

# EQ Review

Educational Quality in the Developing World



*EQ Review is a newsletter published by USAID's EQUIP1 to share knowledge about issues fundamental to improving educational quality and to communicate successes, challenges, and lessons learned by USAID Missions.*

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## Cross-Sectoral Approaches to Youth Development

A consortium led by U.S.-based Youth Transitions Funders Group recently advised youth-serving organizations in the United States to stop dreaming about the day when holistic youth development funding will emanate from one central federal government entity. According to their candid assessment, “policy is made in silos and will continue to be made in silos,”<sup>1</sup> referring to the separate sectors such as education, health, and workforce development into which funding organizations—and their funding streams—are often organized.

The same group of U.S. foundations advises those seeking to serve disconnected youth—i.e., those without connections to families, education programs, social or religious organizations, and positive peer groups—to look for ways to reference a common framework and track cross-cutting results. This will prompt funders and policy makers who traditionally operate only within defined areas or “silos” to be drawn into core youth “learning” programming that ultimately has cross-systems funding and policy implications. Program areas might include school-to-work transitions, second-chance basic education offerings, and financial literacy programming as part of youth-inclusive financial services.

The projects highlighted in this edition demonstrate the effectiveness of involving at least two sectors in programming. Engaging sectors peripheral to education mutually benefits achieving education goals, as well as bolstering neighboring sector initiatives.

Programs in this edition of *EQ Review* highlight ways that youth-serving programs have begun to both (1) reference common youth development frameworks; and (2) track some of the cross-cutting or cross-sectoral results at the project level. It examines how investments in youth learning may foster gains in democracy and governance, conflict mitigation, and economic growth. Activities in this edition include:

- The Workforce Simulation Model developed by the Education Policy and Data Center (EPDC) computes how long it takes education and training investments to mature.
- The Cross-Sectoral Youth Program (CSY), a youth-serving program that broke with common practice and successfully engaged several sectors to design, implement, and evaluate activities in India and the Democratic Republic of the Congo.
- Search Institute’s *40 Developmental Assets*, a common youth development framework, and a related monitoring and evaluation tool, the Developmental Assets Profile (DAP), by the Philippines’ Education Quality and Access for Learning and Livelihood Skills (EQuALLS2) project and the multi-country Cross-Sectoral Youth project.
- The Enter Jovem project in Brazil, which prepares young people for the labor market with technical and personal skills.

The global youth-serving sector must improve tracking, measuring, assessing, and improving both the sector-specific and the cross-sectoral impacts to increase the pace at which overall development goals are reached. Priorities in the current system of youth program funding need to reflect the interest in holistic programming that can deliver (and measure) the needed results through what might at first seem to be non-traditional offerings or approaches.

For more information, please contact David James-Wilson, the Relevance in Basic Education and Livelihoods Advisor for USAID Philippines (OEd) EQuALLS2 project, at [djames-wilson@edc.org](mailto:djames-wilson@edc.org).

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<sup>1</sup> See the Publication *Connected by 25: Effective Policy Solutions for Vulnerable Youth* (2010) from the Youth Transitions Funders Group ([www.ytfg.org](http://www.ytfg.org))

## Education Policy and Data Center (EPDC)

It is generally accepted that investing in education results in individual advancement, the escape from poverty, and the realization of economic potential. However, outcomes from investing in children's education are measurable only decades later as a more productive and innovative workforce, and the relationship between education and employment is vague. There are no calculations of how much an education goal, such as universal primary education, will change the workforce skill levels of the next generation, nor are there calculations on the most efficient and effective education and training paths.

To better calculate the impact of education on workforce skills, the USAID-funded Education Policy and Data Center (EPDC) developed, with a grant from UNESCO, the Workforce Simulation Model. The Workforce Simulation Model computes how long it takes education and training investments to mature and displays projected trends in schooling and workforce skills as a proxy for education attainment.

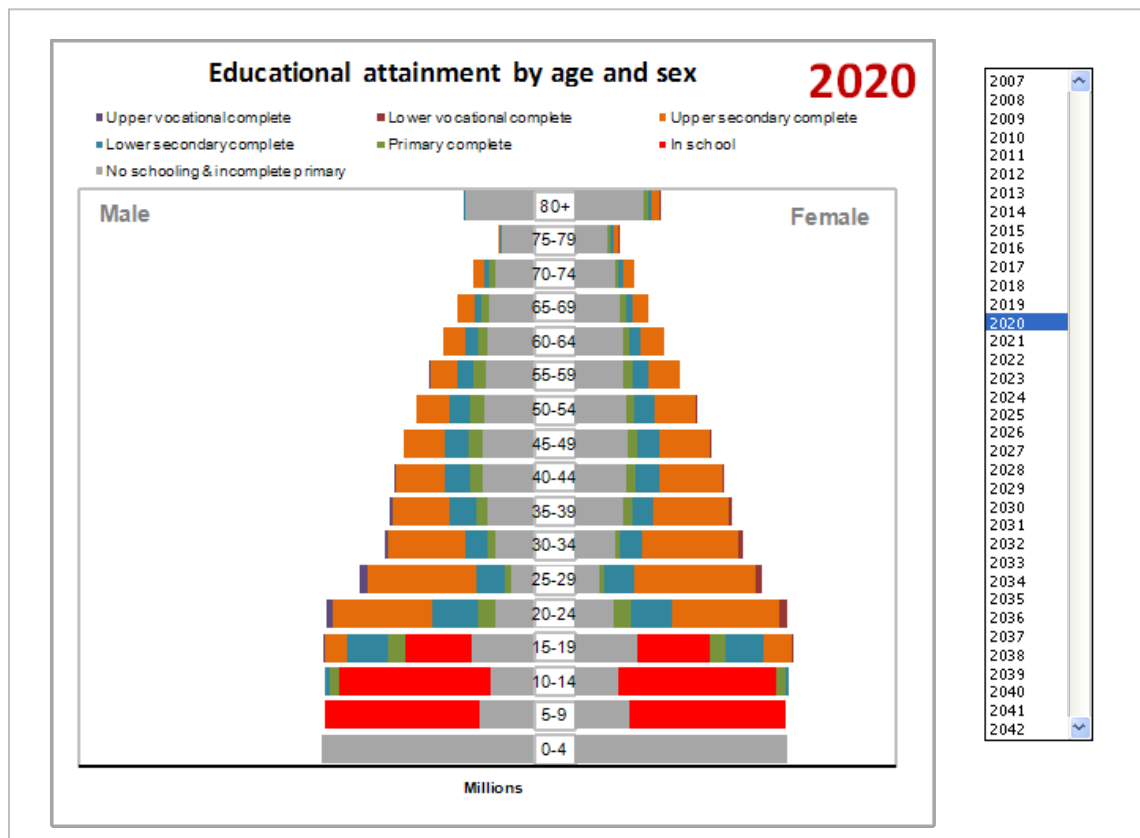
The Workforce Simulation Model is built in Microsoft Excel to ensure broad accessibility, and has a visual interface that allows users to easily change assumptions and instantly see the outputs. All of the model's equations are editable, allowing advanced users to further customize projections. Data populating the model are national population statistics, educational attainment from household surveys, and pupil information from Education Management Information Systems. The Workforce Simulation Model can be customized based on a country's specifications or on labor fields, such as the health care industry. Sample uses of the tool are:

- As a demographically-based model, the number of pupils and education attainment projection are integrated within a structure that tracks groups by age and sex.
- As a policy-making tool, the model shows which education investments generate the quickest, the most efficient, or the largest long-term workforce skill changes, allowing policy-makers to make more precise estimates about the impact of a policy on a country's workforce.
- A workforce projection tool that uses education enrollment data to forecast a simulated workforce, including the projected educational attainment of the future workforce.

The graphic below, Projected Educational Attainment for Adults in the Dominican Republic in 2020, demonstrates one type of visualization produced by the Workforce Simulation Model. To date, the Workforce Simulation Model has been tested with data from Costa Rica, Ghana, and India, and was presented to workforce development experts at UNESCO's International Centre for Technical and Vocational Education and Training (UNEVOC) in March 2010. EPDC hopes to expand the application of the model to 80 developing countries, providing policy-makers worldwide with the data they need to ensure that children enter the workforce with relevant skills.

For more information on EPDC, please contact USAID AOTR Dr. Kristi Fair at [kfair@usaid.gov](mailto:kfair@usaid.gov).

### Projected Educational Attainment for Adults in the Dominican Republic in 2020



## USAID’s Cross-Sector Collaboration Leads to Youth Advancement in India and DR Congo

In order to reach their full potential as productive members of society, youth—particularly marginalized youth—need to grow and develop in a variety of ways. Rather than fit neatly into categories such as education, economic growth, or health, the challenges youth face cut across those sectors. The Cross-Sectoral Youth (CSY) Project sought to demonstrate that when youth programming is approached cross-sectorally, it can provide more effective ways to meet youths’ diverse needs.

USAID created CSY as a multi-country project with the specific intention of bringing together USAID staff from different sectors to design, implement, and assess programs to help youth make positive change in their lives and their communities. CSY also brought together experts from USAID/Washington, USAID Missions, local organizations, and implementing partner Education Development Center (EDC). The project had three demonstration sites: projects in India and the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DR Congo), and a cross-sectoral youth assessment in Morocco. This article discusses the India and DR Congo activities.

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### India



*Women participate in a community literacy class offered by the Cross-Sectoral Youth project in Agra, India*

CSY-India was a 17-month project that strengthened livelihoods, promoted youth civic engagement through awareness-raising about rights and basic education, and supported youth-led community development to improve water and sanitation in Agra, India. The project addressed multiple sectors including economic growth, basic education, democracy and governance, and health education while also leveraging local community support as part of the Global Development Alliance (GDA).

To measure its effects on participating youth, CSY-India tracked a broad range of youths’ “developmental assets,” including traits such as constructive use of time, commitment to learning, and positive values (for more on the innovative tool used to measure and track assets, see the article on page 4). The 241 participating youths who were tracked significantly increased their developmental assets during the life of the project. At CSY-India’s outset, fewer than 20 percent of the youth scored in the “good” or “excellent” ranges for overall development. Near the end of the program, that number increased to 61 percent.

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### Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC)

CSY-DR Congo was a 10-month project that promoted entrepreneurship as a way to increase positive health behavior. Drawing from expertise in economic growth, health, education, and democracy and governance, the project provided 100 youth in Bukavu with business and entrepreneurship training to help strengthen and expand their enterprises.

CSY-DR Congo had a positive impact on youths’ business-related skills and confidence and on health choices. The entrepreneurs’ average monthly revenues increased from \$114.60 to \$161.40. Participants increased their expenditures on health, and 99% of participants surveyed stated that they would not risk their health to expand their businesses. This is particularly important because the initial assessment had found that several young female entrepreneurs were engaging in transactional sex.

By collaborating across sectors in the design, implementation, and measurement of CSY activities and outcomes, USAID and its partners helped youth advance in a range of ways that touched many facets of their lives and improved their overall development and well-being.

For more information please contact Maryanne Yerkes, Cross-Sectoral Youth (CSY) Project AOTR, at [myerkes@usaid.gov](mailto:myerkes@usaid.gov).

## Monitoring Tools for Measuring Impact of Youth Programming

Providing youth with effective, holistic programs that improve education, health, and livelihoods outcomes, among others, is challenging. Measuring the true impact of those programs can present an even greater challenge. Traditionally, youth programs have been measured within single sectors, using variables such as enrollment numbers, achievement tests, job placements, or income. Often, though, that data does not tell the whole story of youth programming’s impact on young people’s lives. Two USAID-sponsored programs have developed promising innovations that demonstrate strong potential for both assessing program results and providing useful information for improving programs.

### The Developmental Assets Profile (DAP)

USAID’s Office of Conflict Management and Mitigation (CMM) emphasizes that young people with many connections to “shielding” institutions—their families, formal or non-formal schools, social and religious organizations, and positive peer groups—are more likely to be positively engaged with society, while youth with few such connections are more likely to join violent groups.

Measuring and tracking these connections is not easy, however. If positive engagement and social connections could be measured, the data could provide a more holistic picture of the impact USAID programming has on the lives of youth—and allow for comparison of the impact and cost-effectiveness of different types of interventions.

Two programs—Education Quality and Access for Learning and Livelihood Skills Phase 2 (EQuALLS2) in the Philippines and the Cross-Sectoral Youth Project (CSY) in India—have tackled this challenge by adapting an existing tool for use in an innovative way. The tool, Search Institute’s Developmental Assets Profile (DAP), measures the presence of “positive assets” in youths’ lives—items that help young people be productive and healthy such as the constructive use of time, commitment to learning, and positive values. The DAP can be used over time to track changes in these assets.

The DAP’s 58 survey items can be grouped according to five key contexts (personal, social, school, family, and community) which align closely with CMM’s description of key “shielding” institutions. Thus, use of the DAP can both show whether individuals and groups of youth are improving their lives in holistic ways and demonstrate whether a program is helping youth establish the connections which support positive engagement and discourage negative behavior.

The EQuALLS2 project’s pilot application of the DAP has yielded promising results. The project, which serves youth in the conflict-affected areas of Muslim Mindanao, had a significant positive effect on DAP scores among EQuALLS2 participants, showing that these youth had more positive assets and had increased their connections to “shielding” institutions thanks to participating in the program. In addition, local project managers used Time One (or pre-intervention) DAP results to improve program design. This included building in-service learning activities to bolster relatively low “community” scores and adding extra-curricular activities to strengthen lagging “social” scores.

The Cross-Sectoral Youth Project, which in India strengthened livelihoods and promoted engagement among youth, used a modified version of the DAP and showed that 241 participating youth achieved an overall four-fold increase in developmental assets throughout the life of the project. Importantly, the use of the DAP in both contexts demonstrates that the DAP’s design is not intervention-specific; the tool can be used across a broad range of sector-specific and cross-sectoral programs, and among programs of different lengths and intensities.

By investing in careful preparation, comprehensive capacity-building, and direct assistance from Search Institute, these projects have overcome longstanding barriers to evaluating the impact of participation in education on what USAID’s CMM refers to as young people’s “positive engagement” with key “shielding” institutions. This pioneering practice can help demonstrate the holistic impact of participation in education on young people’s ability to assume positive roles in the worlds of work, family, and community life.

### Entrepreneurship Skills Survey

In another of its three locations, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, the Cross-Sectoral Youth Project promoted entrepreneurship as a way to increase positive health behavior, so it needed to track its youth participants’ entrepreneurship skills and health-seeking behaviors, another cross-sectoral challenge. The project used the Entrepreneurship Skills Survey, a self-reporting tool developed to build on internationally recognized indicators of wellbeing and livelihood development. The survey included questions on business management skills, business confidence, financial self-sufficiency, and health choices.

The survey demonstrated that CSY-DR Congo had a positive impact on youths’ business-related skills and confidence and on health choices, helping programmers understand in a holistic way the changes that youth undertook with support from the project. See more on CSY and its results in the article on page 3.

As the demand for evidence of aid effectiveness continues to grow, youth programmers will increasingly need to demonstrate the impact of their efforts. To encourage cross-sectoral thinking and programming, the ability to capture that impact holistically is particularly important. The innovative use of these tracking and monitoring tools shows promise for doing so.

#### Additional Resources

- [\*An Assessment of Young People’s Developmental Assets, Agra, India\*](#)
- [\*Measuring Youth Development, Using a Developmental Assets Approach in Youth Programming, Agra, India\*](#)
- [\*Assessing Youth Entrepreneurship Skills, Final Findings, Bukavu, DRC\*](#)
- [\*Tracking the Impact of Returning to Education – How Re-connecting Young People with Educational Opportunities Contributes to Peace Building in Mindanao, Philippines\*](#)

## English as a Mechanism to Youth Employability in Brazil

The Enter Jovem Project, funded by USAID and implemented by the American Institutes for Research (AIR), fosters the development of professional skills and helps youth to become proactive, socially engaged citizens. By providing them with leadership skills, youth can become agents of change, capable of making informed decisions about their futures and taking steps to transform their lives and their communities. Enter Jovem seeks to empower youth and prepare them for the labor market with technical skills and by developing well-rounded citizens. Employers and youth alike highlight the tangible contributions of the program in fostering such behavioral changes.



*Enter Jovem students pose prior to their Cultural performance on May 15, 2010*

Enter Jovem has a three pronged approach to youth employability: (1) work skills training, (2) job placement, and (3) political participation.

In order to address the growing demand from Brazilian businesses for English speaking employees, Enter Jovem is implementing a work skills training approach to youth employability program called the English Component Pilot Test in Bahia. The project teaches English using an experiential approach with the following principles: (1) exposure, discussion, and practical application of learning strategies that accelerate learning and foster the learner's autonomy and independence; (2) topical/situational content focused on employability that explores themes or reproduces situations in which English might

be used in the youth's life or job contexts; (3) basic vocabulary building relevant to the situations in which the youth will need to use English; (4) exposure to English input through audio or video so as the youth becomes familiar with different kinds of accents (native and non-native); and (5) complementary activities using the Reading Language Companion software developed by IBM. IBM has helped establish self-learning English labs where teachers and students are able to enhance their reading skills in a virtual classroom. English trainers have primarily been government employees in an effort to ensure replication of the methodology after the project end date.

To improve job placement, Enter Jovem uses a three-tiered approach based on a cascade model and shared responsibility. Working with community-based organizations (CBOs), Enter Jovem assists youth in accessing the job market via Employability, Technology and English Nuclei (*NETI – Núcleo de Empregabilidade, Tecnologia & Inglês*). NETIs are housed in public schools and CBOs and are mandated to (1) train trainers and students; (2) foster cultural activities and coordinate exchange programs; and (3) hold workshops. Each NETI consists of one computer lab with a minimum of 15 machines and a broadband connection, a classroom, and one additional room for cultural activities and workshops. NETIs serve as multicultural centers that foster language and cultural exchanges between Brazilian and American teachers, professors, students and other professionals to increase the proficiency of the English language as a means to communicate effectively in a local and global market.

To increase political participation, Enter Jovem facilitated the election of State Youth Committee members from various NETIs to State Youth Committees, which enable program beneficiaries to experience first-hand public policy through forums, seminar, youth networks and direct contact with government officials. Recently, the Youth Secretariat of the State of Pernambuco raised issues such as entry level employment creation for youth, vocational training courses for youth in partnership with the private sector and an increase in recreational activities in communities. Additionally, youth committee members participated in the MOST & UNESCO 2<sup>nd</sup> Summer Session Conference, which gathered representatives from Latin America and the Caribbean to discuss public policies at the international, national, regional and local level.

For more information at about Enter Jovem Project in Brazil contact Alisson Nascimento, CTO, at [anascimento@usaid.gov](mailto:anascimento@usaid.gov).



*Enter Jovem graduates receive their Certificates of Completion on May 15, 2010*