critical climate policies.
- USAID activities engage with youth and youth organizations to promote a just transition by providing skill-building opportunities to learners as industries, such as fishing and forestry, transition to low-carbon economic outputs. Through USAID programs, youth are learning more sustainable consumption and production methods that are both innovative and tap into traditional, localized knowledge bases.
- USAID programs leverage youth's role in their communities and the workforce to critically examine climate impacts and create innovative, sustainable, and environmentally-friendly solutions.
- Youth organizations are engaged in key dialogues with members of their community and government officials to discuss the future impacts of climate change relevant to their generation.

FEW PRE-PRIMARY AND PRIMARY EDUCATION ACTIVITIES INTEGRATED CLIMATE ACTION.

- A limited number of basic education programs have focused on climate action compared to the number of climate-relevant education activities included that target HEIs and youth.
- Most of the climate-relevant and basic education-relevant activities included in the inventory analysis involved community clean-ups, school repairs, and disaster relief reconstruction work.
- Some basic education activities included pre-service teacher training programs that focused on climate literacy and the integration of climate themes into literacy and numeracy skill development for women, youth, and people with disabilities.
- A few basic education activities engaged local communities in disaster risk management and climate resilience building interventions.

CONCLUSION

The analysis demonstrates that the most common approach to integrating climate action into USAID's education activities to date has been through higher education partnerships. Many partnerships with HEIs equip learners with green skills and contribute research to innovative climate adaptation and mitigation strategies.

The inventory of USAID programs also demonstrates an emphasis on youth engagement in climate action and the green economy. Youth programs that promote environmental stewardship as well as employment in agriculture, engineering, waste management, and tourism industries also elevate the role of youth as climate advocates. Many youth-centered interventions showcase the cross-sectoral nature of climate action and serve as models for future youth workforce development and higher education programs.

To date, there has not been consistent or substantial integration of climate action into activities that aim to improve education at the pre-primary and primary levels. Few activities were identified that focused on systems-level climate-relevant interventions such as environmentally friendly infrastructure or learning modalities that are resilient to climate impacts. There are opportunities to leverage resources and incorporate climate action into basic education activities that aim to measurably improve learning outcome, including by developing teaching and learning materials with climate themes and equipping early learners with the foundational skills to adapt to and overcome climate challenges.

Additionally, while some USAID education programs incorporate resilience planning into program design, further systems-level programming is needed to reduce the impact of climate-related disruptions to learning. Strong education systems, from the pre-primary level through higher education, must mitigate the effects of, adapt to, and help learners recover from and overcome climate shocks and stressors while ensuring continuity of learning. Best practices and lessons learned from the adaptations made to education systems in response to COVID-19, as well as in conflict and crisis settings, can inform climate adaptation and resilience programming.