

## **Pandemic-Era Responses in Higher Education and Youth Workforce Development: Webinar Discussion Capture**

The following discussion and resources were pulled from the chat sections of both webinars.

### **Micro internships**

USAID/Somalia is partnering with financial institutions to provide \$3 million in micro- and small- size loans to women and youth and businesses to help them withstand the disruptions to their businesses as a result of the pandemic.

USAID/India is supporting the REVIVE alliance, a group of private foundations, to offer returnable grants or loans to over 60,000 self-employed workers in micro enterprises, with a preference to youth and women in the informal sector.

IRES worked with universities across Iraq in a network of 47 career development centers to launch the first ever virtual Career Preparation Academy and first virtual micro-internship program in Iraq. These initiatives provided professional development opportunities for youth across Iraq, 91% of them noted that the experience equipped them with valuable skills for their future careers, and 97% of whom recommended the opportunity to other students.

USAID/Indonesia and USAID/Philippines are developing toolkits for education institutions to engage with the private sector to implement virtual micro internships.

### **Provision of internet access and other resources**

Resources:

- [Delivering Distance Learning in Emergencies](#)
- [Online and Distance Education Resources for Youth and Higher Education](#)

In Indonesia, the Ministry of education provided free Internet packages (up to 10 GB per month) for students to connect to virtual learning. The Egypt Mission also reported success in delivering internet packages.

The S4YE offers some innovative examples of increasing youth's access to technology. More information [here](#).

These examples include:

- Hardware: Across-the-board, projects increased purchase of laptops, internet packs and power backups for their staff and beneficiaries.
- 'Fit to purpose' software: projects also increase the integration of tools for videoconferencing (e.g. Hangouts, Zoom, Skype); workshops, design thinking, polling (e.g., Mentimeter, Micro, Whiteboard); collaboration tools (e.g., Basecamp, Twist, Slack); program management (E.g., Trello, Podio) as per their staff size and budget.

Participants expressed guidance on cash transfers for Internet access would be super helpful, especially for IPs.

Some activities partnered with Give Directly and benefited thousands of youth in Kenya. During the pandemic, this kind of investment was a breather for a majority of youth as they would prefer income over training during difficult situations like this. This provided mobility and flexibility for young people to respond in multiple ways.

There is also an opportunity to leverage the role of higher education institutions as conveners to hold multi stakeholder forums (government, private sector, economists and social scientists) that identify policies and practices that will lead to inclusive recovery. See more [here](#).

### **Engaging youth in advocacy around COVID response**

Youth require spaces to be able to voice their concerns and needs, this was seen as especially salient for young entrepreneurs. The ILO released a policy brief highlighted in the larger report around policies that build the resilience of youth in the workforce (labor policies, childcare policies, investments in infrastructure to reduce time in unpaid work).

### **Equitable access to education**

Universal Design for Learning (UDL) principles came up throughout the research for this brief. A lot of what we understand about UDL in its application in our COVID-19 and post COVID-19 programming is especially related to online tools. There are ways to make any of these online learning platforms, digital tools, and ways youth are connecting universally accessible.