

Youth Workforce Development is a priority area of the USAID Education Policy, along with early learning, higher education, and education in crisis and conflict. This learning agenda comprises part of a collection of prioritized learning questions developed by USAID's Office of Education. To address the questions posed by the Youth Workforce Development Learning Agenda, the USAID Education Office will organize and disseminate existing data, generate new evidence, and produce conclusions and recommendations through research, situational analyses, literature reviews, case studies, peer-to-peer learning, and program and impact evaluations. The Learning Agenda is intended to guide the generation of evidence to inform USAID education program strategic planning, activity design and professional development.



Focus on Collaboration in Learning Activities and Utilization of Findings



The youth workforce development team is collaborating with other USAID staff working on youth cross-sectoral issues in Washington, USAID Missions and partners to advance the learning activities, with the goal of developing learning products to inform program design, implementation and strategic planning. Taken as a whole, this new wave of inquiry aims to improve the quality and impact of USAID education programs as well as enhance the shared understanding of what works.

We welcome feedback and engagement on these questions. For more information or to share notes or collaborate, write to officeofeducation@usaid.gov.



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USAID YOUTH WORKFORCE
DEVELOPMENT

LEARNING AGENDA



USAID Youth Workforce Development

LEARNING AGENDA QUESTIONS



Program Models

1. What are the most effective components, or combinations of components, in youth workforce development programs for improving employment, self-employment, establishment of new self-employment or increased profits for youth's existing businesses? How do these components, or combinations of components, vary by context?
2. What components, or combinations of components, work best for specific segments of youth (especially rural youth, young women, and university-educated youth)?
3. What are the most innovative and effective models of cross-sector collaboration in the delivery of youth services? What are models that lead to positive outcomes in multiple sectors?

Soft Skills Development



1. What are the most effective ways to measure soft skills outcomes, including self-report assessments, use of observations, or other items such as situational judgement or anchoring vignettes?
2. What instruments are most effective for working with adolescents of different ages?
3. What are the most effective implementation interventions for fostering soft skills among youth?

Young Women and Youth with Disabilities



1. What does the evidence tell us about the most effective ways to increase employment among young women, particularly in the MENA region where strong socio-cultural norms affect women's labor force participation?
2. To what extent do common USAID workforce development interventions (e.g. soft skills training, mentoring, career counseling,) have differential results for women vs. men?
3. What does the evidence tell us about the most effective ways to increase employment among disabled youth?



Cost of Workforce Development Programs

1. What do youth workforce development programs cost if they were to be replicated?
2. What programs are likely to provide the greatest value for money in given situations? What innovative financing strategies are feasible, both in terms of scaling and for leading to self-reliance (cost recovery)?
3. What are the most cost-effective ways to achieve scale and sustainability?
4. What are examples of best practices in how education or labor policies in developing countries have helped increase economic and employment opportunities for youth?

Employers and Firms



1. How do employment training programs influence firms' practices around recruiting and training of future employees, particularly of disadvantaged youth, and youth at different education levels such as secondary school graduates and university graduates?



Violence Prevention and Workforce in Crisis and Conflict Settings

1. To what extent are workforce development programs effective at preventing youth from engaging in gang-related violence or violent extremist groups?
2. What works at improving workforce/livelihoods outcomes for youth in conflict and crisis settings?
3. Are there soft skills that are more important for youth in conflict or fragile states?

Literacy and Numeracy Development



1. What are appropriate and effective strategies and instructional modalities for improving literacy and numeracy among low literate, out-of-school youth?
2. What are effective, appropriate instruments for measuring reading outcomes among older, out-of-school youth?