



USAID/RWANDA YOUTH ASSESSMENT

September 2019

This report is made possible by the support of the American people through the United States Agency for International Development (USAID). The contents are the responsibility of Making Cents International through YouthPower: Evidence and Evaluation Task Order 1 (YouthPower Learning) AID Contract # AID-OAA-I-15-00034/AID-OAA-TO-15-00011. This report does not necessarily reflect the views of USAID or the United States Government.

USAID/RWANDA YOUTH ASSESSMENT

September 2019

By

Katie Green, Independent Consultant for Making Cents International

Emmanuel Bagaye, Independent Consultant for Making Cents International

Rachel Blum, Independent Consultant for Making Cents International

Lindsey Woolf, Making Cents International

Cassandra Jessee, International Center for Research on Women/Making Cents International

USAID's YouthPower Learning generates and disseminates knowledge about the implementation and impact of positive youth development (PYD) and cross-sectoral approaches in international youth development. We are leading research, evaluations, and events designed to build the evidence base and inform the global community about how to transition young people successfully into productive, healthy adults. PYD is defined by USAID as:

Positive Youth Development (PYD) engages youth along with their families, communities and/or governments so that youth are empowered to reach their full potential. PYD approaches build skills, assets and competencies; foster healthy relationships; strengthen the environment; and transform systems.

Visit us at YouthPower.org to learn more and follow us on Facebook and Twitter for updates.



For public inquiries and additional information, please email comms@youthpower.org or by mail to Making Cents International, attn. YouthPower Learning, 1350 Connecticut Ave NW, Suite 410, Washington, DC 20036.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This assessment was led by Katie Green who reviewed the data collection instruments, oversaw the data collection process, facilitated the majority of stakeholder interviews, completed data analysis, and served as the principal author. Emmanuel Bagaye supported data collection and preliminary analysis, and he authored much of the Stakeholders Analysis. Rachel Blum provided document review as well as input on the analysis, and she also contributed to the strategic recommendations. Lindsey Woolf contributed to analysis and the final report, and Cassandra Jessee provided assessment design, technical support, and oversight.

The assessment team would like to thank the staff of USAID/Rwanda for their support and insights. We extend special thanks to USAID/Rwanda staff David Rurangirwa, Senior Education Specialist and Deputy Director of the Education Office, who served as the lead USAID/Rwanda point of contact, along with USAID staff member Catherine Galloway. The team also wishes to acknowledge the support of other Making Cents International team members, including Dr. Christy Olenik, Vice President for Technical Services, and Jessica Carrera, Project Associate, as well as Yvette Nyinawumuntu, a Rwandan youth advisor for her valuable review and input on the report.

A local research and logistics company, Center for Integrated Development Research and Action (CIDRA), was engaged for the assessment. We owe a special thanks to CIDRA's youth researchers who served as facilitators, note takers, and interpreters: Valery Ndayishimiye, Gaudence Ndayambaje, Laetitia Irankunda, Pascal Muheto, and Innocent Mugiramana. Marcella Igiraneza served as the logistician and made countless arrangements and appointments and developed the schedule. Dr. Ignace Kabano organized the data collection team, provided guidance and facilitated a number of contacts.

Most importantly, we would also like to thank the many stakeholders who volunteered their time to make this assessment a success, including representatives of the Government of Rwanda, other development partners, non-governmental organizations, and USAID-funded projects. The team is especially grateful for the contributions of Rwanda's youth who participated enthusiastically in 24 focus group discussions across five Provinces – this report would have been impossible without their insights. The assessment team earnestly hopes that their hopes, dreams, concerns, and challenges are represented faithfully. In choosing to share some of their reality, we hope this will inform and help catalyze the future they seek to create for themselves and for Rwanda.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

I. Executive Summary	1
A. Introduction	1
B. Findings.....	1
C. General Recommendations	2
II. Introduction, Purpose, and Methodology.....	3
A. Background.....	3
B. Purpose of and Research Questions Under the Cross-Sectoral Youth Assessment.....	4
C. Methodology	5
III. The Situation of Rwandan Young People.....	6
A. Youth Demographics in Rwanda.....	6
B. Realizing the Benefits of the Demographic Dividend.....	6
C. Youth and Education	7
D. Employment and Economic Opportunities for Youth	9
E. Health and Teenage Pregnancy.....	10
F. Youth with Disabilities.....	11
G. LGBTI Youth.....	11
H. Defining Vulnerability and Priority Youth cohorts	11
IV. Findings: Youth Goals, Aspirations, Priorities & Bright Spots.....	13
A. Differences by Youth Cohorts	14
B. Livelihoods, Self-Employment, Business Opportunities.....	14
C. Education.....	19
D. Health	22
E. Safety and Security.....	24
F. Youth Participation & Civic Engagement.....	25
G. Family Life & Well-being.....	26
V. Conclusion	28
VI. Annex A: Primary and Secondary Research Questions.....	29
A. Primary Research Questions.....	29
B. Secondary Research Questions:.....	30
VII. Annex B: Methodology Details.....	33
A. Data Collection	33
B. Team Composition.....	39
VIII. Annex C: Summary of Findings.....	40
IX. Annex D: Applying Positive Youth Development Principles	42

LIST OF FIGURES

Figure 1. PYD Framework.....	5
Figure 2. Population Pyramid	6
Figure 3. Youth Educational Attainment by Gender and Location.....	8
Figure 4: Hart’s Ladder of Youth Participation.....	25

LIST OF TABLES

Table 1. Percent of Youth in technical and vocational school.....	8
Table 2. Illustrative sample of youth priorities ranking	14

ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

ASRH	Adolescent Sexual and Reproductive Health
BDS	Business Development Skills/Services
BDF	Business Development Fund Ltd.
CDCS	Country Development Cooperation Strategy
CSYA	Cross-Sectoral Youth Assessment
DG	Democracy and Governance
DHS	Demographic and Health Surveys
DO	Development Objective
DREAMS	Determined, Resilient, Empowered, AIDS-free, Mentored, and Safe
EDC	Education Development Center
EG	Economic Growth
EICV	Integrated Household Living Conditions Survey
EU	European Union
FGD	Focus Group Discussion
FP	Family Planning
FTF	Feed the Future
GOR	Government of Rwanda
HDAK	Huguka Dukore Akazi Kanoze
ICT	Information and Communication Technology
IIP	International Implementing Partner
ILO	International Labour Organization
INGO	International Non-Governmental Organization
IPRC	Integrated Polytechnic Regional Centers
IT	Information Technology
KII	Key Informant Interview
KSA	Knowledge, Skills, and Abilities
MOE	Ministry of Education
MOH	Ministry of Health
NAR	Never Again Rwanda
NEET	Not in Employment, Education, or Training
NEP	National Employment Programme (of the Government of Rwanda)
NISR	National Institute of Statistics of Rwanda
NGO	Non-Governmental Organization
NRS	National Rehabilitation Service
NYC	National Youth Council
OVC	Orphans and Vulnerable Children
PYD	Positive Youth Development
RDB	Rwanda Development Board
REB	Rwanda Education Board
RH	Reproductive Health
RYAF	Rwanda Youth in Agribusiness Forum

SFR	Strive Foundation Rwanda
SGBV	Sexual-and gender-based violence
SIDA	Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency
MSMEs	Micro, Small, and Medium-Sized Enterprises
SMS	Short Message Service
SOW	Scope of Work
TVET	Technical and Vocational Education and Training
UN	United Nations
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNICEF	United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund
UNIDO	United Nations Industrial Development Organization
UNFPA	United Nations Population Fund
USAID	United States Agency for International Development
USD	United States Dollar
USG	United States Government
VSLAs	Village Savings and Loans Associations
WDA	Workforce Development Authority

I. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

A. INTRODUCTION

Conducted by YouthPower Learning at the request of the USAID Mission in Rwanda between April-June 2019, the purpose of the youth assessment was to utilize a positive youth development lens to answer several broad questions. The first was to better understand the life goals of youth (defined in Rwanda as aged 16-30) and to identify the challenges that youth face in reaching their potential. The assessment also aimed to pinpoint what is working well to support youth in Rwanda and enable them to actualize their potential economically, civically, politically, socially, and with good health. The final goal was to identify the opportunities these bright spots (and remaining gaps) present. This overview presents assessment findings that emerged from consultations that were conducted from April-May 2019. The assessment consisted of a desk review, 30 key informant interviews, and 24 youth-led focus group discussions with 180 youth over three weeks in all five Rwandan provinces. This report consists primarily of the results of the Situational Analysis of the assessment.

B. FINDINGS

Overall, the assessment affirms that Rwandan young people (ages 16-30) have a clear and common set of goals for their futures. They envision self-sufficiency achieved through economic independence and the ability to provide for and support their families, and they see this path as most available to them through self-employment. Youth recognize that formal sector jobs are rare, and while desirable, frequently out of reach. Young people in Rwanda see what the future might hold and place faith in the goals they have as well as those laid out by the government for youth employment. At the same time, they also see a series of almost insurmountable obstacles that impede their own progress and that of their peers. The various transitions to adulthood, which are marked by steps such as educational attainment, obtaining and cultivating land, building a house, getting married and starting a family, and economic self-sufficiency, are frustratingly out of reach to the vast majority of Rwandan youth. This has created a general sense of dissatisfaction; leaving a generation at risk of not fulfilling its own promise and ambitions.

The top three priority areas that youth across all age groups and locations identified as key issues to achieving their goals and promise of their future were:

- **Livelihoods development:** The desire for the requisite tools and opportunities to engage in productive self-employment activities
- **Education and skills for work-readiness:** Practical, skill-based training that leads to employment
- **Reproductive autonomy and health:** Early pregnancy is a significant barrier for young women to achieve economic self-sufficiency.

All of the youth who participated in the focus group discussions indicated that they thought young people like them were either neutral or unsatisfied with their daily lives. None of the youth thought that in general, youth were satisfied. This finding was remarkably consistent.

The key pathways that youth identified that would help them address these priority areas included access to youth-friendly financial services, skills development that meets the demands of the labor market, and creation of opportunities to find viable livelihood options in agriculture.

Youth also advocate for the creation or expansion of confidential youth-friendly safe spaces and places to support their health needs, including reproductive health, mental health, sanitation, and nutrition. Many pointed to the need for greater substance abuse prevention services and programs, along with programs that help generate better support and communication among families.

While there are opportunities for many youth to engage in community efforts, there is a desire for more youth-led activities and initiatives, with adults in supportive or facilitative roles. Many youth reported a strong desire among their peers for greater parental and family support as young people work toward learning, participating, and benefiting from and engaging in a rapidly changing Rwanda.

Youth that are most vulnerable are those that had access to fewer assets. Some of the significant features of these assets could be defined by whether they completed school or possessed a trade certificate, were working or having work experience, possessing networks or family support, living in an urban setting with greater access to resources versus in a rural environment, being younger or over the age of 25, gender, physical assets, (such as land, livestock, or a phone), or their disability status.

C. GENERAL RECOMMENDATIONS

- 1. Increase youth earnings in the informal sector.** According to the GOR definition of formality, 95 percent of all firms operating in Rwanda are informal.¹ The greatest current gap appears to be in helping to prepare youth in existing groups, (such as savings and loan groups or technical, vocational or employment programs) to develop the skills needed to prepare to access finance and the subsequent coaching and support as they start income-earning endeavours, (financial literacy, savings and loans, and business development services). This needs to be coupled with expanding opportunities for developing market-driven technical skills for youth through the TVET system and workplace learning.
- 2. Boost productivity for youth through micro, small and medium-sized enterprises for youth employment, particularly in agriculture.** While many of the youth engaged by this assessment did not show a high level of interest in agriculture-related careers or work, the fact remains that many young people from rural settings in particular do see opportunities and that agriculture remains essential to their survival for the foreseeable future. Adding value to existing efforts, such as increasing access to markets and upgrading value chains, (i.e., food processing) is critical, as is working with banking institutions to develop more youth friendly products as well as public sector institutions to reduce the barriers to formalizing business activities for youth.
- 3. Expand youth-friendly family planning along with sexual and reproductive health for very young adolescents.** Youth are concerned by the prevalence of early pregnancies among their peers and think younger adolescents should have greater access to knowledge and skills. Continued investments in safe places and spaces are essential to enable youth to access reproductive health and family planning services, along with an array of other sanitation, nutrition, and health services. Continued investigation into the dynamics of early pregnancy, including identifying effective strategies to address gender-based violence and sexual violence are also critical in supporting youth health and well-being.

¹ World Bank. "Program-For-Results Information Document (PID) Concept Stage, Priority Skills for Growth (PSG)." 2017.

4. **Address youth psycho-social needs through holistic programs.** Young people are concerned by what they see is the increasing sense of hopelessness or dissatisfaction their peers have about achieving their goals for the future. The milestones of adulthood seem unobtainable to many. They also report that many youth struggle with parental communications and family relationships. They see this as a cause of an increase in drug use and other high-risk behavior. Successful youth programs support adults and community networks as well as young people. Many of the current USAID OVC and DREAMS programs use these comprehensive approaches, and the lessons learned should be applied to other youth initiatives as well.
5. **Apply positive youth development program approaches within programs, including involving youth in the assessment, design, implementation, and monitoring and evaluation of any efforts aimed at supporting them.** This assessment included training and supporting youth researchers to facilitate youth focus groups and analyze information. Young people in Rwanda are the ones that are best positioned to understand their life circumstances and help lead the changes that need to occur. It is also equally important to prepare and engage the adults and supporting youth and to work with them as partners.
6. **Be intentional in targeting segments of youth populations.** New or existing programs should have systems to monitor and assess project results on various segments of the youth population of highest priority. Without this intentionality, projects may not reach the most vulnerable youth or those with fewest assets, (younger girls, from rural areas, out of school, etc).
7. **Foster strategic institutional collaboration and coordination in support youth.** Because youth are such a large proportion of the population, there are a myriad of stakeholders that intersect with and prioritize youth in different ways. The Ministry of Youth has strong leadership and can work with other key stakeholders to serve as a lead convener and coordinating body to elevate positive youth development principles within other sectors such as economic growth, employment, health and education in youth services. They can also lead and support structures, such as the National Youth Council that can serve to cultivate and elevate youth leaders as a means of reaching other development goals.

II. INTRODUCTION, PURPOSE, AND METHODOLOGY

A. BACKGROUND

The United States Agency for International Development (USAID) has long supported young people in Rwanda across sectors including education, economic growth, democracy and governance (civic engagement), and health. USAID/Rwanda's Country Development and Cooperation Strategy (CDCS) has a goal of "Accelerating Rwanda's progress to middle income status and better quality of life through sustained economic growth and reduction of poverty."

The current CDCS describes the youth bulge and unemployment as key risk factors to Rwanda's development. Under this strategy, USAID aims to "help to mitigate this risk by strengthening sustainable economic growth and increasing employment opportunities for youth; recognizing youth as critical stakeholders for consolidating democracy and change agents to promote peace and reconciliation; supporting practices that promote health and improved nutritional status among this population; and addressing gender imbalances faced by female and male youth that prevent them from accessing

employment opportunities and overall contributing to the country’s development.” To this end, the Mission has made significant investments over the last five years.

USAID/Rwanda’s current CDCS expires in 2020. In preparation for the next five-year strategy, USAID/Rwanda requires an analysis of the status and landscape of youth and youth initiatives in Rwanda as well as national policies that are shaping youth development in the country. This youth assessment serves as the basis for decisions on strategic planning and future programming targeting or including youth in the 2020-2024 CDCS. Understanding the context of youth in Rwanda, as well as identifying opportunities for which a positive youth development (PYD) lens can strengthen the quality or impact of existing and future programs, will directly benefit the development of the new CDCS.

B. PURPOSE OF AND RESEARCH QUESTIONS UNDER THE CROSS-SECTORAL YOUTH ASSESSMENT

In February 2019, USAID/Rwanda commissioned the USAID YouthPower Learning team to conduct a cross-sectoral youth assessment. Using a PYD lens, the assessment sought to better understand the status and aspirations of Rwandan youth ages 16-30 in their journey from adolescence to adulthood – a transition that includes starting a productive working life, developing healthy lifestyles, and exercising citizenship.

PYD is both a philosophy and an approach to youth development that “engages youth along with their families, communities, and/or governments so that youth are empowered to reach their full potential. PYD approaches build skills, assets, and competencies; foster healthy relationships; strengthen the environment; and transform systems.” This approach has a proven positive impact across an array of outcomes and sectors in the United States and other high-income countries.

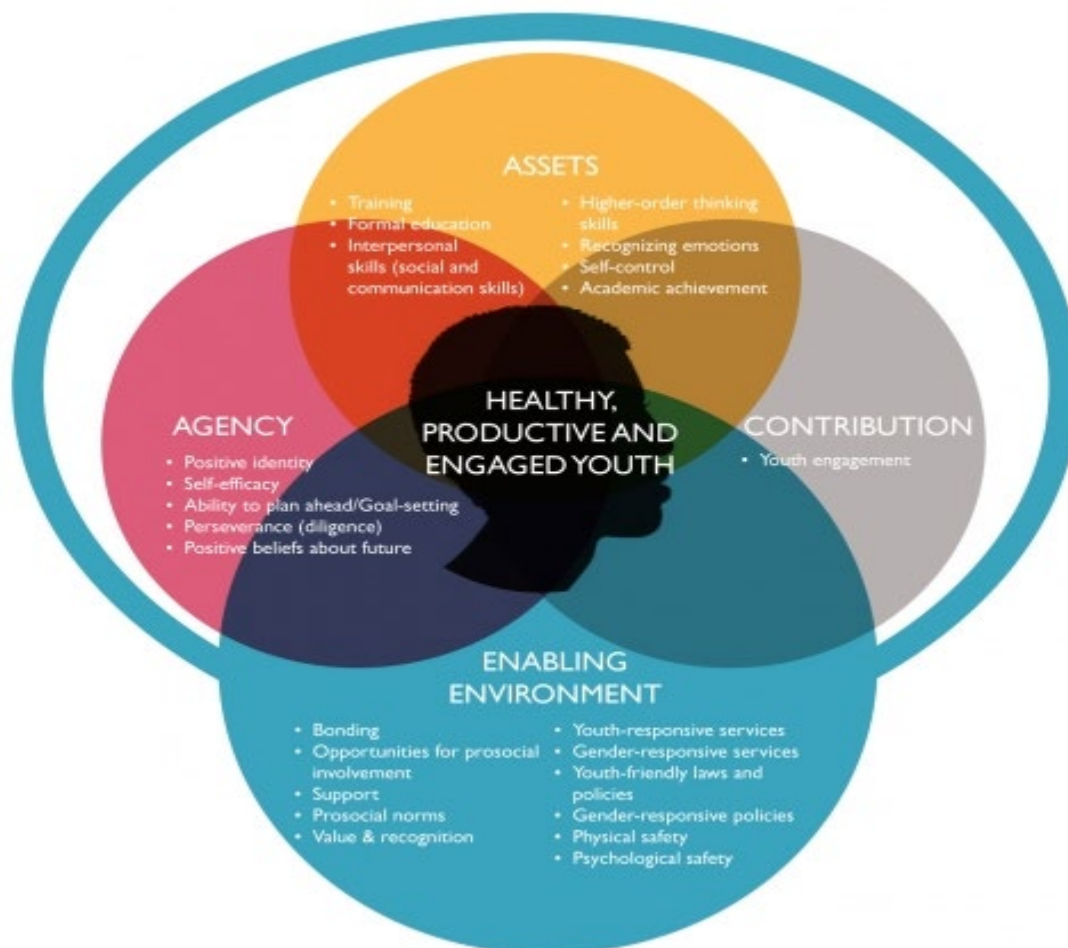
Donors, governments, practitioners and policymakers are increasingly looking to this approach to provide more holistic support for youth in low- and middle-income countries.

The PYD Framework (Figure 1) offers four domains through which the vision of healthy, productive, and engaged youth can be achieved:

- *Assets.* Youth have the necessary resources, skills, and competencies to achieve desired outcomes.
- *Agency.* Youth perceive and have the ability to employ their assets and aspirations to influence their own decisions about their lives and set their own goals, as well as to act upon those decisions to achieve desired outcomes.
- *Contribution.* Youth are engaged as a source of change for their own positive development and for that of their communities.
- *Enabling environment.* Youth are surrounded by an environment that develops and supports their assets, agency, and access to services and opportunities, and which strengthens their ability to avoid risks and stay safe, secure, protected, and live without fear of violence or retribution.²

² An enabling environment encourages and recognizes youth, while promoting their social and emotional competence to thrive. The term “environment” includes four key domains: (1) social- relationships with peers and adults, (2) normative- attitudes, norms, and beliefs, (3) structural- laws, policies, programs services, and systems; and (4) physical- safe, supportive spaces. More information can be found in Annex D.

Figure 1. PYD Framework



The assessment identifies opportunities to optimally support youth and guide USAID/Rwanda toward a more strategic engagement with youth as: a) beneficiaries and participants of sustainable Rwanda-owned development solutions that can be brought to scale over time and, b) key actors empowered to identify and prioritize challenges to the lack of livelihoods and propose innovative solutions.

The assessment included an extensive list of 3 primary research questions, under which were an additional 27 sub-questions. There were also 51 secondary research questions that are addressed throughout the report. A full list can be found in Annex A. The primary questions include:

- What are youth (defined in Rwanda as aged 16-30) life goals?
- What challenges do youth face reaching their potential?
- What is working well to support youth in Rwanda and enable them to actualize their potential economically, civically, politically, and socially, with good health? What opportunities do these bright spots (and remaining gaps) present for USAID?

C. METHODOLOGY

The assessment process consisted of several data collection methods:

- A desk review of over 100 secondary sources;
- A field visit to five districts in all five provinces, (those prioritized prior to the visit by USAID) that included Kigali (Kigali), Huye (South), Musanze (North), Nyabihu (West), and Kayonza (East)
- 24 focus group discussions (FGDs) with 180 male and female youth ages 18-30;
- 23 individual (or small group) interviews with 30 key informants (KIs) from the Government of Rwanda (GOR), international donors, and USAID staff, as well as national and international non-governmental organizations (NGOs) implementing youth programs across Rwanda.

Although USAID defines youth as those aged 10-29, this assessment focused on those 16-30 years of age, which is the official age range for youth in Rwanda.

The assessment aimed to add to build on previous work done by USAID and others, adding value to the knowledge base in order to generate actionable recommendations. Principles of participatory methods were utilized in the research process. The input of young people and their understanding of their own circumstances and lives grounded the situational analysis and subsequent recommendations. A more in-depth description of the methodology and outcomes of the data collection can be found in Annex B.

III. THE SITUATION OF RWANDAN YOUNG PEOPLE

A. YOUTH DEMOGRAPHICS IN RWANDA

Rwanda has the youthful demographic situation that is similar to other countries in sub-Saharan Africa. With a total population of 12.19 million,³ almost 70 percent of the population of Rwanda is under the age of 30, with over 50 percent under the age of 20. The percentage of the population that falls within the Rwandan definition of youth (ages 16-30) is about 26 percent, with the largest of the three segments of that group being between the ages of 16-20 (about 11 percent).⁴ Note that this is slightly different than the USAID definition of youth, which includes a 10-29 age range, with a general programmatic focus on those aged 15-24.⁵ In total, Rwanda has approximately 3.165 million young people between the ages of 16-30. The youth portion of the population has grown by 2.23 percent annually since the last census in 2012, with an increase of about 44,356 youth joining the age bracket annually.⁶

B. REALIZING THE BENEFITS OF THE DEMOGRAPHIC DIVIDEND

Given Rwanda's current population dynamics (Figure 2), the policy decisions the country makes now and in the coming decades have the potential to produce long-lasting growth and benefits. The current high child dependency burden (dependency ratio = .76) creates a bottleneck to long-term socioeconomic development. If the birth rate declines rapidly from current levels, the population structure will create a larger proportion of working age people, opening a "temporary window of opportunity

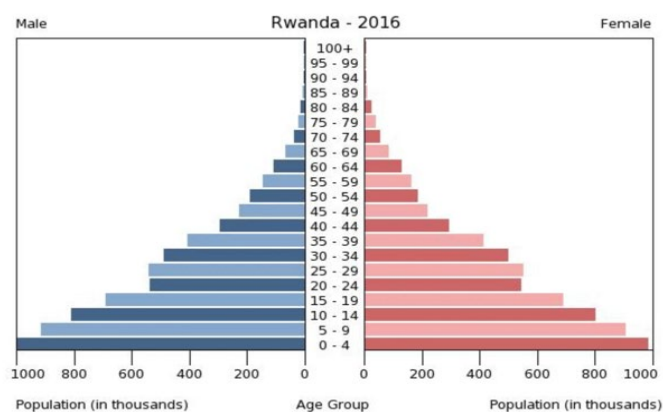


Figure 2. Population Pyramid

³ CIA World Factbook.

⁴ Fifth Integrated Household Living Conditions Survey, Youth thematic report, 2017

⁵ USAID. Youth in Development Policy: Realizing the Demographic Opportunity. October, 2012.

⁶ Fifth Integrated Household Living Conditions Survey, Youth thematic report, 2017

for accelerated economic growth.”⁷ This is referred to as the demographic dividend. These potential benefits will only be enjoyed with policies that take the following actions: 1) accelerate fertility decline, 2) create a healthy workforce, 3) create an educated, skilled, and globally competitive workforce, 4) accelerate economic growth and job creation 5) strengthen governance, efficiency, and accountability and 6) promote gender equity and empowerment of women.⁸ With these actions, Rwanda will be well on its way to achieving the goals of Vision 2050, achieving middle-income status, and on the road to self-sufficiency.

In a country with limited natural resources, human capital development is the key to driving inclusive economic growth; youth skills development and well-being are critical drivers of Rwanda’s human capital growth. The Government of Rwanda in NSTI has prioritized youth and women’s economic empowerment through entrepreneurship under Priority Area 1. Under Priority Area 3, TVET training will be promoted as well as the inclusion of people with disabilities. The World Bank has asserted that **“Rwanda has entered its demographic window of opportunity.”** Since 2005, fertility rates have fallen rapidly, from 6.1 in 2005 to 4.6 in 2010, a 25 percent decline. However, for the demographic potential to be realized, productive employment opportunities have to be created, and a competent and skilled youth workforce has to be developed.”⁹ In addition, in USAID’s Journey to Self-Reliance,¹⁰ investing in human capital of youth by engaging young emerging leaders can play a vital role in a country’s development trajectory. **Youth programming may yield some of the highest returns on USAID/Rwanda’s investments.** A recent study by the Lancet Commission found that a package of evidence-based practices targeting youth had benefit-cost ratios that were substantially higher than infrastructure and other projects. **“Investments in adolescent health and well-being bring a triple dividend of benefits now, into future adult life, and for the next generation of children.”**¹¹

Virtually all of the recommended policy prescriptions and programmatic actions involve targeting Rwanda’s young people with knowledge, skills, and access to opportunities while building supportive environments and institutions. Critically, this youthful population **must** be engaged in helping to create and mobilize its own generation around these solutions.

C. YOUTH AND EDUCATION

Access to education in Rwanda is currently high, while quality of education is still a work in progress. Rwanda has prioritized universal basic education, and as a result, over 98 percent of primary-school-age children (ages 7-12) are enrolled in school.¹² Literacy rates are relatively high as well (76 percent of male youth and 78 percent of female youth between 15-24 years are literate).¹³ Rwandan girls’ primary and secondary school enrolment rates are among the highest in Sub-Saharan Africa.¹⁴ Despite this success, the quality of education, particularly in rural settings, remains concerning. In 2018, a child who starts school at the age of 4 can expect to complete 6.5 years of schooling by their 18th

⁷ Government of Rwanda & UNFPA. Unlocking Rwanda’s Potential to Reap the Demographic Dividend: Policy Brief.” December, 2017.

⁸ Government of Rwanda & UNFPA. Unlocking Rwanda’s Potential to Reap the Demographic Dividend: Policy Brief.” December, 2017.

⁹ World Bank. “Program-For-Results Information Document (PID) Concept Stage, Priority Skills for Growth (PSG).” 2017.

¹⁰ <https://www.usaid.gov/selfreliance>

¹¹ Lancet. 2016 Jun 11; 387(10036): 2423-2478.

¹² MINEDUC. 2018 Education Statistics. December, 2018.

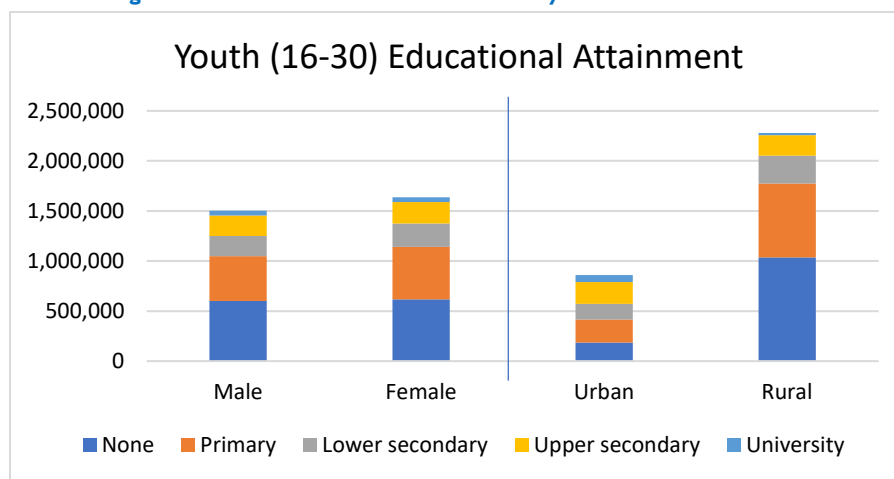
¹³ UNICEF. Country Statistics for Rwanda, 2008-2012.

¹⁴ Stravropoulou, Maria & Gupta-Archer, Nandini. [Adolescent Girls’ Capabilities in Rwanda: The State of the Evidence](#). GAGE: Gender and Adolescence: Global Evidence. December, 2017.

birthday. When that number is adjusted for what children actually learn, it goes down to 3.8 years of expected schooling (a learning gap of 2.7 years).¹⁵

Most youth in Rwanda still live predominantly in rural settings, and despite the improvements in educational access, a significant portion of the youth population (age 16-30) have attained a primary (or less) level of education. In contrast to the high level of current school access, the Labour Force Survey of 2017 shows a different picture for youth ages 16-30 in that almost 70 percent of youth have attained only a primary or lower level of education. The majority of youth (over 2.2 million or over 70 percent) live in rural areas, and of these young people, 1.04 million have not completed a primary level of education. To put this in perspective, 92,528 youth have university degrees, representing only 2.94 percent of the total youth population in the country.

Figure 3. Youth Educational Attainment by Gender and Location¹⁶



Youth attending technical and vocational schools remains a relatively small segment of the youth population overall, with urban youth between the ages of 20-24 the most common participants. Table I below shows the percentage of youth attending vocational or technical schools. The overall percentage of youth accessing vocational training dropped between EICV4 in 2014 and EICV5 in 2017. This might be because the establishment of more rigorous TVET standards led to the closing of a number of private institutions, though this is speculative. Another noteworthy point is that the overall percentage of females attending (3.3%) has surpassed males (2.9%), a marked switch since the EICV4. Overall, this table suggests that the vast majority of young people are not accessing vocational and technical training. This has implications for donors and programmers if these institutions are the primary means by which skill-building opportunities for employment are delivered.

Table I. Percent of Youth in technical and vocational school

VOCATIONAL TRAINING		EICV4	EICV5
		Overall %	Overall %
Rwanda		4.07	3.12
	Urban	5.65	4.21

¹⁵ World Bank. Human Capital Index. October, 2018.

¹⁶ Government of Rwanda. Rwanda Labour Force Survey. February, 2017.

	Rural	3.62	2.76
Province			
	Kigali City	5.91	4.04
	Southern	3.73	3.22
	Western	3.15	2.64
	Northern	4.18	2.37
	Eastern	4.02	3.22
Sex			
	Male	4.88	2.9
	Female	3.32	3.3
Age Group			
	16-19	3.3	2.57
	20-24	5.38	4.29
	25-30	3.46	2.51

Source: EICV4& EICV5

The segment of youth attending university remains small overall. The numbers of youth aged 16-30 that have attended higher education is 3.1 percent, (higher than the percentage that has a university degree) with a significant disparity between urban youth (7.8 percent) and rural youth (1.6 percent). More males (3.5 percent) have attended than females (2.8 percent).¹⁷

D. EMPLOYMENT AND ECONOMIC OPPORTUNITIES FOR YOUTH

Access to and cultivation of adequate livelihood opportunities is one of the most critical issues that youth face. The statistics suggest that labor underutilization (a metric of a mismatch between labor market supply and demand, which includes unemployment, time-related underemployment, and potential labor force) are higher among youth than adults, (18.7 percent versus 12.3 percent).¹⁸ Unemployment, which is one dimension of labor underutilization, is also higher for young people. As a result, youth are facing limited opportunities to develop skills and grow professionally. Social cohesion, development, and sustainable economic growth cannot be achieved with vulnerable and economically frustrated youth.¹⁹

The overall youth unemployment rate dropped from 21.3 percent in 2017 to 18.7 percent in 2018. The share of youth in non-agricultural paid employment went down from 51.3 percent in 2017 to 50.5 percent in 2018. For youth without educational attainment (primary school or less), the unemployment rate was 14.3 percent, versus 33.0 percent for youth with secondary education. This may appear counterintuitive, but it suggests a mismatch between the education system and the labor market. This will be discussed in further detail later. The recent results for those with a university education shows a slight decline to 25.7 percent unemployment, which again is higher than one would expect.²⁰ Finally, while youth-specific underemployment rates were not available, time related underemployment rates for the population overall went up from 29.9 percent in 2017 to 32.0 percent in 2018.²¹

¹⁷ Government of Rwanda. Rwanda Labour Force Survey. February, 2017.

¹⁸ National Institute of Statistics of Rwanda (NISR), Labour Force Survey ,Annual report, December 2018

¹⁹ National Youth Policy

²⁰ National Institute of Statistics of Rwanda (NISR), Labour Force Survey, Annual report, December 2018

²¹ National Institute of Statistics of Rwanda (NISR), Labour Force Survey, Annual report, December 2018

Composite measures of labor underutilization show the greatest gaps for those who live in rural areas, are female, and are between the ages of 16-30. Labor underutilization rates are highest for individuals with no education or primary education only, but they are significant for those with upper secondary education as well. The labor underutilization rates in the Rutsiro, Nyaruguru, and Muhanga districts are the highest in the country (above 70 percent) while Kicukiro, Kayonza, Gasabo and Huye are the districts with lower labor underutilization rates.²²

The relationship between education and employment is a complicated one. The patterns suggest that to some degree, the higher the level of educational attainment, the greater the risk of unemployment, with the greatest risk of unemployment among those with upper secondary education, at 26.5 percent, (this data includes non-youth as well, so the overall percentage is lower than the 33.0 percent noted above). This is followed by those with lower secondary level education at 18.1 percent. Those with a primary education and tertiary educational attainments share similar unemployment rates at 15.1 percent and 15.7 percent respectively. The rate for those with no educational attainment (less than primary school) is the lowest at 12.4 percent.²³ So the relatively few young people that are able to access tertiary education do experience the benefits in their employment rates, while the vast majority that only obtain secondary education do not.

A full third of the youth population was neither employed nor in education or training in 2018. About 33 percent of the youth population ages 16-30 fell into this group at the time of the 2018 Labour Force Survey. This rate was higher for young women (40.8 percent) than for young men (23.9 percent).²⁴

E. HEALTH AND TEENAGE PREGNANCY

Early pregnancy is slightly on the upswing and greatly impacts young women's long-term prospects for well-being. According to the 2015 DHS, 7 percent of young women ages 15-19 have begun childbearing (up from six percent in 2010). The rates are low at age 15 but accelerate each year, and by the age of 19, 21 percent of women have begun childbearing.²⁵ The rates of teenage pregnancy are highest in the East. Those with less education and those in the lowest wealth quintile tend to start childbearing earlier. Rwandan women aged 15-24 account for 47% of maternal deaths in the country.²⁶

While Rwanda's HIV prevalence is relatively low, many young people, especially girls, continue to be at risk of contracting the virus. Older adolescent girls (ages 18-19) are 10 times more likely to contract HIV than their male counterparts.²⁷ While 65% of young people have comprehensive HIV knowledge, UNICEF Rwanda has identified some key challenges to HIV prevention among youth that include:

- *Knowledge gaps:* Only 49 percent of males and 43 percent of females understand how to use condoms.
- *Availability of youth-friendly HIV prevention services:* Youth-friendly HIV prevention services attempt to prevent HIV by reducing risky behaviors, providing the relevant information and services in an

²² National Institute of Statistics of Rwanda (NISR), Labour Force Survey, Annual report, December 2018

²³ National Institute of Statistics of Rwanda (NISR), Labour Force Survey, Annual report, December 2018

²⁴ National Institute of Statistics of Rwanda (NISR), Labour Force Survey, Annual report, December 2018

²⁵ National Institute of Statistics of Rwanda (NISR). Demographic and Health Survey. Final Report. 2014-2015.

²⁶ Stravropoulou, Maria & Gupta-Archer, Nandini. [Adolescent Girls' Capabilities in Rwanda: The State of the Evidence](#). GAGE: Gender and Adolescence: Global Evidence. December, 2017.

²⁷ Bloom, S. S., Cannon, A., Negroustoueva, S. (2014). Know your HIV/AIDS epidemic from a gender perspective: Rwanda report. Chapel Hill, NC: Measure Evaluation.

enabling and protective environment for young people. Each district has only one (1) youth-friendly center that offers these services.

F. YOUTH WITH DISABILITIES

Rwanda has a favorable policy and legal environment for people with disabilities, having ratified a number of international and regional instruments, as well as the Optional Protocol to the Convention of the Rights of Persons with Disabilities in 2008. Currently, employment for people with disabilities is a priority area with a focus in the NEP (National Employment Programme). That said, people with disabilities still frequently face marginalization and stigma in all aspects of public life including basic accessibility.

Disability prevalence among youth in Rwanda was estimated based on the questions and results of the EICV5.²⁸ The total numbers of youth living with disabilities were estimated at around 14,000 people with a visual disability, 7,800 with a hearing disability, 13,000 with a physical disability, and more than 20,000 living with mental disability. There was no significant difference among youth with disabilities broken down by gender. A more nuanced assessment of disability that was gathered in Bugesera and Musanze by door to door survey, using a more widely accepted definition of “activity limitation,” revealed higher than previously reported disability prevalence rates of 8.6 percent in Bugesera and 14.7 percent in Musanze, with higher rates of disability among adults over children, (up to 18 years). In Musanze, the higher rates in adults may be attributed to the extended conflict in this part of the country and the impact on disabilities in older segments of the population. Generally, higher adult disability rates are considered a factor of aging.²⁹ Visual impairments were the most commonly identified.

G. LGBTI YOUTH

Rwanda is one of the few countries in East Africa without anti-sexuality laws, and the country has signed a United Nations joint statement condemning violence against LGBTI people. This legal framework is critically important but does not mean that LGBTI youth live openly or are free from discrimination. This assessment did not seek out significant information in the FGDs regarding the context and reality for LGBTI youth, but there are a few organizations, mostly in Kigali City, that serve and support the LGBTI community, including youth.

Young people who identify as members of the LGBTI community are particularly vulnerable. They have unique challenges in accessing healthcare, education, and work and are highly susceptible to homelessness. One landscape analysis confirms, “The outcome is almost always the same i.e. individuals are thrown out of their family homes due to actual or perceived sexual orientation and gender identity and gender expression. In such situations, LGBTI youth are forced to drop out of school due to financial and survival needs.”³⁰

H. DEFINING VULNERABILITY AND PRIORITY YOUTH COHORTS

When reviewing the demographics in the previous sections, it is clear that there are many circumstances that influence a young person’s life. There are also many different segments of youth with unique circumstances that may be defined by biological stages, personal identity, or cultural factors. One of the more useful ways to identify youth cohorts is to understand the relative assets they possess. The term

²⁸ Fifth Integrated Household Living Conditions Survey, Youth thematic report, 2017

²⁹ G Urimubenshi, JB Sagahutu, A Kumurenzi, A Nuhu, D Tumusiime, J Kagwiza. Profile of disability in selected districts in Rwanda. *African Journal of Physiotherapy and Rehabilitation Sciences*. Vol 7, No 1-2. 2015.

³⁰ Iradukunda, Irwin and Odoyo, Roselyn. Agaciro: A Landscape Analysis of the Human Rights of Sex Workers and LGBT Communities in Rwanda. UHAI EASHRI. Nairobi, Kenya. 2016.

“assets” is defined as the necessary resources, skills, and competencies to achieve desired outcomes. In Rwanda, some distinguishing features of various youth cohorts that are most relevant in understanding youth assets, or conversely defining vulnerability include the following: school completion or possessing a trade certificate, working or having work experience, possessing networks or family support, living in an urban setting with greater access to resources versus in a rural environment, being under or over the age of 25, gender, physical assets, (such as land, livestock or a phone), or disability status.

It is worth recognizing also that reaching the most vulnerable youth can be challenging. They are often outside of the fold of formal institutions such as schools and least likely to access available community resources. There are many different segments of vulnerable youth, but those who emerged from this assessment include:

- **Young women, including younger adolescents.** This includes those at risk for early pregnancy, those who are pregnant, and unmarried women with children.
- **Younger youth, especially the younger youth cohorts in the 10-14, 15-19, and/or 20-24 age bandings.** They generally have fewer assets and are statistically likely to be in a rural setting with less access to resources and opportunities. Drilling down further, in health activities, younger youth are likely considered 10-14 or 15-19, and should be the focus as they are the groups that may otherwise be more vulnerable.
- **Youth from poverty-affected families** (from the lowest two quintiles). Many FGDs identified youth from families who engage in subsistence farming as those most affected by poverty and a cycle of dependency. Literacy rates along with school attainment are likely to be lower. In 2013-14, 39% of adolescent girls were poor and 17% extremely poor.
- **Youth not in employment, education or training (NEETs).** This represents a full third of the youth population, with a higher proportion among females than males.
- **Youth living in rural areas.** It is apparent that rural youth have access to few training and education opportunities and less access to resources to build their future.
- **Youth with disabilities.** It is clear from the data and from the FGDs that youth with disabilities have unique challenges in accessing public services and spaces, are more vulnerable to exploitation, and are less likely to have opportunities to acquire assets.

One caveat should be noted. Young people with higher assets are often well-prepared to work as partners in development efforts and should not be dismissed, nor should this be discontinued. They can be important catalysts for future efforts. Rather, it is worth reviewing periodically the overall investment and youth cohorts that are benefiting from activities to ensure that key populations are receiving the bulk of program resources and attention.

IV. FINDINGS: YOUTH GOALS, ASPIRATIONS, PRIORITIES & BRIGHT SPOTS

Overall, the assessment affirms that young people have a clear and common set of goals for their futures. They envision self-sufficiency achieved through economic independence and the ability to provide for and support their families, and they see this path as most available to them through self-employment. Youth recognize that formal-sector jobs are rare, and while desirable, frequently out of reach.

While young people in Rwanda see what the future might hold and place faith in the goals they have as well as those laid out by the government, they also see a series of almost insurmountable obstacles that impede their progress and that of their peers.

In the focus group discussions, young people discussed challenges and obstacles to achieving their vision for becoming economically self-sufficient, with one major issue seen as translating technical training or skill-building opportunities into a viable form of income generation or gainful self-employment. They articulated this as an obstacle of access to financial services, credit, and a lack of collateral. However, when they are asked for more detail, the team implicitly noted that young people are often missing an array of supporting (and foundational) knowledge, skills, or assets; those include financial literacy, business development skills/services (BDS), and ongoing coaching/mentoring. Access to financial services seems to be a convenient way to describe this gap.

In the absence of a job or self-employment, young people reported that many of their peers turn to alternative means of coping, such as drug or alcohol

abuse, dropping out of school, and transactional sex resulting in early pregnancy. Many young people also discussed the challenges around the lack of family support that they and many of their peers encounter.

In addition to concerns about general youth satisfaction (see Box 1), a second question asked young people about other youth they know in their communities that have been most successful in obtaining employment, starting a business, or earning an income. Participants were asked to speculate on what contributed to the success of these young people. Was it particular education or training opportunities? What support did they have? Youth commonly responded that they thought young people were successful either due to family or individual connections, or because they had generally supportive families (financial and emotional). Success, then, was generally viewed as a pre-determined feature of some young peoples' lives rather than being dependent on hard work, training, or other educational opportunities. This seems to contribute to a plausible sense of hopelessness about individuals' abilities to move beyond their circumstances, despite many participants also stating that they believe young people can obtain their goals.

In addition to these broad findings, Annex C summarizes some of the main sector-specific themes and findings from the assessment.

Box 1: Youth Satisfaction: A Concern

When asked to rate in the simplest of terms whether they think young people in their community are generally satisfied, unsatisfied, or neutral, the answers were remarkably consistent:

- 43% indicated that people their age were generally unsatisfied.
- 57% said they were neutral (neither satisfied nor unsatisfied)
- Zero FGD participants of any age or location thought that people of their age are generally satisfied with their daily lives.

A. DIFFERENCES BY YOUTH COHORTS

In each of the focus group discussions, participants engaged in a priority ranking exercise in which they were asked to identify the aspects of life they thought were most important to a person’s well-being. The complete list is included in the table below. The groups, across ages and locations, all overwhelmingly identified “better livelihoods, business opportunities and jobs” as the most critical factor to well-being.

A few other distinguishing priorities became apparent across groups:

- Girls placed a much higher value on education as a means to achieving well-being than boys
- Boys placed a higher value on increased safety and security than did girls
- Rural youth assigned almost the same value to education as to livelihoods
- Younger participants (18-20) assigned the same value to education as to livelihoods
- Youth aged between 20-24 and 25-30 placed increasing value on livelihoods, with the latter group choosing it as a much higher priority than education
- The older youth age group (25-30) prioritized safety and security along with health, with education considered a lower priority.

Table 2. Illustrative sample of youth priorities ranking

What top two priorities do youth have in your community? What top two things would make a difference in improving the circumstances for youth in your community?				
	Males	Females	Total	Percent
Better livelihoods / business opportunities	50	71	121	34%
Increased education	19	51	70	20%
Increased safety & security	37	15	52	15%
Improved health	34	9	43	12%
Stronger connection with family/friends	19	16	35	10%
Improved spiritual life	8	14	22	6%
Improved participation	7	5	12	3%

B. LIVELIHOODS, SELF-EMPLOYMENT, BUSINESS OPPORTUNITIES

PRIORITIES IN LIVELIHOODS

Many of the youth that identified livelihoods as the most critical factor to well-being described it as being the key driver behind the rest of their obstacles or key to their success. It was a critical factor in whether they would be able to build a house or have a family. Conversely, they frequently described that a lack of viable livelihoods led youth to engage in transactional sex, early pregnancy, drug abuse, and fomented family conflict. Poverty was viewed by many young people as the root cause of many young peoples’ challenges. While education (via practical or technical skills training) is often described as a key component to achieving their livelihood goals, it is not by itself, viewed as sufficient.

“Better livelihood is a source of confidence.”

“With a better livelihood, you are valued in your family.”

“When you have better livelihood, you are financially independent and you have the ability to help others.”

-Young female aged 18-24, Kigali

“Youth have many ideas, and in our country, other sectors have increased, but job opportunities are still one of the biggest problems. Youth have strength to work but don’t have a place to apply their knowledge.”

- Young woman living with a disability, Kigali

“Youth need to become entrepreneurs and self-dependent. We need technical and vocational skills that make it possible to create our own jobs.”

- Young male aged 25-30, Kayonza

Access to youth-friendly finance (flexible, timely, low or no interest) is the most commonly cited need by youth as necessary for self-employment.

The Government of Rwanda has made some attempt to create youth finance mechanism/tools, but the results are uncertain and seem to have not been well adjusted to youth capacities and needs. The Business Development Fund Ltd. (BDF) was created in 2016 with the aim of providing SMEs with access to finance as well as credit guarantees. The fund works “with the financial institutions (Banks, MFIs and Saccos) to cover between 50% and 75% of collateral required by the lending institution.³¹”

In almost every focus group discussion, the BDF was brought up by participants as an intended resource for young people that aims to meet a critical need. However, when asked for more detail, youth did not know anyone who had successfully accessed funds or used the services to launch a business. They generally did not view it as a viable option or something that was accessible to young people in their community. The 25% collateral required by the fund was simply too much for many young people. In addition, what is identified by young people as a credit challenge appears to conceal a more nuanced skill gap. Considerable knowledge and skills are required to start a business beyond the basic technical skills a young person might acquire in TVET or informally. Developing a business model, managing money, entrepreneurship skills, and then more continued support are all ingredients of success and appear to be holes in youth’s skillset, above and beyond a lack of collateral or credit.

“BDF does not handle well the application of youth business projects.”

-25-30 year old males, Kigali City

Youth from all backgrounds are involved in income-generating activities, primarily self-employment activities in the informal sector, in order to support themselves and their families. Of the young people who participated in the focus group discussions, 19% indicated they were engaged in informal employment, while 65% indicated they were unemployed and looking for work. Those that indicated they are unemployed also mentioned a range of income- generating activities that youth they know engage in to make ends meet and to survive. These included activities such as driving bicycles, selling items on the street, or providing cleaning services. Many spoke of their concerns with

³¹ www.bdf.rw/guarantee-fund/

operating in the informal sector, as there is pressure to register businesses, pay taxes, and work within the formal economy more broadly. This creates another set of barriers they view as prohibitive.

Agriculture is prioritized as a viable and desired livelihood option in rural areas; urban and peri-urban youth desire “office work” or selling products or services in the informal sector as means of income generation. When speaking with youth in Kigali or peri-urban areas about desirable sectors or areas of work, they frequently dismissed agriculture as undesirable or untenable.³² One participant who had children spoke about the time and expense required before food is harvested as being unrealistic for feeding one’s family.

The EICV5 Thematic Report on youth states that 77.2% of youth work and that 16% are students. Of these groups, the largest segment of young people (45%) work as independent farmers as their main job. This represents a disconnect between urban youth’s aspirations and available income-generating opportunities. In more rural areas, many young people in the FGDs acknowledged that livelihoods related to agriculture held promise and opportunities. This was also true in districts where USAID agriculture-focused projects were implemented, such as Hinga Weze and Nguriza Nshore, both of which were mentioned as positive programs or resources.

Young people frequently cite skills as a critical factor for earning livelihoods. In addition to access to finance, the other factor youth identify as critical for self-employment are technical/trade skills. Many recognized that local training institutions such as TVETs and VTCs were good sources of these practical skills. Implicit in this discussion were a number of personality traits they said were critical factors to success. These include things such as “hard work,” “work ethic,” “being determined,” “risk-taking,” and “self-confidence.” While young people don’t label these as soft skills, they clearly fit the description of such.

Key informant interviews indicate that there is a greater need for private-sector engagement in youth employment and livelihood programs. This topic is discussed in greater detail later.

BRIGHT SPOTS IN YOUTH LIVELIHOODS

The Government of Rwanda has placed a high priority on and mobilized resources in support of youth employment. It has also successfully sensitized young people on the value and reality of self-employment as a key livelihood pathway. The National Employment Programme (NEP) aims to create a national framework coordinating skills training and finance initiatives with the goal of creating 200,000 non-farm jobs per year. A 2017 mid-term evaluation³³ found that NEP is promoting a combination of skills training for youth, business coaching/mentoring, and access to finance through BDF or a grant scheme. The Kora Wigire centers (formerly business development centers) are units in Youth Empowerment for Global Opportunity (YEGO) or other youth-services centers that present a promising avenue to provide these services. While NEP has put a clear strategy in place that operates at the national level and down to the district, it has a number of areas in which the services and outcomes can be improved. Defining or accounting for jobs created due to NEP is difficult, but as recently as 2017, beneficiaries have been primarily based in urban or peri-urban areas. Nevertheless, it provides a promising framework, and with continued decentralization, capacity-building

³² For more information on approaches to make careers in agriculture seem more viable to youth, see YouthPower Learning. Feed the Future Project Design Guide for Youth- Inclusive Agriculture and Food Systems: Volume I- Project Design. 2018.

³³ Sarah Gray, Charles Twesigye-Bakwatsa, David Muganwa, and Marcienne Umubyeyi. “[Mid-Term Evaluation of the National Employment Programme, Rwanda, Final Report March 2017.](#)” SIDA Decentralized Evaluation 2017:11. SIDA.

of service providers and BDAs, and greater involvement of the private sector as well as civil society, NEP may make significant strides in achieving greater youth employment outcomes.

Savings and loans groups are common

and valued. Young people who participated in focus group discussions consistently mentioned group savings and loan models as something that they consider a useful strategy for meeting day-to-day economic challenges, as well as a means of self-financing livelihood endeavors. Saving was also frequently identified as one of the habits or behaviors that contributed to their ability to achieve their goals. While challenges around trust and leadership were also mentioned, most of the FGD participants overall saw these as a bright spot in their financial well-being. They noted that group savings principles have been introduced into the education system, and some expressed their wish that it would be introduced at younger ages. Organizations that were mentioned as supporters of youth savings models include Caritas, CRS, AEE and ADRA.

A 2018 USAID CHAIN assessment of savings groups revealed that one opportunity to improve the support savings groups provide youth is to work with operators and financial institutions to develop youth-friendly products. As youth are more mobile than adults, they may be more likely to turn over in membership. This should be planned and accounted for in savings group design.³⁴

Box 5. Promising Example of Youth-developed and Youth-led Solutions to Development Challenges: IMIHANGO

Gerard Mporananayo is a recent University of Rwanda graduate who has developed and been working on his initiative, IMIHANGO, full-time for the past year. He has developed this model through the University of Rwanda's Center for Innovation in response to his understanding of business startup obstacles facing Rwandan young people.

IMIHANGO is a youth-led finance scheme which aims to work with young people in a group savings and business development model with two innovations. The first is that prior to providing support for access to finance by linking them to financial institutions, IMIHANGO does training and preparation for the groups to develop an entrepreneurial mindset, or as Gerard describes is, "to change their mentality." Secondly, the group savings are then invested into government bonds, which shifts the mindset of group savings for investment instead of (more commonly) savings for consumption. While all groups receive the training and support, they also offer a business competition where the five best projects receive startup funds.

The groups then work together on a business or investment plan, supported by IMIHANGO with a traditional array of BDS. If the group prepares an application for credit through BDF, then they receive continued coaching and support as they launch and nurture their business.

GAPS AND OPPORTUNITIES IN LIVELIHOODS

The BDF is designed to meet a critical need, but is not yet effective in realizing its potential. Young people in the FGDs had high expectations of the BDF and viewed it as a critical instrument in helping them achieve their livelihood goals. However, some of their expectations were misaligned with the role that the BDF can be expected to play and the array of services it can realistically provide.

In a key informant interview, an RDB staff member involved with the NEP and BDF discussed a number of challenges and transitions that the BDF had to make; the group added the requirement for some (25%) collateral in response to very low initial repayment rates. The BDF also faces the challenge of inadequate capacity and reach in meeting the demand for its services, but has also needed to pivot

³⁴ USAID. Rwanda Community Health and Improved Nutrition Project: Savings Group Assessment. August, 2018.

toward establishing more rigorous criteria which they believe will lead to greater economic sustainability.³⁵ At the same time, its areas of focus need to shift toward the secondary school graduates who won't attend university – youth that are not in education or training. BDF has previously been primarily reaching university graduates. An example of BDF's potential includes the agribusiness investment facility which has generated some jobs and now allows online submission of proposals.³⁶

The RDB staff member interviewed believes that startup kits for youth are starting to have an impact. In addition, cooperatives seem to have some success in accessing services and expanding their businesses (including a group of women street vendors and graduates from rehabilitation centers). When asked about influential stakeholders, the informant noted that a number of implementers are providing help to prepare young people for access to finance, including DOT Rwanda, World Vision, and EDC through USAID Akazi Kanoze and Huguka Dukore. The individual pointed out the collective action needed on the part of an array of stakeholders to help BDF realize its promise. As these efforts are all relatively new, there has not been a coordinated effort to streamline or standardize these practices.

It is important to expand access to demand-driven skills, entrepreneurship, work-based learning, apprenticeships, market linkages, and finance. USAID's efforts through first Akazi Kanoze and now through Huguka Dukore were repeatedly identified by FGD participants as well as by key informants as valuable, impactful, and relevant. The array of services addresses the critical skills needed by young people to access the labor market. EDC, through HDAK, has successfully integrated its array of work readiness interventions (financial fitness, personal development, work habits, and introduction to entrepreneurship) into the “youth employment ecosystem” in Rwanda and is a known resource that is filling a critical niche (supporting out-of-school youth with low assets).

The skills development that happens in the TVET institutions still reaches a relatively small segment of the overall youth population. Part of this comes down to the fact that as youth employment has risen to a national level priority, there are many different Government of Rwanda stakeholders that are responsible for various components of meeting the youth employment challenge (among them MINEDUC, MIINICOM, MINALOC, RDB and MIFOTRA). While MIFOTRA was the designated lead,³⁷ many of the more visible interventions have shifted to RDB, and there is still a need for improved coordination. USAID may consider working more closely with MINEDUC and RDB to build capacity at the district levels in their work not only in supporting educational institutions (TVETs and VTCs), but also as RDB rolls out components of the NEP and the Kora Wigire centers. This may allow for greater support in the development of youth business ideas and better preparation to access finance along with more support in the early stages of business development and investment.

Engaging the private sector more effectively will promote more workplace learning. Young people in FGDs as well as key informants all agree that they want more direct linkages with private-sector stakeholders to meet supply- and demand-side labor market needs. It is a reality that in rural areas, the private sector may be small, i.e. sole proprietor artisans or tradespeople. Young people want practical work experience and on-the-job training via attachments, but note that obtaining these positions is difficult and often transactional. Youth might have to pay for attachments or be required to

³⁵ More information about the more defined criteria as well as the refocusing of services can be found in MIGEPROF, “Women and Youth Access to Finance Program.”

³⁶ Under the Agribusiness Financing Investment Scheme, BDF targets recent secondary or university graduates for support in projects related to aquaculture projects, modernized livestock and agriculture farming, horticulture and agro-processing projects. <https://www.newtimes.co.rw/news/featured-bdf-moves-finance-60-agribusiness-projects-youth>

³⁷ World Bank. “Program-For-Results Information Document (PID) Concept Stage, Priority Skills for Growth (PSG).” 2017.

have other social assets or connections to obtain them. More assessment is needed to determine what incentives are compelling for private sector actors ranging from sole-proprietor businesses to SMEs and larger firms, to take on apprenticeships. The Private Sector Assessment may provide additional insights.

The 2015 Workplace Learning Policy defines the term *workplace learning* (WPL) as denoting all professional or occupational training and learning that takes place in a real workplace (and not in a training or higher education institution) and that is intentional.³⁸ This policy (noted by one key informant to be at this time still largely donor-driven rather than institutionalized into the public and private sector) advocates for the development and implementation of cooperative apprenticeship programs in partnership with the TVET sector while at the same time building capacity for more apprenticeship training. This presents an opportunity to expand practical training experience for youth.

C. EDUCATION

PRIORITIES IN EDUCATION

Youth place a high priority on practical, skill-based training that leads to self-employment. Again and again in the youth focus group discussions, young people stated that increasing access to vocational skills, especially in rural areas, was a high priority.

“With improved education you have an open mindset.”

“Education is the basis of a better livelihood in the future.”

-Young woman in the 20-24 age group, Musanze

Youth desire more hands-on learning at younger ages, (10-15). Youth wished that the basic education system incorporated more “practical” skills earlier. When asked about what things they wish were in place or that they wished they learned when they reflected back on their childhood, focus group participants emphasized practical skills. They wished they had experience with managing small projects (*“even if we had just one chicken to practice managing.”*) They note that participation in savings and loan groups is now taught in school, but they wish they had learned savings habits and financial literacy earlier in their lives.

Education quality (in basic education system) is a concern. Many FGD participants also noted that the switch to competency-based education in the school system has the promise to bring around more relevant education, but the promise is not yet fulfilled. Some participants noted that the low quality of English education (especially in rural schools), along with the minimal qualifications of teachers for the subjects they are teaching, reduces the benefit of schooling. While access to school in Rwanda is relatively good, the recent World Bank Human Capital Index shows the magnitude of the concern with the overall quality of education, (referenced also in the previous section).

“Education is not for all, especially in rural areas.”

Box 9. In their Own Words

“Suppose that you were in charge and could make changes to help young people like you achieve their goals and ambitions. What would you do?”

- Mobilize youth to work together
- Mobilize entrepreneurs to give jobs to the youth in their locality
- Increase vocational training and make it available at the sector level
- Mobilize youth to join their abilities and work together
- Have a follow-up plan for youth’s businesses.
- Encourage youth to participate in cooperatives

³⁸ Republic of Rwanda. National Policy on Workplace Learning to Prepare Rwandan Youth for Employment (Workplace Learning Policy). July 2015.

“Teachers don’t have skills in education, especially in rural areas.”

-20-24 year old young women, Musanze

“Once education is for all, it will improve skills and allow youth [to succeed] in job innovation.”

-20-30 year old young woman, Nyabihu

BRIGHT SPOTS IN EDUCATION

Technical, Vocational Education and training offers valued programs and skills currently, with an opportunity for continued improvement. The TVET system in Rwanda provides important skill-building training and is a critical part of the youth employment ecosystem. Many young people describe the technical skills they receive (i.e., hairdressing) in practical, favorable terms.

They viewed the training provided as mostly relevant and practical (Box 4). Some noted that they wished more technical training was available in rural areas. Their primary emphasis, or identified gap, was on finding ways to enhance, develop, or practice that skill after training to generate income or employment.

TVET system coordination among GOR and donors is exemplary. As all technical training institutions have recently come under the auspices of the MINEDUC via Rwanda Polytechnic and the Workforce Development Authority (WDA), including TVETs and IPRCs, it has allowed a more cohesive conversation about direction, standards, and quality. In addition, the TVET sub-sector working group (which is comprised of key GOR officials as well as donors) appears to be doing an excellent job of coordinating interventions while raising the overall quality of the system.

For example, GIZ focuses on specific sectors (hospitality, wood, creative areas, e-commerce, logistics, and ICT), while KOICA helps support systems strengthening with institutional quality standards and teacher training. When various key informants were asked about the role and niche of USAID (viewed through this lens as via Huguka Dukore’s work), the responses were favorable. They acknowledge that USAID was engaged in appropriate work with the right populations (targeting young people with low assets, attempting to reach greater scale). When pressed for ideas

Box 13. In Their Own Words

“How is education helping young people achieve their goals?”

- Language skills that promote effective communication for youth enable them to adapt in different environments and countries
- Education is helping open youth’s minds
- Educated youth, even though many of them are unemployed, have qualifications that bring hope that they will find jobs sooner or later
- Promotion of TVET is helping technically skilled youth to get or create jobs in the informal sector

“How could children ages 10-15 be helped to make a successful transition to young adulthood?”

- Strengthen and promote work readiness programs
- Improve the quality of education
- Give them fundamental technical and vocational skills
- Enrich their talents that might be fruitful in the future

Box 17. Promising Example

Swisscontact works specifically in the Western Province and has a holistic model that has a forthcoming evaluation. The six schools that Swisscontact supports work toward five outcome areas: skills development, quality of training, capacity promotion (school management, local authorities and private sector), certification, and entrepreneurship in formal and informal sectors. In addition, they provide short courses to vulnerable groups, facilitate rapid market labor assessments (RMAs) to train and sensitize young people on labor market demand, and implement an apprenticeship program. It is clear this model is likely more intensive than many that are working on a larger scale. However, they report an employment rate of 81% of participants, which is higher than national tracer survey rates.

and recommendations, one key informant noted that USAID could do more in collaboration with the Government of Rwanda to help build more capacity and institutionalize their work.

GAPS AND OPPORTUNITIES IN EDUCATION

Qualified, trained teachers, (especially in rural areas) need to be better prepared for the demands of competency-based education as well as English education. A number of focus group participants spoke of the challenges of the basic education system, specifically the need for more qualified teachers in rural areas. They noted that class sizes are large and teachers are expected to teach very full schedules. Many English language teachers in particular are not qualified to teach the competencies.

Integration of soft skills (creative thinking, problem-solving) into teacher training and school pedagogy should occur. Young people in the FGDs often brought up the desire to have education or training based on cultivating their talents. They saw this to be a valuable opportunity to create a sustainable livelihood and believe it to be something that motivates them to learn and create. Their arguments were rational: They saw opportunity in creative endeavors (sports, music, artisan pursuits, among others), and as critical in developing a new economy. Young people recognize that a future career that leverages their talents also comes with the need for accompanying skills such as the ability to solve problems, create opportunities, communicate well, work as a team, and other traditional soft skills.

Teachers are one of the key service providers that have an opportunity to cultivate youth, help them realize their promise, and build on their talents. Teachers can also impart optimism, skills, agency, and help young people develop their abilities to reach their goals and to lead others.

Engaging parents. Across all groups of young people, parent support came up as a critical component of young peoples' success and as a key factor in whether education was pursued and valued. This was described in two primary ways, the first being that parents felt protective of young people and wanted to keep them engaged in familiar, low-risk pursuits, such as agriculture conducted in a traditional manner. Some participants spoke of parents prohibiting their daughters from pursuits – either school- or work-related – that would keep them out in the evening or place them in unfamiliar settings. Repeatedly, youth stated that parents' "primitive mindsets" limited the type of future possibilities they saw for their sons and daughters.

The second way in which youth spoke of parents' influence related to family conflict, violence or neglect; they thought that it was not uncommon for some parents to not provide for young peoples' basic needs or support them in attending school. Some groups spoke of family conflict at home causing young people to leave and become subject to high-risk behaviors, such as drug or alcohol abuse or early pregnancy. They subsequently don't stay in school or pursue education.

Many young people participate in school-based or community clubs. When youth were asked about how they engage with their peers or develop skills informally, many quickly delivered lists of school-based or community clubs in which they participate. These offer a variety of knowledge and skills while creating safe, supportive environments for young people in which they get to exercise some agency while developing their assets. These ranged from HIV to savings clubs, debate, girls' spaces, or youth corners. More will be said about youth-friendly spaces, but these clubs – regardless of where they meet – present a significant opportunity to cultivate youth leadership, develop relevant practical and soft skills, and allow young people to explore their life transitions while they build the nurturing connections that are critical to their well-being as well as to reaching their aspirations.

D. HEALTH

PRIORITIES IN HEALTH

Teen or early pregnancy is a dominant concern across all cohorts of youth. While the rates of early pregnancy are lower in Rwanda than in neighboring countries, it was still identified as an urgent concern on the part of young people. And indeed, early pregnancy rates have gone up to 7.3 percent according to the 2014/2015 DHS (from 6.1 percent in the five years preceding the survey). Approximately 45 out of 1,000 girls between 15-19 will become pregnant. The unmet need for family planning is high. Youth across all cohorts frequently named early pregnancy as one of the key obstacles for young women to achieve their goals. In addition, the added dynamic of young women engaging in transactional sex as a means of supporting themselves or as a means to achieve other goals was also a frequently cited concern.

A recent study looked at risk factors for teen pregnancy using 2015 DHS data.³⁹ The study found that being between the ages of 17 and 19 was a risk factor, but that those who had secondary or higher education were less likely to have a teenage pregnancy, as were those who had never been married or were in a union. Strikingly, those using a contraceptive method were more likely to have a teenage pregnancy than not, (though this was found to involve contraceptive use after their first child). Finally, religious affiliation, province, literacy, knowledge of a condom source and ability to access it, along with access to media, all were shown to not be significant risk reduction factors.

While both boys and girls mentioned early pregnancy as a concern, it was primarily voiced as a problem for girls or young women. However, sexual violence may be a primary driver. Concerns around early pregnancy came up in focus groups both for boys and girls across the age cohorts. Many youth spoke of it as a barrier to completing educational goals or an impediment in being able to build a successful livelihood. It also causes many young people to remain stuck in a cycle of dependency and poverty. When groups discussed the dynamics and possible methods to develop solutions for avoiding or reducing early pregnancy, they often did so with an emphasis on increasing knowledge of girls in order to avoid pregnancy. It was not viewed as something that particularly affected young men. (The other implication was that becoming pregnant was something that was within the control of young women).

The dynamics of early pregnancy and sexual violence demand further analysis. One 2016 rapid assessment in 10 districts found that 49% of teenagers get pregnant from their peers (colleagues in the school), 20% from family friends, 17% from strangers, 6% from employers, 4% from family members, 2% from tutorials, (teachers) and 1% from local leaders. The same study also highlighted that 75% got pregnant related to sexual violence, 15% through voluntary sexual intercourse and 10% not identified.⁴⁰

Finally, when asked about access to family planning, a number of female participants noted that family planning is something that is for married women, not necessarily for unmarried adolescents.

“Youth believe that family planning is not relevant to them. They think it is for adult women.”

-Young woman in the 18-24 age group, Kigali

Drug and alcohol abuse was a close runner-up among health concerns for young people. Many FGD participants raised concerns that youth in their communities, either due to family conflicts or

³⁹ Hakizimana, Dieudonne, Logan, Jenae, and Wong, Rex. “Risk Factors for Pregnancies Among Females Age 15 to 19 in Rwanda: A Secondary Data Analysis of the 2014/2015 Rwanda Demographic and Health Survey (RDHS). University of Health Equity, Rwanda. Journal of Management and Strategy. Vol 10, No. 2, Special Issue 2019.

⁴⁰ CLADHO-KNH. “Report on Early/Unwanted Pregnancy For Under 18 Years in 10 Districts of Rwanda.” Kigali, 2016.

hopelessness around employment opportunities, turned to drugs and alcohol as a means of coping. This was mentioned in rural groups as well as among peri-urban and urban participants.

This finding is confirmed by a 2015 study of Rwandan youth ages 14-25 which found 34 percent of youth had used alcohol in the last month. It also found that 8.5 percent smoked tobacco products, 0.2 percent used glue as a drug, and 0.1 percent used other drugs such as diazepam. Over half of youth indicated they had used a psychoactive substance at some time in their lives, with a higher rate for males than females.⁴¹

The lack of specifically youth-friendly services, (timely, confidential, and flexible) was frequently mentioned as a significant barrier to young people accessing health care, screening, and contraceptives. Many young people cited the lack of confidentiality as an undermining factor in seeking health care at the village health center or via community health workers. The desire for “safe spaces and places” was frequently echoed in conversations around health care access.

“We are not comfortable with health centers services when discussing secret issues because nurses are from our neighborhood.”

-Young men aged 25-30, Kayonza

Closely related, when asked about mental health services, youth indicated that confidentiality remains a central challenge. “Youth need professional counselors to believe in and feel comfortable with, because when they tell their private life, they go and tell their parents.” (20-24 year old young woman, Musanze.) When asked more broadly about who they seek support from, participants mentioned a variety of community leaders and peers, including faith leaders and youth leaders, among others.

Youth wish that comprehensive sexual and reproductive health education was more widely available for younger adolescents (ages 10-15). This sentiment was also shared in key informant interviews in the districts. While sexual and reproductive health is introduced in secondary school, many thought that this is too late and it needs to start between the ages of 9-11 (the assumption being that young girls become pregnant because of lack of knowledge). Implicit in this desire may also be ways to reduce sexual coercion or violence through education.

Youth with disabilities also cite the need for comprehensive sexual and reproductive health education and services. Youth with disabilities indicated that this is an area in which adults often don't perceive sexual and reproductive health as a need, but in fact may end up putting many young people with disabilities at risk of “being taken advantage of.”

Other priority health services that youth indicated were valued included:

- Sanitation services, including both menstrual health and basic sanitation provided at schools and health clinics
- Nutrition program (especially for pregnant girls) and food security
- Reproductive health services (both boys and girls mentioned this)
- Health screening programs (HIV, hepatitis)

⁴¹ Kanyoni et al. Prevalence of Psychoactive Substance Use Among Youth in Rwanda. BMC Research Notes (2015) 8:190 DOI 10.1186/s13104-015-1148-2

- Provision of health insurance
- Circumcision services
- Substance abuse counselling (drugs, alcohol, tobacco, other)
- Counselling. Youth that had access to confidential counselling services for mental health or general health counselling mentioned this as valuable.
- Sports clubs
- Isange One Stop Centre (Rwandan Police initiative to support victims of GBV and child abuse with comprehensive support)

BRIGHT SPOTS IN HEALTH

Youth-friendly centers (some of which are USAID-funded) are creating welcoming, trusted sources of service delivery. These centers offer youth valuable services in a confidential and flexible manner, while also serving as community hubs offering recreational/arts activities, and as such are quite popular among young people. Focus group participants in Huye were notably strong advocates of the youth-friendly health center in their region. They cited the value of the services, how trusted the staff were, and the range of activities (crafts, sports, music, etc.) offered by the center as elements that made it a place which is frequented by young people. Similarly, they also spoke of the range of services they relied on the center for, including screening, condoms, reproductive health, and circumcision campaigns.

USAID investments in vulnerable youth addressing critical needs (OVC programming and DREAMS). While the health sector of USAID may not have a specifically labeled “youth program,” it deserves mention that both the OVC and DREAMS programs incorporate most of the elements of more comprehensive, systemic and positive approaches to youth development.

USAID’s youth-focused health programs are valued by focus group participants that are aware of them. In Kigali, USAID’s DREAMS was specifically mentioned as an important resource by focus groups comprised of males aged 25-30 as well as women aged 18-24. When asked what they considered “the most effective and influential” programs, the male participants mentioned Imbuto Foundation’s work on school reintegration for young mothers and USAID’s Twiyubake. While it was not possible to discern which FGD participants were direct beneficiaries of these activities, those that knew of these programs spoke highly of the comprehensive assistance they offered.

E. SAFETY AND SECURITY

PRIORITIES IN SAFETY AND SECURITY

Youth placed safety and security as a high priority for well-being; they frequently noted that it is a necessary pre-condition for all other areas of life. When asked about the factors that help a person feel like they can achieve their potential, security was often mentioned as foundational. “Someone [who is] satisfied has peace, safety and security, a family, and can afford his/her basic needs.” (young man in the 25-30 year age bracket, Nyabihu). In the priority ranking exercise, it emerged as a higher priority for young men than it did for young women. Fifteen percent of participants overall selected it as one of the highest two priorities, however, 21 percent of males selected it as the highest priority, while only 8 percent of females did the same.

“Without safety and security, someone is not guaranteed well-being.”

“No dreams are achievable without security and safety.”

-Young men, Musanze

“There is security in our country, if you start a business there is a chance for achieving your goals.”

“Security makes other goals achievable.”

“Well-being starts from safety and security.”

“Human beings need safety and security to safeguard their fortune.”

-Young men aged 25-30, Nyabihu

What is not clear is whether this was identified as a priority due to a perceived need or gap in this area or as a result of the messaging young people have received in their lifetime. With the genocide as the backdrop of all young Rwandan’s lives, there is a high priority placed on the value of security in all aspects of Rwandan life.

F. YOUTH PARTICIPATION & CIVIC ENGAGEMENT

PRIORITIES IN PARTICIPATION AND ENGAGEMENT

Young people across all cohorts spoke of multiple opportunities to participate in community life; however, most agreed that young people had few opportunities for agency or to develop leadership roles. When asked about opportunities to participate in community life, the example of Umuganda, (monthly community service) was frequently offered as a way in which young people contribute to their communities. Other community works projects mentioned included sanitation projects, church efforts, and support of vulnerable families. Most of these were described as efforts youth were directed to assist with, rather than youth-led or initiated. When FGD participants’ reflections are reviewed in the context of Hart’s Ladder of Youth Participation, (Figure 4) most of the activities youth described would be considered “assigned but informed.” Conversely, many youth spoke of the desire to have more opportunities to participate in youth-initiated activities involving shared decisions with adults.

Some FGD participants mentioned that youth felt more motivated to participate in community activities when they have greater leadership roles. “We like being involved in civic activities when we take our own initiative,” said an older male participant. They also note some of the obstacles they encounter in community participation, such as that parents do not encourage youth to get involved in civic society because of an emphasis on household work or income-generating activities.

“Youth should be the ones who make decisions in youth-oriented projects and decision-making bodies.”

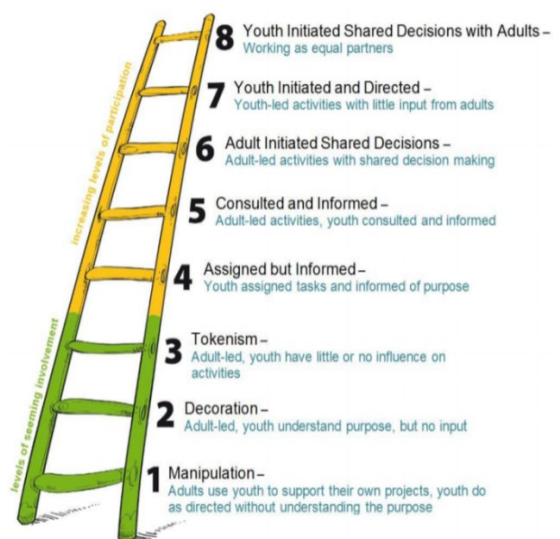
“Youth should be given equal priority in decision-making bodies as adults.”

“Youth-oriented programs are managed by adults who literally don’t understand youth and are not well-informed.”

-Young men aged 25-30, Kigali

Youth with disabilities identify specific challenges with participation and engagement. Young men and women that participated in focus groups and have disabilities brought up specific challenges they have with being viewed as capable and contributing to community efforts. Several

Figure 4: Hart’s Ladder of Youth Participation



mentioned being sidelined at events, noting that “youth with disabilities are not considered.” Another stated that older people’s attitudes “marginalize and isolate youth with disabilities.”

BRIGHT SPOTS IN YOUTH ENGAGEMENT

Safe Spaces and Places offer a key asset to promote youth engagement. Youth centers (YEGO centers, youth-friendly corners, and similar) offer places where young people clearly feel some ownership and on which they place a high value. When staffed with trusted adults and/or peer leaders, these are key resources that can be leveraged to both a) provide critical knowledge and skill-building activities (health, employment, or civic engagement) and b) create an environment where youth leadership can be cultivated and practiced. Young people already care about the development challenges that impact their lives. If afforded the opportunity and support, they can identify and mobilize around actions that enable them to work toward addressing problems. It is important to note that safe places and spaces don’t need to be physical. Young people also reported on numerous clubs and groups in which they are involved, like HIV/AIDS clubs, volunteer clubs, English, debate, church groups, girls’ clubs, etc. One of the critical questions still to be answered is to identify the adults and/or peer leaders that can help create these environments and cultivate these skills.

The National Youth Council (NYC) provides a structure for youth representation at all levels of community life, at the national level but also the district, sector, and cell levels. Young people are generally aware of their NYC representative, and in many cases rely on them as a source of information and resources. Feedback on this type of representation was mixed. Some groups felt like this was a good representation of their priorities and interests. Others felt that this was often more symbolic, and the NYC representative was more directive than responsive. In meeting with a national representative from the National Youth Council, they were minimally informed about the role and activities of USAID projects in the country. Under the auspices of the Ministry of Youth, the NYC is the official mechanism for youth participation and engagement in Rwanda.

G. FAMILY LIFE & WELL-BEING

PRIORITIES IN FAMILY LIFE & WELL-BEING

Parents are key drivers for youth well-being. When asked about challenges that keep young people from achieving their goals, youth across all cohorts and locations and in virtually all focus groups mentioned unsupportive, neglectful, or abusive behavior by parents as a primary obstacle in their lives. Just as often, they described the restrictive behavior of parents (i.e., not allowing them to study what they want, to pursue their talents, work) as an impediment to their aspirations. They frequently used the term “primitive minds” (translated) to refer to parents. At the same time, parents were mentioned as a critical factor to achieving well-being or meeting one’s goals.

“Irresponsible parents don’t care about our future; many parents are drunkards that spend money on alcoholic drink instead of supporting our life projects.”

“Parents are not supportive in cultivating our talents and career development due to their primitive mindset.”

“We are always compelled to do what is in line with their beliefs, values and cultural norms.”

“They are always likely to choose for us”

-Males aged 25-30, Nyabihu

These findings are reinforced with the Violence Against Children and Youth Survey⁴² which includes many key findings on physical and emotional violence, such as: 37% of females and 60% of males aged 18-24 had experienced physical violence prior to age 18; 12% of females and 17% of males aged 18-24 reported experiencing emotional violence by a parent or caregiver prior to age 18. Among them, 97% of participants (both genders) experienced multiple incidents; and 24% of females and 10% of males aged 18-24 had experienced sexual violence prior to age 18.

⁴² Republic of Rwanda, Ministry of Health. Violence Against Children and Youth Survey: Findings from a National Survey, 2015-2016. Kigali, Rwanda 2017.

V. CONCLUSION

This document offers a detailed look at the hopes, assets, challenges, and realities faced by Rwandan youth in 2019. It reviews the key stakeholders and makes recommendations for those that present the best opportunity for USAID collaboration in order to meet pressing youth priorities. This report also offers a number of priority recommendations based on the results of the youth assessment that USAID/Rwanda might consider as it develops its next CDCS. Of these, the Mission may select to act on some or all.

Depending on the number and vigor with which the Mission acts on the recommendations included in this report, USAID/Rwanda and its implementing partners may anticipate the following broad outcomes:

- More consistent and systematic use of evidence-based and effective youth programming within USAID/Rwanda in all sectors;
- Improved coordination, efficiency, and sustainability of youth-focused programs within USAID and across USAID and other donors, GOR, and stakeholders;
- Improved implementation, oversight, and leadership capacity of key local GOR stakeholder agencies and offices;
- Increased sense of belonging, connectedness, and constructive engagement among Rwandan youth;
- Improved employment, employability, health, and engagement among Rwandan youth;
- Increased long-term and sustainable employment opportunities for Rwandan youth; and
- Increase in satisfaction and a decrease in key needs of Rwandan youth.

Using the recommendations in this report and bringing to bear its significant expertise, USAID/Rwanda can make the strategic investments necessary to develop and/or scale up the systems, infrastructure, and programs needed to foster inclusive development. Each of these efforts can help provide Rwandan youth with the skills required to build the country's economy and transform itself to succeed in the 21st century.

VI. ANNEX A: PRIMARY AND SECONDARY RESEARCH QUESTIONS

A. PRIMARY RESEARCH QUESTIONS

The following sets of questions served as the primary framework for the assessment:

1. What are youth (defined in Rwanda as aged 16-30) life goals?
 - a. How do the goals differ for urban vs. rural youth, male vs. female youth, and in-school vs. out-of-school?
 - b. Who are the most vulnerable youth populations in Rwanda, and what are their unique needs? (differentiated by gender, sexual orientation, age, disability, urban/rural, years of education, wealth quintile)
2. What challenges do youth face in reaching their potential?
 - a. What are the contextual risks and barriers that hinder or impede youth development? Contextual risks may include political, economic, social, security, and environmental risks.
 - b. For those young people who may be dissatisfied, what are the sources of their frustrations?
 - c. What are the youths' biggest concerns about their future?
3. What is working well to support youth in Rwanda and enable them to actualize their potential economically, civically, politically, and socially, with good health? What opportunities do these bright spots (and remaining gaps) present for USAID?
 - a. What promising policies, structures, programs, and partnerships currently exist that could be learned from, scaled up, and/or borrowed?
 - How effective have investments by the GOR and other stakeholders in youth development been to date?
 - Have the policies and strategies in place to address youth development issues been effective?
 - How are children aged 10-15 being prepared to transition to the youth age?
 - Who have been the key stakeholders in youth development, what are their roles, and how effective have their investments been?
 - How effective have efforts to coordinate the various interventions in youth development been?
 - To what extent have youth participated in design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of activities implemented by the stakeholders mentioned above?
 - What types of interventions/sectors have the potential to improve youth human capital?
 - b. What is working well and what hasn't worked in education?
 - How do youth feel their education has prepared them for the decisions and challenges they face in their lives, or not?
 - What do they identify as barriers to education? How does this differ for male and female youth and urban and rural youth?
 - c. What has worked and what hasn't worked in youth employment and livelihoods improvement programs (micro, small, and medium enterprise development, increased farm productivity, agriculture service provision, etc.)?
 - What are the red flags in the current situation of youth livelihoods that need to be addressed in the immediate term?

- Which public and other donor resources and strategies have been applied inappropriately?
- d. What challenges and opportunities do youth experience in their civic engagement?
 - How do these challenges differ by age, gender, disabilities, and/or other demographic information or marginalization?
- e. What factors influence the health and health-seeking behaviors of Rwanda's youth cohorts?
 - Are youth-friendly and gender-sensitive services offered consistently by the health sector, and if so, what makes them youth-friendly? If not, what needs to be changed to make them youth-friendly and gender-sensitive?
 - What information is available to youth on health issues and services? What are the gaps?
 - Which health services are in the highest demand by youth?
 - What programs exist in Rwanda to support the health needs and healthy behaviors of these youth cohorts? How well are these programs and strategic approaches working in practice?
 - What is the status of adolescent mental health services in the country? Are there strategies or policies that support mental health interventions? Who are the actors/stakeholders?
 - What are the available interventions to address problems related to drug abuse among youth?

B. SECONDARY RESEARCH QUESTIONS:

OVERALL

- How has the GOR invested in youth? What are the intentional investments that benefit youth?
- How effective have been USAID/Rwanda's investments in youth development?
- To what extent do USAID youth-related programs and activities (last nine years) include explicit interventions to improve gender equality? What have we learned about their effectiveness to achieve gender equality?
- To what extent have youth participated in design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of USAID activities?
- Who have been the key stakeholders and their roles in youth development?
- How effective have been the strategies in place to address youth development issues?
- Are there strategies to address development issues for younger youth aged 10-15?
- How are youth currently contributing to economic growth? Civic engagement? Health programs? Enterprise development? How would they like to engage?
- How does unemployment and underemployment impact young people in Rwanda?
- What rules, laws and policies impede or support full engagement of youth civically and economically?
- What relationships and networks are or can advance youth engagement and participation?
- How have GOR policies promoted gender equality?
- What are youth's perceptions on how GOR policies have promoted gender equality?

YOUTH DEMOGRAPHICS AND DYNAMICS

Findings can be drawn from available literature and included in the background section of the youth assessment report.

What are the defining structure and characteristics of youth cohorts in Rwanda? What are the prevailing differences between male and female, urban and rural, in school and out-of-school youth and age cohorts?

- What do these youth cohorts express as their priorities and ambitions? What are their greatest frustrations? How are these ambitions and frustrations expressed?
- What are the statistics on youth employment and unemployment in Rwanda? What are the primary occupations of youth, and how does this vary by youth cohort, education level, and demographic?
- What youth-led and/or youth-oriented networks exist in Rwanda? What has allowed some networks to be effective and others not?
- What percentage of youth has access to computers? Internet? Mobile phones? How do youth use the internet? How does this differ among male and female youth? How do innovation hubs and schools help extend ICT skills to youth?

GOING TO WORK

- What are the aspirations of Rwandan youth with regard to employment/self-employment/livelihoods disaggregated by age cohort, gender, and rural/urban location? What are their main opportunities in accessing employment? What are the key barriers to getting employed?
- What opportunities exist for youth in the democracy & governance, economic growth, health and education sectors? What can be done to make employment in the agriculture sector a viable livelihood option for youth?
- What vocational, entrepreneurship, employability and life skills training institutions/programs exist in Rwanda, and are these accessible to most youth? Are these institutions/programs adequate as viewed by the youth and are they responsive to labor market demands?
- What opportunities and challenges do youth face when accessing, staying and completing vocational and entrepreneurship programs?
- What opportunities and challenges are faced by youth in accessing credit and building savings?
- To what extent are youth moving between rural and urban areas and/or migrating to other countries or regions to find employment?
- What partners could USAID work with in the area of youth development and employment?

LEARNING FOR WORK AND LIFE

- How do youth feel their education has prepared them for the decisions and challenges they face in their lives, or not?
- What do they identify as barriers to education? How does this differ for male and female youth?
- What opportunities and resilience factors positively influence youth access to safe, quality education?
- How do youth and potential employers perceive the relevance of knowledge and skills provided through education opportunities?
- What opportunities and resilience factors positively influence young people's ability to persist in and complete a minimum basic education?

EXERCISING CITIZENSHIP

- What challenges and opportunities do youth experience in their civic engagement? How do these challenges differ by age, gender, disabilities, and/or other demographic information or marginalization?
- What informal or traditional structures exist at community level that involve youth in civic engagement activities?
- What opportunities are there for supporting leadership development of young people?

FAMILY LIFE

- How are families engaged in supporting youth, their education, employment and civic engagement?
- What are the main programs that are focused on strengthening family communication?
- How are families involved in protecting youth against violence and sexual exploitation?

GROWING UP HEALTHY

- What factors influence the health and health-seeking behaviors of Rwanda's youth cohorts?
- Are youth-friendly and gender-sensitive services offered consistently by the health sector; if so, what makes them youth-friendly? If not, what needs to be changed to make them youth-friendly and gender-sensitive?
- What information is available to youth on health issues and services? What are the gaps?
- What positive and negative health behaviors characterize Rwanda's youth cohorts? Are there significant differences between youth cohorts, or between male and female cohorts?
- Which health services are in the highest demand?
- Where are the biggest gaps in terms of quality?
- What programs exist in Rwanda to support the health needs and healthy behaviors of these youth cohorts? How well are these programs and strategic approaches working in practice?
- What are the main drivers of violence against children/youth?
- What is the status of adolescent mental health services in the country?
- What mental health problems are common among young people in Rwanda?
- What are the available interventions to address these problems? Are there strategies or policies that support mental health interventions? Who are the actors/stakeholders?
- How can youth be more actively engaged in the implementation of health programs?

INSTITUTIONAL AND POLICY INFRASTRUCTURE FOR SUPPORTING YOUTH

- What other donors, international and local non-governmental organizations (NGOs), and community-based organizations (CBOs) have youth-centered activities in Rwanda? What have been their experiences and accomplishments? What lessons learned and/or recommendations do they have for potential USG youth programming?
- What institutions, structures, programs and/or policies has the GOR set up to address youth issues in Rwanda? How do these institutions or ministries collaborate to address youth issues?
- What is the capacity of Rwandan institutions (e.g schools, NGOs, CBOs, relevant government agencies) to support and engage youth and/or respond to their needs?

VII. ANNEX B: METHODOLOGY DETAILS

A. DATA COLLECTION

The assessment process consisted of several data collection methods:

- a desk review of over 100 secondary sources; and
- a field visit to five districts in all five provinces, as prioritized by USAID: that included Kigali (Kigali), Huye (South), Musanze (North), Niabahu (West), and Kyonza (East)
 - 24 focus group discussions (FGDs) with 180 male and female youth ages 18-30;
 - 23 individual (or small group) interviews with 30 key informants (KIs) from the Government of Rwanda (GOR), international donors, USAID staff, as well as national and international non-governmental organizations (NGOs) implementing youth programs across Rwanda.

LITERATURE REVIEW AND SECONDARY DATA COLLECTION

The YouthPower Learning Team completed a document review from previous (approximately from the past five years), current USAID/Rwanda, and other stakeholder and donor work plans, program descriptions, assessments and evaluations integrating or dedicated to youth programming in Rwanda. USAID assisted in compiling known materials for the team such as the 2014 USAID/Rwanda Akazi Kanoze Scale and Sustainability Study. The review also included data sets such Rwanda Demographic and Health Surveys, the PEPFAR funded Violence Against Children and Youth Survey, peer review articles, and other literature, as appropriate, related to youth development in Rwanda. These documents, and others already generated by the YouthPower Learning assessment team, served as references to both respond to the three primary research questions and associated secondary questions, as well as informed the final data collection tools. They provided key contextual and demographic information for framing and interpreting findings from youth focus group discussions and key informant interviews.

PEER-LED FOCUS GROUP DISCUSSIONS, AGES 18-30

The YouthPower Learning Team completed systematic discussions with groups of youth as the core approach for primary data collection and participatory assessment. The YouthPower Learning Team actively engaged youth as protagonists throughout the research design, data-gathering, and analysis. Engagement of youth was a key objective of the assessment. The YouthPower Learning Team collected primary data through 24 focus group discussions (FGDs) with separate male and female groups of “non-elite” youth ages 18-30, living in peri-urban and rural areas in the six USAID-supported districts. Dedicated focus group discussions with near-peer youth ages 18-19 were used to capture experiences of younger youth in the 15-17 age range. The YouthPower Learning assessment team used purposive sampling to identify between eight and ten same-sex and age-specific individuals for each FGD. The YouthPower Learning Team also made every effort to ensure that participants within focus groups have similar age, sex, and socio/economic/demographic characteristics, while simultaneously ensuring that FGDs participants represented a variety of backgrounds, including youth with disabilities, where possible.

To identify locations for data collection, the team selected at least one district from each Province, with direction of USAID. Within each selected district the YouthPower Learning team selected youth for the FGDs through *purposive sampling* (prior to the data collection exercise) with help from USAID implementing partners and local government, (mayor’s offices). See table A1 for the schedule that includes research locations. Specifically, the assessment team sought to include youth within the age and sex categories (inclusion criteria) who are both *willing to participate* and to *freely share their perspectives and expertise*. The YouthPower Learning Team allotted enough time for each session to give youth the space to “open up” and speak honestly in front of the facilitator. The analysis made every effort to

employ creative approaches that use youth to help facilitate these sessions and support the analysis. This served to build the capacity among the youth researchers as well as deepen the analysis and assessment.

Table A1: Field Assessment Schedule

Date	Day	Location	Activity	Participants
April 24, 2019	Wednesday	Kigali	KII	Katie Green, Emmanuel Bagaye and Bill Potter
April 24, 2019	Wednesday	Kigali	KII	Katie Green, Emmanuel Bagaye and Jean Marie Ntakirutimana
April 24, 2019	Wednesday	Kigali	KII	Katie Green, Emmanuel Bagaye and John Kalenzi
April 24, 2019	Wednesday	Kigali	KII	Katie Green, Emmanuel Bagaye and Alimas Hakizimana
April 25, 2019	Thursday	Kigali	KII	Katie Green, Emmanuel Bagaye and Tona Isibo
April 25, 2019	Thursday	Kigali	KII	Katie Green, Emmanuel Bagaye and Dario Devale
April 25, 2019	Thursday	Kigali	KII	Katie Green, Emmanuel Bagaye and Robert Mwesigwa
April 26, 2019	Friday	Kigali	KII	Katie Green and Emmanuel Ntagozera
April 26, 2019	Friday	Kigali	Training	Assessment Team
April 26, 2019	Friday	Kigali	Pilot FGD	Assessment Team
April 27, 2019	Saturday	Kigali/Kimisagara	FGD	Female, Age 25-30
April 27, 2019	Saturday	Kigali/Nyakabanda	FGD	Male, Age 25-30
April 29, 2019	Monday	Nyarugenge	FGD	Female, Age 20-24/ Male, Age 25-30
April 29, 2019	Monday	Nyarugenge	FGD	Female, Age 20-24/ Male, Age 25-30
April 30, 2019	Tuesday	Huye	FGD	Female, Age 20-24/ Male, Age 18-19
April 30, 2019	Tuesday	Huye	FGD	Female, Age 18-19/ Male, Age 20-24
May 1, 2019	Wednesday	Musanze	FGD	Female, Age 20-24/ Male, Age 20-24
May 1, 2019	Wednesday	Musanze	FGD	Female, Age 20-24/Male, Age 20-24
May 2, 2019	Thursday	Nyabihu	FGD	Female, Age 20-24/Male, Age 20-24
May 2, 2019	Thursday	Nyabihu	FGD	Female, Age 20-24/Male, Age 25-30
May 3, 2019	Friday	Nyabihu	KII	Emmanuel Bagaye, Uwurugo Monique and Eugene Rudaseswa , District Officials

May 3, 2019	Friday	Musanze	KII	Emmanuel Bagaye, Gasoromineza Sylvani, Mutabazi Moses and Kazungu Siperien, District Officials
May 3, 2019	Friday	Kigali	KII	Katie Green and Anne Fleuret, David Rurangirwa, other USAID Staff
May 3, 2019	Friday	Kigali	KII	Katie Green, Innocent Mugiramana, and Youn Young Joon
May 4, 2019	Saturday	Kigali	FGD	YwD Female, Age 25-30/Male, Age 25-30
May 6, 2019	Monday	Kayonza	FGD	Female, Age 18-19/Male, Age 25-30
May 6, 2019	Monday	Kigali	KII	Katie Green, Innocent Mugiramana, and Norihide Furukawa
May 6, 2019	Monday	Kigali	KII	Katie Green, Innocent Mugiramana, and Venuste Niyitanga
May 6, 2019	Monday	Kigali	KII	Katie Green, Innocent Mugiramana, John Gaga, and Charles Pouliot
May 7, 2019	Tuesday	Kigali	KII	Katie Green, Innocent Mugiramana, and Marie-Pierre Ngoma
May 7, 2019	Tuesday	Kayonza	FGD	Female, Age 20-25/Male, Age 18-19
May 7, 2019	Tuesday	Kigali	KII	Katie Green, Innocent Mugiramana, and Gerald Mporananayo
May 8, 2019	Wednesday	Kigali	KII	Katie Green, Emmanuel Bagaye and Ministry of Youth leadership team
May 8, 2019	Wednesday	Kigali	Data Analysis	Assessment Team
May 9, 2019	Thursday	Kigali	KII	Katie Green and Rica Rwigamba
May 9, 2019	Thursday	Kigali	KII	Emmanuel Bagaye and Aime Bosenibamwe
May 9, 2019	Thursday	Kigali	KII	Katie Green, Emmanuel Bagaye and Lucy Schalkwijk
May 10, 2019	Friday	Kigali	USAID Outbrief	Assessment Team
May 10, 2019	Friday	Kigali	Team Meeting	Assessment Team

KEY INFORMANT INTERVIEWS

The YouthPower Learning Team complemented primary data collection through semi-structured interviews with key informants. These interviews were carried out with implementing partner staff, youth-focused organizations and leaders, service providers, educational and training institution officials, government officials at central and district/sector levels, and donors. The YouthPower Learning Team conducted a number of key informant interviews in order to ensure the representativeness of the sample and the generalization of the results at the end. See Table A2 for the list of key informants.

Table A2: List of Key Informants

Name	Title	Institution	Location
John Kalenzi	Executive Director	African Evangelistic Enterprise (AEE) Rwanda	Kigali
Marie-Pierre Ngoma	Program Administrator, Workplace Learning Support Program	APEFE Rwanda (Association for the Promotion of Education and Training Abroad)	Kigali
Jean Marie Ntakirutimana	Program Team Leader	Caritas	Kigali
Mutabazi Moses	Youth Coordinator	District Official	Musanze
Gasoromineza Sylvani	Gender Coordinator	District Official	Musanze
Bill Potter	Chief of Party, Huguka Dukore	Education Development Center (EDC)	Kigali
Tona Isibo	Deputy Chief of Party, ISVP	Global Communities	Kigali
Dario Devale	Country Director	Health Poverty Action	Kigali
Gerald Mporananayo	Founder/ Director	IGIHANGO Investment Social and Youth Enterprise	Kigali
Rachel Akimana	Deputy Health Unit Coordinator	Imbuto Foundation	Kigali
Venuste Niyitanga	Director of Quality Assurance	International Business Center-Rwanda	Kigali
Norihide Furukawa	Program Advisor for Education and Vocational Training	Japan International Cooperation Agency	Kigali
Youn Young Joon	Program Manager, Monitoring and Evaluation Specialist	Korea International Cooperation Agency, Workforce Development Authority (WDA)	Kigali
Rica Rwigamba	Senior Program Manager	Mastercard Foundation	Kigali
Emmanuel Bigenimana	Permanent Secretary	Ministry of Youth	Kigali
William Furaha	SPIU Manager	Ministry of Youth	Kigali
Grace Mugabekazi	Advisor to Minister	Ministry of Youth	Kigali
Benoit Ngabonziza	Director of Youth Economic Empowerment	Ministry of Youth	Kigali
Sylvere Ntirampeba	Director of Planning and M&E	Ministry of Youth	Kigali
Robert Mwesigwa	Executive Secretary	National Youth Council	Kigali
Aime Bosenibamwe	Director General	National Rehabilitation Service	Kigali
Lucy Schalkwijk	TVET Component Manager	GIZ (German Development Agency)	Kigali
Sharmi Surianarain	Solutions Design	Harambee Youth Employment Accelerator	Kigali
Abdou Musonera	Labor Market Analyst	Rwanda Development Board (RDB)	Kigali
Alimas Hakizimana	Social Inclusion Specialist	Private Sector Driven Agricultural Growth Project (PSDAG)	Kigali

Name	Title	Institution	Location
Charles Pouliot	Director, Rwanda, DR Congo, and Burundi	Swisscontact	Kigali
John Gaga	Program Manager, Rwanda	Swisscontact	Kigali
David Rurangirwa	Senior Education Specialist, Deputy Office Director	USAID/Rwanda Education Office	Kigali
Anne Fleuret	Program and Management Analyst	USAID/Rwanda Program Office	Kigali
Solange Uwamahoro	Director of Qualification, Licensing, and Accreditation	WDA	Kigali

Key Informant Interviews (KIIs) with community leaders

While the intention was to arrange additional community level focus group discussions, it proved difficult to gather leaders at the same time and the result were more individual interviews with individuals district officials that represented youth or gender. The questions and discussions were similar to the topics in the focus group discussions with an emphasis on structures and influential actors or organizations at the community and district level. They also offered insights on their perceived priorities for youth development.

Key Informant Discussions with other USG and GOR Stakeholders and Partners

The team conducted individual interviews to generate information on program experiences and country-level priorities. The initial list was developed with input and letters of introduction from USAID upon the start of the field work phase. The YouthPower Learning team intended to conduct group discussions with other key informants in order to gain input from a variety of implementers. However, due to scheduling constraints on part of many of those targeted, these were primarily conducted as individual interviews. This was particularly challenging at the district level in which community leaders were unavailable/ unwilling to meet together and the team had to conduct individual KIIs were possible.

DEMOGRAPHIC SUMMARY

Table A3. District and Province Sampling

PROVINCE	DISTRICT
Kigali	Kigali (urban)
Eastern	Kyonzza (rural)
Northern	Musanze (peri-urban)
Western	Nyabibu (rural)
Southern	Huye (peri-urban)

As illustrated in Table A4, 179 youth that participated in focus group discussions slightly more than half (53%) were female and (47%) were male. One third (30%) were from the Kigali (urban) region, while another third (33%) were from peri-urban areas of Huye and Musanze. Slightly more than the final third (37%) were from rural districts of Nyabibu and Kayonza. This is not a truly representative sample of where youth reside in the country where according to World Bank 2016 data, slightly over 70% of the population lives in rural areas. However, this sampling ensured that youth from different parts of the country with different backgrounds participated. With regard to age bandings, twenty eight percent (28%) of focus group participants were between 18-19 years, while thirty seven percent (37%) were between 20-24 years. Finally, thirty five percent (35%) were between 25-30. As part of the data collection, each participant completed a basic intake form which includes included demographics (sex,

age, marital status, children) as well as current educational attainment and employment data. See Table 3 for this information.

Table A4. Number of Youth FGDs by District, Sex, Age Bandings, & Rural/Urban Mix

Province/ District	NUMBER OF YOUTH FGDs							NUMBER OF YOUTH PARTICIPANTS		
	Total	Urban	Peri-Urban	Rural	Ages 18-19	Ages 20-24	Ages 25-30	Total	Male	Female
Kigali/ Nyarungenge	8	8			1	3	4*	50	27	23
Southern/ Huye	4		4		2	2		34	17	17
Western/ Nyabihu	4			4		2	2	35	16	19
Northern/ Musanze	4		4		2	2		30	14	16
Eastern/ Kyonza	4			4	2		2	31	15	16
Subtotals	24	8	8	8	6	8	8	180	89	91
Percentages										

Table A5. Education Levels and Employment Status of Youth Focus Group Participants

Educational Attainment, as Reported by Youth Focus Group Participants	Percent
No Schooling	0
Primary School Graduate or Below	14%
Some Secondary School	23%
Secondary School Graduate	44%
Technical Ordinary (lower level TVET)	3%
University Graduate	16%

Employment Status, as Reported by Youth Focus Group Participants	Percent
Formal Employment	5%
Informal Employment	19%
Not Employed, Looking for Work	65%
No Employed, Not Looking for Work	5%
Unable to Work	< 1 %
Declined to answer	5%

As indicated in Table A5, Thirty-five (20%) of FGD participants reported being enrolled in a non-formal education program, which may include TVET, VTC, or similar. As the current employment status of the participants indicates, sixty five percent (65%) of participants indicated they are not employed and looking for work, while another nineteen percent (19%) are engaged in informal employment. The remaining groups are engaged in formal employment (5%), not employed and not looking for work (5%) and those that declined to answer (5%).

B. TEAM COMPOSITION

The core team was comprised of: (1) a Team Leader with overall responsibility for methodology design, implementation, team training and supervision, quality control, data analysis and reporting; (2) a Deputy Team Leader who supported data collection planning and team training, shared oversight of FGDs and conducted KIs; (3) a Logistician who supported the logistical arrangements for this assignment; and (4) five youth Researchers⁴³ who conducted FGDs. Additional support and leadership was provided by the YouthPower Learning team and USAID/Rwanda staff.

QUALITY CONTROL

To ensure quality of data collection, the Team Leader and Deputy Team Leader used an Assessment Team Training Guide to provide one day of quality control training, including facilitation techniques, human research ethics, and notetaking techniques. The youth researchers pilot tested the data collection tools under the supervision of the Team Leader and Deputy Team Lead, who conducted observation and feedback using a standard quality control checklist. Once FGDs were underway, the assessment team performed daily debriefs to process the information and identify data collection needs in real time. For data processing quality: (1) the youth researchers took handwritten notes in a dedicated Field Notebook with clear labels for the location and composition of each FGD, which they electronically transcribed daily or transcribed notes directly into a laptop into a template; and (2) the Team Leader reviewed transcripts to provide feedback regarding areas for clarification or improvement, as needed. The Team Leader also regularly reviewed the FGD participant intake form database to ensure accuracy.

ANALYSIS

The Team Leader and Deputy Team Leader guided a daily debrief with the youth researchers regarding the key themes, trends, explanations, and outliers arising from the day's data collection. The debrief sessions provided insights into key findings and emerging themes, while serving to identify process challenges and jointly identify solutions. The Team Leader and Deputy Team Leader then documented the emerging themes and gaps identified by the youth researchers. The "gaps" identified were used to reinforce the use of probes and follow-up questions to ensure sufficient explanatory data in subsequent interviews. Once the FGDs were completed, the assessment team conducted an initial, one-day participatory analysis exercise in Kigali, facilitated by the Team Leader, during which the team used deductive analysis to identify salient findings and discuss outliers.

Data across all methods of collection were triangulated to ensure consideration of multiple viewpoints and facilitate robust conclusions.

LIMITATIONS

Although the breadth of the assessment was quite extensive, it was not possible to answer all 30 primary research questions exhaustively, (as well as an additional 51 secondary questions). Where feasible, the data collection team conducted follow-up interviews and additional literature reviews to deepen analysis of the most salient issues, policies, and programs. As a largely qualitative assessment using purposive sampling, the assessment cannot purport to be statistically representative or generalizable to all youth in Rwanda.

43 Making Cents engaged a local Rwandan firm, CIDRA, which identified the local youth researchers.

VIII. ANNEX C: SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

Summary of Findings from USAID/Rwanda Youth Assessment (2019)

	EDUCATION	LIVELIHOODS	HEALTH	FAMILY LIFE & WELL-BEING	CIVIC ENGAGEMENT & YOUTH VOICE
YOUTH PRIORITIES	<p>Practical, skill-based training that leads to self-employment^{44**}</p> <p>Vocational training (TVETs, IPRCs and similar) offer valued programs and skills</p> <p>Ages 10-15: Wish they had more “practical” skills: managing small projects, S&L, SRH earlier in school</p>	<p>The desire for the requisite tools and opportunities to engage in productive self-employment activities is the most commonly shared sentiment among all youth segments^{**}</p> <p>Access to youth-friendly finance (flexible, timely, low-interest) is the most commonly cited need by youth as necessary for self-employment</p> <p>Agriculture is only prioritized as a viable/desired livelihood option in rural areas; otherwise, many youth seek “office work” or selling products or services (informal sector) as means of income generation</p>	<p>Early pregnancy^{**} is a significant barrier for young women to achieve economic self-sufficiency</p> <p>Substance abuse is a concern among youth</p> <p>Hygiene services/sanitation along with nutrition services are valued and prioritized</p> <p>Poverty leading to high-risk behaviors (transactional sexual relationships, drug abuse)</p> <p>Many health service providers do not necessarily offer confidentiality; less trusted for screening, counseling and family planning</p> <p>Ages 10-15: Wish SRH was offered around ages 9-10 to avoid early pregnancy (frequent at ages 12-13)</p>	<p>Overall, youth think most youth are either neutral or unsatisfied with their state of overall well-being, with this impression frequently related to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Unemployment • Lack of support in the family <p>Family support is critical to all other outcomes; education, livelihoods, health</p> <p>Value working in groups; connection, support, self-confidence</p> <p>Youth with disabilities seek participation and connection. Often isolated & perceive missed opportunities</p>	<p>Safe spaces for youth to “express their talents” (recreation, arts, sports, IT, youth friendly centers)</p> <p>“Assigned but not consulted:” Youth participate in community efforts, but often not in decision-making roles</p>

44 ^{**}indicates a priority that emerged in almost every FGD

	EDUCATION	LIVELIHOODS	HEALTH	FAMILY LIFE & WELL-BEING	CIVIC ENGAGEMENT & YOUTH VOICE
BRIGHT SPOTS	<p>Value investment in basic education and availability of TVETs and other similar options to “learn practical skills”</p> <p>Move to competency-based curriculum indicates promise</p> <p>Many participate in school-based or community clubs. These deliver a variety of knowledge and skills while creating safe, supportive environments</p> <p>MOE/USAID investment in basic education</p>	<p>GOR has placed high priority on this area. Successful sensitization regarding self-employment as key option. Key strategies and policies in place</p> <p>Savings and loans groups are common and valued</p> <p>USAID/HDAK offers key interventions</p> <p>USAID/PSDAG meets critical role for youth in agriculture</p>	<p>Youth-friendly centers (USAID funded) are creating welcoming, trusted sources of service delivery: value confidentiality, flexibility, recreational/arts activities, and subsequently seek health services, (family planning, circumcision, screening, and other)</p> <p>USAID investments in vulnerable youth addressing critical needs (OVC, Dreams)</p> <p>MOH/USAID investment in systems strengthening has led to a good foundation for community health</p>	<p>Youth-friendly centers: health, YEGO, and similar efforts to offer safe spaces and place to build supportive connections</p> <p>Many USAID partners building on groups and building connections, mentoring (Dreams, HDAK)</p>	<p>Youth have multiple avenues to engage in community efforts: Umuganda, NYC, youth representatives</p> <p>Recognize their multiple service roles: military, Umuganda, etc. Want trust and to help lead</p> <p>Many youth indicate connection via phone and social media/ WhatsApp</p>
PROGRAMMATIC GAPS/ OPPORTUNITIES	<p>While education for all is valued, it is not viewed as necessarily leading to employment</p> <p>Qualified, trained teachers, (especially in rural areas) prepared for demands of competency-based education as well as languages</p> <p>Integration of soft skills (creative thinking, problem-solving) into teacher training</p> <p>Engaging parents in support of relevant education</p>	<p>BDF (pillar of NEP and government-run finance initiative) is designed to meet a critical need, but not effective in doing so</p> <p>Expanding access to demand-driven skills, entrepreneurship, work-based learning, apprenticeships, market linkages, finance</p> <p>Investing in cooperative SMEs that grow & create jobs for youth</p> <p>Engaging the private sector: demand-driven, attachments, potential win-win</p> <p>Agriculture: market linkages, infrastructure, improved methods/ new technologies</p>	<p>Family planning behavior change communication via youth entry points (social media, youth centers, community engagement). Youth perceive family planning “implies women with a family” rather than a youth-friendly health service.</p> <p>Engage parents and teachers to educate/support younger youth, engaging men/boys,</p>	<p>Introduce substance abuse prevention approaches through a positive youth development (PYD) lens</p> <p>Safe spaces for youth</p> <p>Youth group interventions: multiple interventions through common vehicle (mentoring, livelihoods, life skills, etc.)</p> <p>Parents/caring adults</p>	<p>Greater youth participation in the design of USAID projects</p> <p>Safe spaces for youth</p> <p>Youth-led service learning, volunteerism, youth-led community improvements</p> <p>Mentoring/adult partnerships</p>

IX. ANNEX D: APPLYING POSITIVE YOUTH DEVELOPMENT PRINCIPLES

PYD Domain	PYD Program Features	Key Interventions
Assets	Skill-Building	Intentionally integrating skills development so as to reach youth with fewer skills, assets, and agency (not only those with pre-existing skills, assets, and agency)
Agency		Intentional focus on broadening youth perspectives Development of social-emotional, problem-solving, and communication skills (soft skills)
Contribution	Youth Engagement and Contribution	Engaging and partnering with youth Offering meaningful and developmentally appropriate opportunities for participation (e.g., youth-led discussion, real choices) and Opportunities for leadership development (e.g., youth as peer counselors, tutors, evaluators, and contributors)
Enabling Environment	Belonging and Membership	Fostering a sense of community within youth-serving programs Social inclusion (gender, disability, ethnic/religious differences, etc.)
	Healthy Relationships and Bonding	Supporting bonds between youth and caring adults, Positive role models Healthy peer relationships
	Positive Norms and Expectations	Establishing positive norms and rules for youth engagement Setting high expectations of independence and responsibility
	Safe Spaces	Ensuring and supporting physical, emotional, and virtual safety for young men and women
	Access to Youth-Friendly Services	Offering a continuum of integrated services among family, youth programs, school, and health services providers