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# USAID EDUCATION: YOUTH WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT

Youth gain the skills they need to lead productive lives, gain employment, and positively contribute to society.

USAID believes that education is a foundational driver of development and fundamental to achieving self-reliance. When children and youth go to school and receive training in skills they can use in the workforce and to navigate life, they are able to build more hopeful and prosperous futures for themselves, their families, communities, and countries. USAID works in more than 50 developing countries to ensure that investments in education systems—from pre-primary to higher education—enable all children and youth to acquire the education and skills needed to be productive members of society.

## EDUCATION THAT HELPS YOUTH PREPARE FOR A CHANGING LABOR MARKET

High youth unemployment has a negative effect on local economies and a young workforce that lacks the skills needed to succeed limits businesses' ability to grow and contribute to economic growth. The changing world of work demands transferable, foundational, and technical skills to thrive in today's labor market.

As part of education and training, youth need to learn about the world of work—what opportunities exist, how they are accessed, and what skills are required to

An estimated 440 million young people will enter the labor market by 2023 in Africa alone.

—International Fund for Agricultural Development

be successful. USAID investments strengthen local education systems to ensure youth learn the foundational, technical, entrepreneurial, and other critical skills they need to obtain or create livelihoods to support themselves and their families, and prepare them to lead productive lives.

Due to discrimination, crisis and conflict, and violence, many young people have missed out on opportunities to acquire the skills and education needed for employment. USAID supports second-chance education programs to serve disadvantaged, marginalized, over-age, and out-of-school children and youth to build foundational skills. USAID also supports secondary education, technical and vocational training, and higher education programs that are relevant to youth and responsive to labor market needs.

Half of the world's population is under 30. Youth can be a positive force for change—with meaningful employment, youth can contribute to a stable and strong workforce, global security and economic prosperity.

—USAID Youth Policy, 2012

## MAKING A DIFFERENCE FOR THE NEXT GENERATION

In 2018, USAID programs enabled more than 311,000 individuals to gain new or improved employment by providing them with relevant training and necessary skills. Here are some examples:

- In **Egypt**, the university and technical college systems face funding challenges and misalignment with the needs of employers. In coordination with the Ministry of Higher Education, USAID is supporting 20 sustainable career development centers at universities across Egypt. These new centers will serve over 70 percent of all public university students with specialized employability skills training, networking, and career mentoring.
- After years of conflict in eastern **Democratic Republic of Congo**, many youth have not had access to education or meaningful employment. The Integrated Youth Development Activity (IYDA) supports Congolese youth through mentoring, coaching, and other learning opportunities to establish their own economic activities. IYDA will provide employability and entrepreneurship training for 8,000 youth and will connect 4,000 youth to employment opportunities. The program is also developing and delivering accelerated learning and vocational training programs in North Kivu and South Kivu provinces.
- **Serbia** has a 40 percent youth unemployment rate. USAID supported Impact Hub Belgrade to address youth unemployment by helping young entrepreneurs and startups attract potential investors. The Impact Hub's Launch Pad program gives young innovators the tools and skills they need to develop new products, validate their business models, and link them to regional and international investors. As of March 2018, participants had raised \$230,000 in new investments from a mix of Serbian public sector and domestic and international private investors.

## CONTACT

E3: Office of Education

U.S. Agency for International Development  
1717 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW, 8<sup>th</sup> fl  
Washington, DC, USA 20009

Phone 202-712-0000

Email: [officeofeducation@usaid.gov](mailto:officeofeducation@usaid.gov)