



U.S. Government Strategy on International Basic Education

Fiscal Years 2019-2023




 Cover Photo: Sumaiya Akter, 12, is a Rohingya refugee living in Kutupalong camp, Bangladesh.
Photo courtesy of the Department of State. © UNHCR/Roger Arnold.

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Executive Summary

United States Government investments in international education serve as a force multiplier for all of its work in international development.

Equal access to relevant, quality education creates pathways for greater economic growth, improved health outcomes, sustained democratic governance, and more peaceful and resilient societies. Education promotes positive socio-economic progress and enhances standards of living. Strengthening education systems—the people, public and private institutions, resources, and activities whose primary purpose is to improve, expand, and sustain education outcomes—in developing countries advances U.S. foreign policy goals, promotes U.S. and international security, and helps accelerate economic growth at home and abroad.

Congress passed the Reinforcing Education Accountability in Development (READ) Act, (Division A, Public Law 115-56), in 2017 to demonstrate the United States Government’s commitment to helping ensure that individuals around the world have the education and skills needed to be productive members of society. By calling for a comprehensive, integrated U.S. Government Strategy to promote basic education, the READ Act recognizes the important role the United States plays in working with partner countries to strengthen their education systems and create a foundation for sustained economic growth that places partner countries on a trajectory toward graduation from assistance.

The READ Act provides an opportunity for the U.S. Government to improve the effectiveness and efficiency of its international basic education programs and partnerships by increasing coordination and leveraging each department, agency, and official’s unique experience and expertise at the global and country level. These departments, agencies, and officials include the U. S. Agency for International Development (USAID), Department of State, Department of the Treasury, Department of Labor, Department of Education, Department of Agriculture, Department of Defense, Chief Executive Officer of the Millennium Challenge Corporation (MCC), National Security Advisor, and Director of the Peace Corps.

The goal of the U.S. Government Strategy on International Basic Education for Fiscal Years 2019 - 2023 (the Strategy) is to achieve a world where education systems in partner countries enable all individuals to acquire the education and skills needed to be productive members of society. To accomplish this goal, the U.S. Government has two principal objectives:

1. Improve learning outcomes; and
2. Expand access to quality basic education for all, particularly marginalized and vulnerable populations.

Through a comprehensive approach to international basic education, the U.S. Government will use research, data, and evidence to help empower partner countries to better respond to their unique contexts, more

holistically address their education needs, and build systems that can be fully supported by country resources, paving a way toward graduation from assistance. The U.S. Government's approach will be guided by the principles of prioritizing country ownership; engaging holistically with education systems to strengthen their capacity and performance; partnering and leveraging resources; and responding to country needs and opportunities.

As noted in the READ Act's definition of basic education, U.S. Government interventions will address international educational needs across the spectrum, from early childhood to primary and secondary education to workforce development and vocational training, in both formal and non-formal settings. The U.S. Government will coordinate its efforts across departments and agencies; align its programs with the needs and opportunities of partner countries; contribute to the evidence base to determine the cost-effectiveness of investments in U.S. Government priority areas; and help place partner countries on a path to self-reliance by which they can sustainably finance and deliver services that expand access to education and improve learning outcomes and skills for all individuals.

To achieve the goals laid out in the READ Act, U.S. Government departments and agencies will work with partner countries, other donors, multilateral organizations, the private sector, non-government organizations (NGOs), and faith-based institutions around the world.

Pursuant to the objectives of this Strategy, efforts will be coordinated across the U.S. Government and integrated into departments' and agencies' ongoing work. The U.S. Government will build on past progress, learn from our experiences, and take into consideration emerging trends to achieve three principal coordination goals:

1. Strengthen transparency and accountability and streamline reporting;
2. Work to ensure a consistent level of quality across programs; and
3. Improve coordination and reinforce a "One U.S. Government" approach while optimizing each agency's strengths to achieve maximum impact of taxpayer dollars.

Each year, a mandated annual public report will be submitted to Congress and will include a description of the efforts of each department and agency to implement the Strategy and a description of progress made toward meeting the goals and objectives of the Strategy—with particular emphasis on whether there are demonstrable and quantifiable improvements, such as in literacy, numeracy, or other basic skills.

“Without a doubt, education is the greatest force multiplier in foreign aid. The READ Act will enhance our global education efforts, removing barriers to education for those out of school and improving the quality of education for those already enrolled.”

— Representative Nita Lowey [D-NY]

The Global Context

Education provides individuals, communities, and nations with the opportunity to fulfill their potential. However, due to a variety of circumstances, many people in developing countries currently lack access to quality basic education. Broadening access to quality education in developing countries could help mitigate many of the most critical challenges facing the United States around the world.

 Bednet distribution at a school in Tanzania. Photo Credit: USAID Tanzania.

Challenges

There is a Global Learning Crisis

This learning crisis has left millions of individuals around the world without even the most basic life skills.

Too many children and youth—263 million—are not in school.¹ Certain groups are more likely to never attend school, or to drop out, including: girls and women; children in child labor; individuals affected by conflict; individuals with disabilities; and other marginalized and vulnerable populations. Even for those in school, enrollment does not automatically lead to learning: 387 million children of primary school age (56 percent) are not reaching minimum proficiency levels in reading and math.²

Many factors contribute to this learning crisis. Children may not be prepared to learn at school due to a lack of nurturing care, including malnutrition, poor health, or a lack of parental or caregiver involvement and safe environments, among other issues. There are chronic shortages of trained and qualified teachers and instructors; often they are simply absent.³ Many students either lack books and other materials entirely, or are required to share them extensively with others. Where students do have books, most are poor quality, and often they are written in languages they do not understand.⁴ Moreover, millions of youth and adults are left unemployed or under-employed, lacking skills to meet the demands of a modern economy because they do not have basic literacy, numeracy, soft, and technical skills.

Crises and Conflicts are Increasing

Across 35 crisis-affected countries, approximately 75 million children and youth aged 3-18 are in desperate need of educational support.⁵

The number of children and youth living in crisis and conflict settings around the world has accelerated at a shocking rate. Crisis and conflict contexts have become more complex, urbanized and protracted, and typically involve multiple, simultaneous stresses and shocks from armed conflict, criminal violence, forced displacement, natural disasters, and/or epidemics. In addition, these environments often suffer from political and economic instability, governance deficits, and corruption.

When a conflict breaks out or a crisis occurs, education is often the first service interrupted and the last resumed,⁶ despite the fact that communities, especially parents and caregivers, often identify education as their number-one priority during these times. The plight continues in post-conflict societies, where an entire generation may have missed the opportunity for school or training—yet must find a way to economically support their families and help rebuild their communities. The resulting workforce of unskilled or under-skilled employees desperately needs additional training to help ensure economic stability.

The Youth Population is the Largest in History

Today, half the world's population is under the age of 30—the largest youth population in history.⁷

When youth are educated, healthy, employed, and civically engaged, they have the power to drive economic growth, democracy, and prosperity. However, when the needs of youth are not addressed, poverty, migration, violence, violent extremism, instability, and unrest can follow.

Countries with large youth populations are statistically at greater risk of conflict and political violence, particularly when combined with a lack of employment opportunities.⁸

For millions of youth, employment prospects are limited. An estimated 21 percent of young people worldwide—most of whom are female—are neither employed nor in education or training programs.⁹ Young people represent the future engineers, doctors, teachers, entrepreneurs, and leaders of their countries, yet millions are not receiving the education, skills, training, and opportunities needed to fulfill their potential. Adolescent girls and young women face particular challenges to getting a quality education, among them: poverty, geographical isolation, minority status, disability, child, early, and forced marriage, early pregnancy, gender-based violence, and traditional attitudes about the roles of girls and women.

Partner-Country Education Systems are Strained

Financial resources are critical to effective education systems.

The International Commission on Financing Global Education Opportunity estimates that \$3 trillion in annual education spending will be necessary in low- and middle-income countries by 2030—a gap of \$1.8 trillion from today's spending levels. An estimated 97 percent¹⁰ of these funds will need to come from domestic governments: their commitment to investment and reform will be the most important driver in closing the funding gap. However, international donor funds, philanthropy, and the private sector will continue to play a critical role, especially for low-income countries where these entities cover half of education costs, on average.¹¹

Just as important as the level of funding is how effectively and efficiently it is spent and leveraged to improve learning. Too often, the education sector is fragmented due to inefficient coordination of interventions and approaches, both globally and within partner countries. Despite expressing a desire to do so, partner-country governments lack the ability to sustainably finance and deliver services that help enable individuals to gain the education and skills needed to become productive members of society. Policies and institutions are often of poor quality, systems are inefficient, and there is a lack of research and data needed to assess the cost-effectiveness and sustainability of quality programming.

The Education Ripple Effect

A well-educated society is essential for a partner country to take control of its own development and progress along its journey toward self-reliance. Quality education enables economic growth, sustained democratic governance, more resilient societies, and improved health outcomes, and can lead to reductions in conflict and violent extremism.

As the [Department of State and USAID Joint Strategic Plan \(JSP\) for Fiscal Years \(FY\) 2018-2022](#) states, “Economic growth, particularly in developing and transitional economies, serves to strengthen and expand our base of partners, bolster economic opportunities, and build future markets for U.S. exports in the fastest growing regions of the world.” Today, the fastest-growing export markets for U.S. goods are in developing countries.¹² Societies with an educated and skilled workforce are more stable, prosperous, and democratic, making them stronger trade partners for the United States.¹³

Education also has the potential to reduce violent extremism. Each year of education reduces an adolescent boy’s risk of becoming involved in conflict by 20 percent.¹⁴ A recent study shows that education, when combined with other approaches focused on civic engagement, employment, or positive youth development, can reduce youth participation in violence.¹⁵

In environments affected by crisis or conflict, education can provide essential skills and important psycho-social support for people coping with the negative impacts of disaster and conflict. Given the changing nature of conflicts and protracted crises,¹⁶ education is central to effectively bridging the divide from humanitarian assistance to longer-term development.

In addition, the links between education and health are irrefutable—education saves lives. This is especially true when considering the impact an educated mother has on her children.¹⁷ In developing countries, a child whose mother can read is 50 percent more likely to be immunized, twice as likely to attend school, and 50 percent more likely to live past the age of five.¹⁸ Education also helps combat deadly diseases such as HIV/AIDS. According to a study in Botswana, one additional year of education for adolescents can reduce HIV acquisition by one third—and by nearly half for young women.¹⁹

An analysis of 120 countries over 30 years found that countries with large numbers of young men were less likely to experience violent conflict if their populations had higher levels of education.²⁰

 Photo: USAID Somalia.



A Holistic Approach to Improving Education around the World

International education programs promote U.S. and international security and help accelerate economic growth at home and abroad.

Photo: USAID Peru.

International Basic Education Assistance Supports U.S. Government Foreign Policy Priorities

The U.S. Government's efforts to expand access to quality education and measurably improve learning outcomes and employment are strategic and effective investments that align with the pillars and objectives of existing strategies including the [National Security Strategy \(NSS\)](#) and the Department of State and USAID [Joint Strategic Plan](#) for FY 2018-2022. International education programs promote U.S. and international security and help accelerate economic growth at home and abroad. These efforts promote American values and interests; demonstrate the generosity of the American people; and help create conditions in partner countries that are favorable to peace, democracy, and trade.

The United States has distinct and well-defined foreign policy priorities, and the objectives of the U.S. Government Strategy on International Basic Education are aligned with and support those priorities. Specifically, the fourth pillar of the NSS ("Advance American Influence") stresses the importance of collaboration with partners and focusing investments where the U.S. Government can have the most impact, and where there is commitment from stakeholders to address local challenges for positive, sustainable change. As highlighted in the READ Act, country ownership, coordination, and working to strengthen education systems are core tenets of a holistic U.S. Government approach to international basic education—and are Guiding Principles echoed in this Strategy.

Strategic Objective 2.2 of the JSP is to "promote healthy, educated, and productive populations in partner countries to drive inclusive and sustainable development, open new markets and support U.S. prosperity and security objectives." Aligned with the JSP and the READ Act, this Strategy promotes education as a foundation for sustained economic growth and development by equipping individuals with the literacy, numeracy, and other basic skills that will help prepare them to be active, productive members of society and the workforce.

“The READ Act will empower millions of children around the world, particularly girls, by increasing their access to basic education and reducing their vulnerability to poverty, abuse, and extremism.”

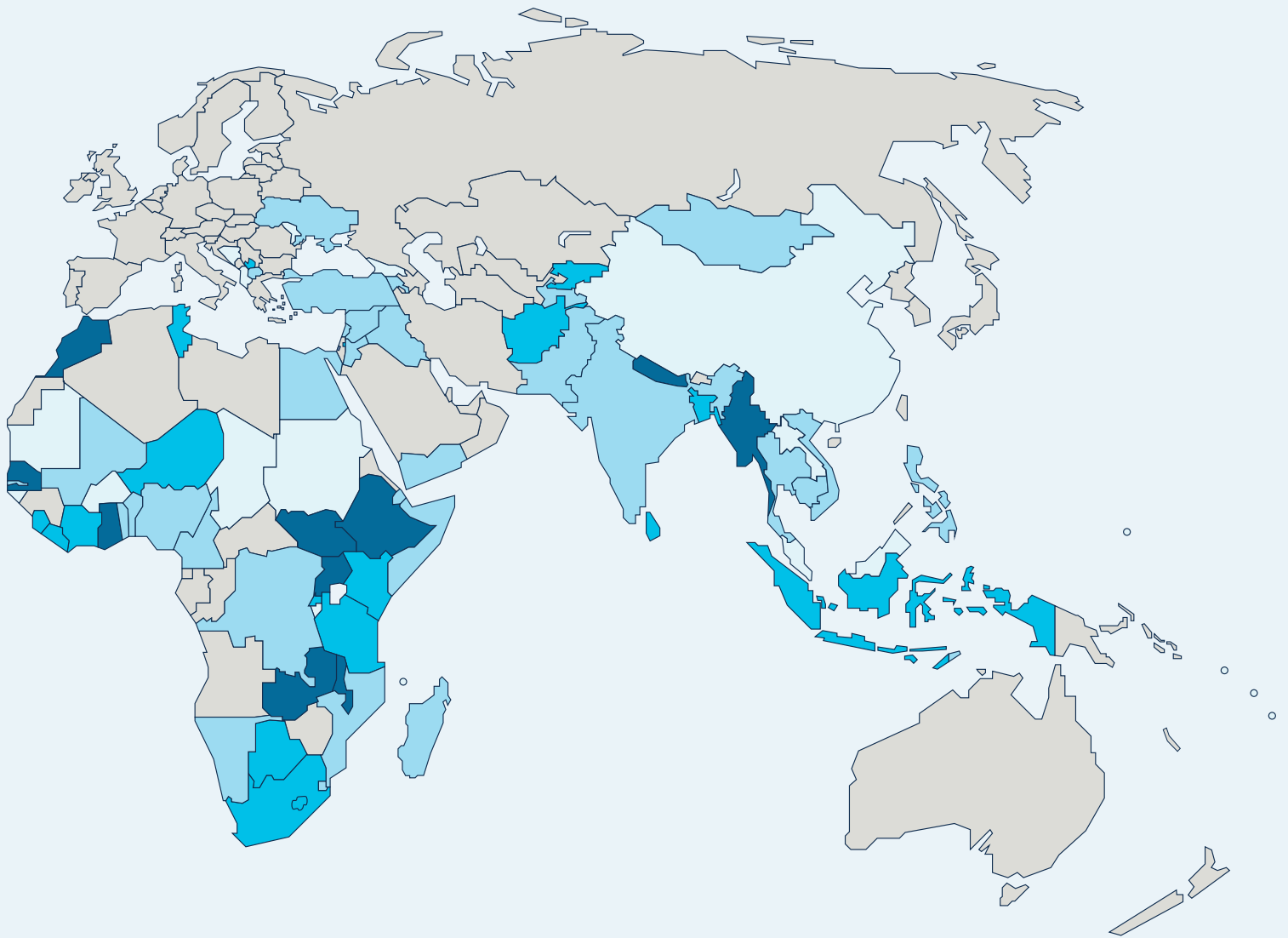
— Senator Marco Rubio [R-FL]

WHERE WE WORK

98 Countries: 1 Shared Vision

The U.S. Government is actively working to achieve a world where education systems in partner countries enable all individuals to acquire the education and skills needed to be productive members of society. Below is an illustrative list of countries with basic education activities, which will be updated yearly in reports to Congress.*





*The map represents a snapshot in time. Future programming is contingent on the availability of funding, Congressional appropriations, and department and agency budgets and priorities.

98 Countries: 1 Shared Vision

The U.S. Government is actively working to achieve a world where education systems in partner countries enable all individuals to acquire the education and skills needed to be productive members of society. Below is an illustrative list of countries where we work, which will be updated yearly in reports to Congress.*

Afghanistan

Department of Labor
Department of State
USAID

Albania

Peace Corps

Argentina

Department of Labor

Armenia

Department of State
Peace Corps

Bangladesh

Department of Labor
Department of State
USAID

Belize

Peace Corps

Benin

MCC
Peace Corps

Bosnia

Department of State

Botswana

Peace Corps
Department of State

Burkina Faso

MCC

Burma (Myanmar)

Department of Labor
Department of State
Peace Corps
USAID

Burundi

Department of State

Cambodia

Peace Corps
USAID

Cameroon

Department of State
Peace Corps

Chad

Department of State

China

Peace Corps

Colombia

Department of Labor
Department of State
Peace Corps

Comoros

Peace Corps

Costa Rica

Department of Labor
Peace Corps

Cote d'Ivoire

Department of Labor
Department of State
MCC

Democratic Republic of the Congo

Department of State
USAID

Djibouti

Department of State
USAID

Dominican Republic

Department of Labor
Peace Corps
USAID

Eastern Caribbean

Peace Corps
USAID

Ecuador

Department of Labor
Department of State
Peace Corps

Egypt

Department of State
USAID

El Salvador

Department of Labor
MCC
USAID

eSwatini

Department of State
Peace Corps

Ethiopia

Department of Labor
Department of State
Peace Corps
USAID

Fiji

Peace Corps

Gambia

MCC
Peace Corps

Georgia

MCC
Department of State
Peace Corps
USAID

Ghana

Department of Labor
Department of State
MCC
Peace Corps
USAID

Grenada

Peace Corps

Guatemala

MCC
Peace Corps
USAID

Guinea-Bissau

Peace Corps

Guyana

Peace Corps

Haiti

Department of Labor
USAID

Honduras

Department of Labor
Department of State
MCC
USAID

India

Department of State
USAID

Indonesia

Department of State
Peace Corps
USAID

Jamaica

Peace Corps

Jordan

Department of State
USAID

Kenya

Department of Labor
Department of State
USAID

Kosovo

MCC
Peace Corps
USAID

Kyrgyz Republic

Department of State
Peace Corps
USAID

Laos

USAID

Lebanon

Department of State
USAID

Lesotho

Department of State
MCC
Peace Corps

Liberia

MCC
Peace Corps
USAID

Macedonia

Peace Corps
USAID

Madagascar

Department of Labor
Peace Corps

Malawi

Department of State
MCC
Peace Corps
USAID

Malaysia

Department of State

Mali

Department of State
USAID

Mauritania

Department of State

Mexico

Department of Labor
Peace Corps

Micronesia

Peace Corps

Moldova

Peace Corps

Mongolia

MCC
Peace Corps

Morocco

Department of State
MCC
Peace Corps
USAID

Mozambique

Department of State
Peace Corps
USAID

Namibia

Department of State
Peace Corps

Nepal

Department of State
MCC
Peace Corps
USAID

Nicaragua

USAID

Niger

Department of State
MCC
USAID

Nigeria

Department of State
USAID

Pakistan

Department of State
USAID

Panama

Department of Labor
Peace Corps

Paraguay

Department of Labor
Peace Corps

Peru

Department of Labor
Peace Corps

Philippines

Peace Corps
USAID

Rwanda

Department of State
Peace Corps
USAID

Samoa

Peace Corps

Senegal

Department of State
MCC
Peace Corps
USAID

Sierre Leone

Department of State
MCC
Peace Corps

Somalia

Department of State
USAID

South Africa

Department of State
Peace Corps
USAID

South Sudan

Department of State
USAID

Sri Lanka

Department of State
MCC
Peace Corps

Sudan

Department of State

Syria

Department of State
USAID

Tajikistan

Department of State
USAID

Tanzania

Department of State
Peace Corps
USAID

Thailand

Department of State
Peace Corps

Timor Leste

MCC
Peace Corps

Togo

MCC
Peace Corps

Tonga

Peace Corps

Tunisia

Department of Labor
Department of State
MCC

Turkey

Department of State
Department of Labor

Uganda

Department of Labor
Department of State
Peace Corps
USAID

Ukraine

Department of State
Peace Corps

Vanuatu

Peace Corps

Vietnam

Department of State
Department of Labor

West Bank and Gaza

Department of State
USAID

Yemen

Department of State
USAID

Zambia

Department of Labor
Department of State
MCC
Peace Corps
USAID

Zimbabwe

Department of State

*The list represents a snapshot in time. Future programming is contingent on the availability of funding, Congressional appropriations, and department and agency budgets and priorities.

The U.S. Government's Collective Efforts

The departments and agencies that contribute to this Strategy collectively allocate more than \$1 billion in FY 2017 and work in more than 90 countries to expand access to quality education and improve learning outcomes and employment.²¹

This Strategy builds on this strong foundation of investments. The U.S. Government recognizes that many factors shape whether or not learners gain the education and skills necessary to contribute to their community. Multiple U.S. Government departments and agencies are involved in supporting international basic education assistance, and each brings distinct resources, capabilities, and experiences to address these factors—resulting in impact that is both broad and deep. Results not only further learning and increase economic growth, but improve the quality of life more broadly by improving health, reducing violence, and increasing participation in democratic governance.

The U.S. Government deploys the department or agency with the greatest comparative advantage and tailors its programs to the unique conditions in partner countries. For example, various departments and agencies may engage in the following work based on their expertise:

- Supporting national nutrition and health programs, recognizing that children must be healthy when they enter school so they are ready to learn;
- Providing a safe place to learn by building new schools and renovating older facilities, including for individuals affected by conflict or crisis;
- Removing children from child labor and providing them with educational alternatives;
- Working with partner countries to reform policies, improve curricula, strengthen data systems, train teachers, and help ensure students have the books and materials necessary to provide an environment conducive to learning;
- Removing barriers to entering formal education for out-of-school children, youth, and adults, assisting in keeping them in school, and providing an opportunity to catch up on schooling for those left behind, so they can ultimately become productive members of society; and
- Providing individuals with relevant education, training, and skills to prepare them to secure employment and develop throughout their career.

Information about each department and agency's work can be found in Annex Two of this Strategy.

The U.S. Government has seen tremendous success in these efforts. For example, Department of Labor projects have rescued close to 2 million children from some of the worst forms of child labor, and provided them with an education.²² Since 2011, USAID has provided early-grade reading instruction to almost 70 million children.²³ The Millennium Challenge Corporation has built or rehabilitated 791 schools and education facilities and trained 216,201 learners.²⁴ Every year Peace Corps Volunteers teach English, math, science, and literacy to 260,000 students around the world.

Working Together to Increase Impact

The U.S. Government's international education work reaches individuals in a variety of different ways and throughout their educational journey. The U.S. Government tailors its programs to the comparative advantages of a department or agency, and the unique conditions in partner countries. For example, departments and agencies engage in the following work based on their expertise:



This Strategy will serve as a critical tool for improved coordination, which will in turn increase the impact of U.S. Government programs. By implementing the vision of the Strategy over the next five years, together with our many partners across the globe, the U.S. Government believes it can have a greater impact.

A MOMENT OF OPPORTUNITY

Working Together to Address the Global Education Challenge

The passage of the READ Act and development of the U.S. Government Strategy on International Basic Education represent an opportunity to learn from global evaluations and evidence, identify gaps, and lay out a clear path forward to increase the U.S. Government's collective impact. Increasing access to quality education for all and improving learning outcomes is an ambitious vision. It is clear that no single intervention, policy change, or investment is sufficient to achieve these objectives. The U.S. Government will build on past progress, learn from our experiences, and take into consideration emerging trends to achieve the following coordination goals:

- 1. Strengthen transparency and accountability and streamline reporting** through a harmonized set of project-level indicators, definitions, disaggregated data, and strengthened monitoring, evaluation, and learning approaches;
- 2. Work to ensure a consistent level of quality across programs** by identifying a knowledge-management system for sharing effective practices, data, and research, and adapting programming based on data and evidence; and
- 3. Improve coordination and reinforce a “One U.S. Government” approach while optimizing the strengths of each department and agency to achieve maximum impact of taxpayer dollars** by promoting increased communication, improving coordination of resources, establishing complementary investments, and burden-sharing among departments, agencies and donors, and encouraging the early co-design and co-creation of programs where appropriate.

Achieving these goals will take thoughtful analysis, planning, resources, and commitment. The following structure and activities will facilitate the achievement of these coordination goals at the global and country level and, in turn, the Strategy's objectives.

The yearly report to Congress will include updates on short-, medium-, and long-term actions identified by the departments and agencies to achieve these coordination goals, as outlined in Annex One of this Strategy.

Global Coordination

The relevant Executive-branch departments, agencies, and officials will establish an Agency Advisory Group and an Interagency International Basic Education Working Group to facilitate robust coordination among federal entities and increase transparency and accountability to Congress and key stakeholders, including other donors and partner governments.

At the global level, the Senior Coordinator for International Basic Education Assistance (Senior Coordinator) at USAID will lead interagency coordination efforts, taking into account resources and expertise across the interagency, past experience, evidence, and lessons learned. As outlined in the READ Act, the Senior Coordinator is responsible for facilitating program and policy coordination of international basic education programs and activities among relevant Executive-branch departments, agencies, and officials; partner governments; multilateral institutions; the private sector; NGOs; and faith-based and civil society organizations.

The Agency Advisory Group—comprised of officials at the level of deputy assistant administrator, deputy assistant secretary, deputy vice president, or comparable level at other departments or agencies—will make final technical and policy decisions related to the implementation of this Strategy.

The Interagency Working Group will improve coordination; work to ensure reporting requirements are met; identify areas for additional collaboration and cross-department and -agency training; and facilitate sharing of research, data, evidence and best practices. Sub-groups will meet as needed to address specific issues, such as education in crisis- and conflict-affected environments; increasing the participation of girls and women in education; disability-inclusive education; monitoring, evaluation and knowledge management; and technology and innovation.

Country-level Coordination

Strong U.S. Government coordination at the country level is necessary for programs to be efficient, effective, and responsive to local needs.

In all countries with multiple U.S. Government agencies investing in education programs, agencies will establish processes to facilitate increased coordination with the goal of sharing data, research, program information, technical expertise, and effective practices.

All work at the country level should seek to support and align with the partner country's education needs and plans that allow for focused investments to achieve sustained impact. U.S. Government interagency teams in partner countries should work together to update existing plans or develop

new plans in alignment with this Strategy, as well as build on experience to date. U.S. Government departments and agencies should identify the most relevant outcomes to pursue through the Integrated Country Strategy (ICS) process and other relevant U.S. Government-wide strategic planning processes. Through these processes, departments and agencies should integrate country-specific targets and objectives, coordinate approaches to implementation, and streamline monitoring and reporting. Additionally, each department and agency's specific country strategy should define specific objectives.

To accelerate country-level coordination and identify best practices, the Agency Advisory Group, in coordination with in-country field staff, will identify countries where the U.S. Government currently devotes significant resources to basic education through multiple agencies.

In these countries, agencies will, to the extent practicable:

- Coordinate programs;
- Identify opportunities to co-design interventions at the earliest planning stages;
- Establish a specific interagency coordination structure; and
- Explore the possibility of co-investing in programs.

The best practices and lessons learned from these countries will inform future programmatic coordination across all countries where the U.S. Government works in basic education.

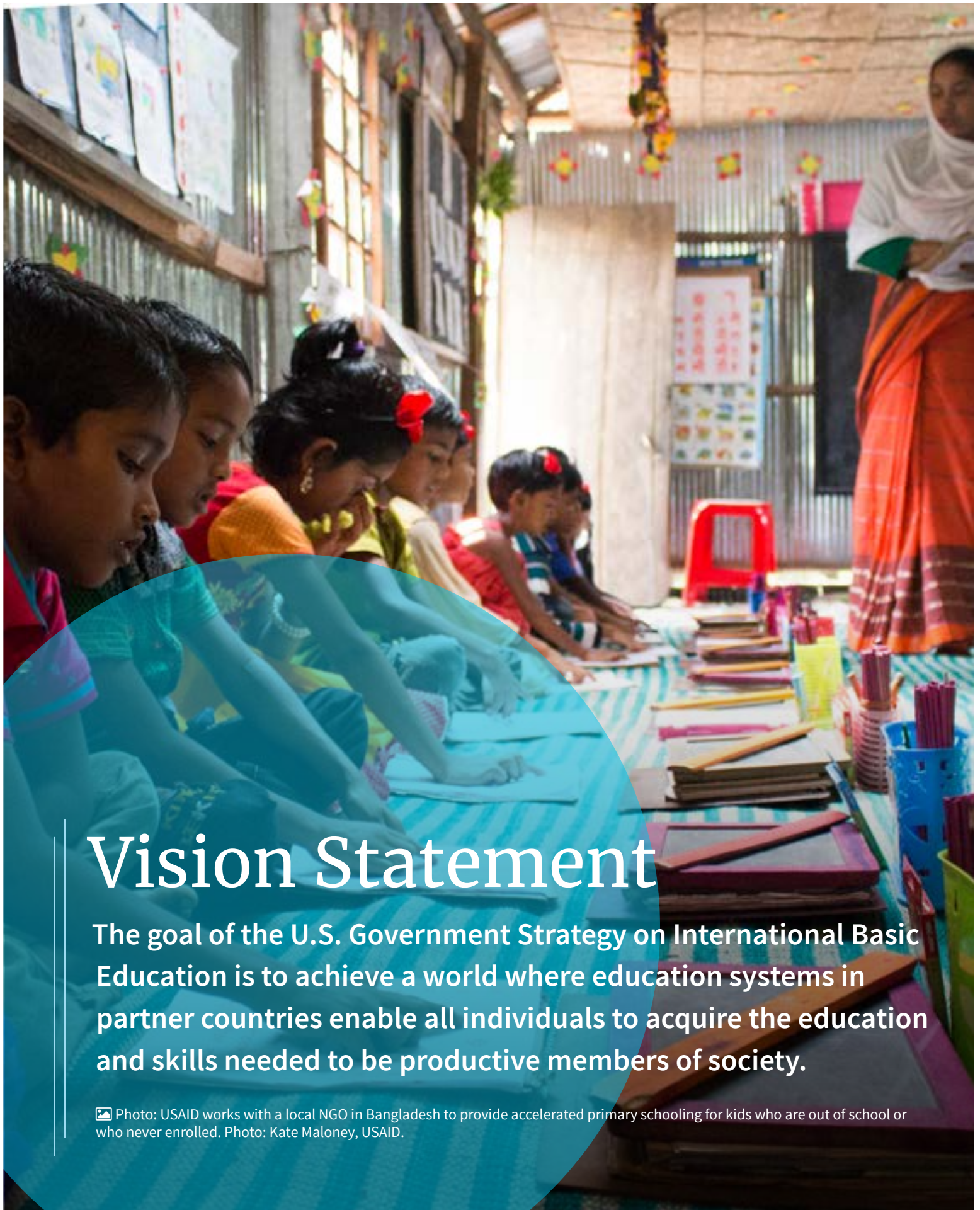
Cross-Sectoral Coordination

The U.S. Government Strategy on International Basic Education recognizes the connections between education and economic growth, democracy, governance, health, humanitarian assistance, peace and security, resilience, and safeguarding natural resources.

While cross-sector projects require more coordination to implement and fund,²⁵ combined interventions also have the potential to lead to greater outcomes than those implemented without coordination. Through a “Communities of Learning” approach to community engagement, as defined in the READ Act, education centers can be resource hubs for the delivery of services to the community at large—leveraging and maximizing the impact of other development efforts.


Barriers to education can originate in other sectors beyond education. To increase impact, build resilience, and produce broader development gains, education programs should work with other sectors, when appropriate, to address these barriers—for example, by considering the impact of transportation, infrastructure, lack of early stimulation and nurture, health, nutrition, social norms, vulnerability to labor exploitation, household income, and extreme weather.

Coordination may take the form of interventions explicitly coordinated across departments, agencies, and sectors toward shared program logic, outputs and outcomes, and targets. Coordination may also take the form of proactive sequencing of programs to help bridge gaps in programming—such as the gap between humanitarian and development assistance—to help ensure programs build upon each other and gains are sustained.



Vision Statement

The goal of the U.S. Government Strategy on International Basic Education is to achieve a world where education systems in partner countries enable all individuals to acquire the education and skills needed to be productive members of society.

 Photo: USAID works with a local NGO in Bangladesh to provide accelerated primary schooling for kids who are out of school or who never enrolled. Photo: Kate Maloney, USAID.

Guiding Principles

The U.S. approach to expanding access to quality education and improving learning outcomes will be guided by prioritizing country ownership; engaging holistically with education systems to strengthen their capacity and performance; partnering to leverage resources; and responding to country needs and opportunities.

Prioritize Country Ownership

The U.S. Government believes it is critical for stakeholders in partner countries to own and lead efforts to help ensure that children, youth, and adults are acquiring the education and skills needed to be productive members of society. Each country is different, with unique challenges, contexts and opportunities. The U.S. Government will tailor its efforts to each country's circumstances and environment while encouraging local ownership and engagement, which are critical to sustaining progress.

The U.S. Government will work with a variety of local actors and stakeholders to determine the approaches most appropriate to achieving country ownership. Beyond working with partner-country and local governments, U.S. Government departments and agencies will engage and empower parents and caregivers, students and youth, community leaders, civil society, faith-based organizations, the private sector, academia, and other actors to lead the way to self-reliance. U.S. Government diplomatic engagement and programs will use a variety of approaches to strengthen partner-country education systems and outcomes, including policy reform, performance-based assistance,²⁶ public-private partnerships, technical assistance, and capacity-development support.

To the greatest extent feasible and appropriate, programs and activities will align with and support national education plans and development strategies of partner countries.

Strengthen the Capacity and Performance of Education Systems

For U.S. Government's programs to be effective, they must address a range of policy, technical, institutional, and social constraints, based on a country's needs. Even the strongest evidence-based education programming will not be sustainable if the policy environment is not supportive and the institutional capacity and commitment of private and public partners are weak. Learning will not support poverty-reducing economic growth if education programming does not align with market needs.

Local public and private resources must also be able to sustainably finance education programs after U.S. Government programs end. Thorough analysis of the strengths and weaknesses of local education systems, institutions, and workforce demands are needed to inform realistic, sustainable, and evidence-based approaches tailored to each environment.

Engage with Education Systems Holistically

An education system consists of the people, public and private institutions, resources, and activities whose primary purpose is to improve, expand, and sustain education outcomes.

Achieving real, sustainable change depends on the collective contributions from a range of interconnected actors, including national and local governments, schools, teachers, administrators, parents and caregivers, NGOs, faith-based and community organizations, universities, the private sector, and other partners.

In each country, the specific actors vary, as well as their motivating factors, constraints, and capacity levels. Strengthening the capacity and relationships of those involved at various levels—school, community, region and country—increases resilience and adaptability.

Strengthening institutions and promoting local ownership depends on the ability to work with stakeholders effectively. Each system must be understood and addressed individually with transparent, contextualized, and locally driven solutions. Even evidence-based approaches and effective practices must be integrated in context-specific ways.

The ability to sustainably finance and deliver services that improve learning and employment outcomes for all individuals is essential to each country's progress toward self-reliance. Improving learning outcomes relies mainly on the ability to satisfy and continuously refine these fundamental objectives simultaneously:²⁷

1. Individuals arrive prepared to learn (including addressing external factors such as nutrition, medical care, housing, and safety, among others);
2. Parents and communities have the knowledge and support to make informed choices about their children's education;
3. Teachers and instructors have the skills, support, data, and motivation to teach effectively in positive environments;
4. Inputs (e.g., schools, textbooks, teacher guides, and school budgets) reach classrooms and contribute to learning; and
5. Management and governance systems support schooling and training access, quality, and relevance.

These objectives must align with a country’s laws, policies, and informal governance mechanisms for education systems to produce learning results that prepare an individual to be an active, productive member of society and the workforce.

Capacity must also be matched with commitment—for example, by systematically:

- Assessing learning and using evidence to set priorities and inform policies;
- Assessing how contextual risks such as violence, insecurity, natural hazards, and pandemics impact education—and how education influences these risks;
- Understanding trends and needs in the workforce—and aligning pedagogy and training accordingly;
- Developing effective management-information systems, enabling policies, and technical capacity to track student and teacher outcomes and support data-driven decision-making;
- Mobilizing financial resources and devoting sufficient resources to education;
- Tackling system-level technical and political barriers to change; and
- Engaging with parents, caregivers, and communities.

Innovative Financing

When it comes to large-scale reforms, the institutional and social impacts of effective education systems can be as transformational at the country level as they are for the individual.

In strengthening education systems, particular attention should be directed to building up capabilities for governance, accountability, transparency, and resilience, as well as the adequacy, reliability, and effectiveness of domestic public and private financial resources invested in education.

The U.S. Government understands the importance of burden sharing with partner countries to achieve an effective balance between foreign assistance, domestic public resources, and private capital as they move toward determining and financing their own development. Domestic resource-mobilization efforts—the process through which countries raise and spend their own funds to provide for their people—help ensure the ability of partner countries to fund and deliver public services, particularly education.

The U.S. Government recognizes that achieving the objectives of this Strategy will require that we actively explore all options for education service delivery and financing mechanisms, including fund matching with other donors and/or partner countries. In addition, the U.S. Government will take a targeted and tailored approach to identify opportunities where private sector partners may offer a comparative advantage and can complement the public sector. The growth of non-state education institutions offers an opportunity for innovation that can improve education outcomes for all.

Track Progress and Identify Gaps

The capacity of partner countries to collect, manage, and use quality data is critical to the ability to track progress and identify gaps in education service delivery.

Strong partner-country education data systems are necessary to sustainably improve education service delivery and promote transparency and accountability throughout the education system. Understanding the importance of quality data to inform decision-making, the U.S. Government will work with partner countries to reinforce and support their capacity to collect and use good quality, disaggregated education data, such as on learning outcomes, displaced populations, and out-of-school individuals.

Partner to Leverage Resources

To use every U.S. taxpayer dollar efficiently and achieve the objectives of this Strategy, collaboration and coordination with partner countries, donors, non-traditional development partners, civil society, and the private sector is critical. The U.S. Government will seek new opportunities to maximize and leverage its technical and financial resources through efficient and accountable engagement with partner countries, multilateral organizations, and other donors; innovative partnerships with the private sector; and smart technology solutions.

Partner Countries

The U.S. Government will encourage burden-sharing with recipient governments to promote the joint funding of education efforts.

Domestic resource mobilization and co-financing will help build self-reliance, ensure the longer-term sustainability of programs, and help pave the way to decreasing reliance on foreign assistance. The U.S. Government will seek to incentivize these types of burden-sharing mechanisms, such as through fund-matching, which can increase resources overall and spur national commitments to basic education.

Multilateral Institutions, International Organizations, and Other Donors

The U.S. Government will leverage its engagement in multilateral institutions, international organizations, and global funds to advance its objectives in international education.

U.S. Government engagement with these entities includes, but is not limited to, the Global Partnership for Education, Education Cannot Wait, multilateral development banks (MDBs), and other international organizations.

The U.S. Government will use diplomatic efforts to influence the resource and programming decisions of these institutions and continue to provide leadership and technical expertise to help ensure multilateral efforts are complementary to, and not duplicative of, U.S. Government efforts. This includes utilizing the U.S. Government's leadership role in multilateral development banks. While strategic priorities vary by institution, the MDBs' approach to education are broadly well aligned with U.S. Government objectives and will help improve in-country coordination among donors and amplify the impact of U.S. financial resources.

The U.S. Government will also work with other donor countries toward common goals of expanding inclusive, equitable, and quality education and promoting lifelong learning opportunities for all. The U.S. will also expand its efforts to it will also identify ways to leverage other resources to maximize collective impact in support of partner countries' own development priorities.

The Private Sector, Academia, and Implementing Organizations

The private sector, academia, and implementing organizations are critical partners in achieving the objectives of this Strategy, with the capability to unleash innovations in financing, data, research, and methods.

The private sector has an inherent interest in working with the U.S. Government and partner countries to educate and train individuals so they enter the workforce with demand-driven skills for the 21st century. Beyond a vested interest in an educated population, the private sector brings innovative approaches and unique solutions to the education challenges faced by partner countries, including through the operation of schools and providing technology and technical assistance to them.

Academia, including U.S.-based and partner-country colleges and universities, are contributing to the evidence base on international basic education through research and innovations. These higher education institutions are also a valuable partner in building the capacity and expertise of partner countries, especially through teacher training.

Implementing organizations, both international and local, play a critical role in carrying out U.S. Government programs in partner countries. They partner with the U.S. Government as technical experts, conveners, and researchers, among other roles, to help ensure U.S. Government assistance is put into action as effectively and efficiently as possible. Through innovative financing mechanisms, the U.S. will also seek to mobilize private sector capital towards its education objectives

U.S. Department of the Treasury Improves Equitable Access to Education through Engagement with Multilateral Development Banks

The U.S. Department of the Treasury aims to improve equitable access to education through its engagement with the multilateral development banks. For example, Treasury, through its position on the Executive Board of the Asian Development Bank (ADB), has been a strong supporter of the ADB's work to rebuild schools devastated by the 2015 earthquake in Nepal. Completed in 2017, the ADB's school sector program in Nepal funded the construction of separate male and female toilets in more than 17,000 school buildings, contributing to helping keep girls in school, as well as the provision of textbooks and other learning materials, reaching 7 million students in the country.

Likewise, at the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development (EBRD), the U.S. is supporting workforce training and development in Croatia. The goal of this initiative is to address the skills mismatch of young people and barriers of progression for young women. To achieve this goal, the EBRD is working with private sector companies, professional women's associations, and academic institutions to:

- Introduce recognized international standards in relation to internship policies and practices, as well as mentorship opportunities, in the Croatian private sector;
- Foster closer engagement of the private sector and academic institutions to make curricula in higher education institutions more relevant for local industries;
- Invite private companies to join and offer high quality internship opportunities that add value to learning outcomes for students; and
- Provide the private sector with a larger talent pool of potential employees and create significant capacity building for future interns, companies and mentors.

Since launching, over 100 companies and more than 30 academic institutions have joined. They have collectively mobilized more than 500 internships to date, allowing young people to gain their first work experience.



Harnessing Technology and Innovation

Innovative approaches and technology can reduce cost and improve effectiveness, resulting in expanded access to quality education and improved learning outcomes.

Where a technology-based solution makes sense given country needs and context, the U.S. Government will work to identify, implement, test, and scale up that solution.

Technology and innovation provide the opportunity to engage families and communities effectively and efficiently, increase the impact of teacher training, improve transparency and accountability, streamline teacher pay, and reach marginalized and vulnerable populations—including those unable to attend school because of crisis or conflict, children engaged in child labor, persons with disabilities, and girls, among others.

The U.S. Government will seek new opportunities to leverage technical and financial resources to strengthen the financing and delivery of quality education, expand the appropriate use of technology, pilot and evaluate new approaches for cost effectiveness, and identify system-level solutions that build capacity for improved policymaking, implementation, monitoring, and accountability.

Respond to Country Needs and Opportunities

Each U.S. Government department and agency will continue to follow its own process for selecting the countries in which it works. To meet the requirements of the READ Act, departments and agencies will also take into consideration the foreign-policy and economic interests of the United States and give priority to countries in which:


1. There is the greatest need and opportunity to expand access to basic education and to improve learning outcomes, including for marginalized and vulnerable groups, particularly girls and women to help ensure gender parity in basic education, or populations affected by conflict or crisis;
2. Assistance can produce a substantial, measurable impact on children, youth, and educational systems; and
3. There is the greatest potential to reduce child and adolescent exposure to, or engagement in, violent extremism or extremist ideologies.

An annual report to Congress will include a description of resource allocations across partner countries by all relevant U.S. Government departments and agencies.

Objectives

The U.S. Government Strategy on International Basic Education has two principal objectives to promote greater U.S. Government coherence and accountability for its work on international basic education:

1. Improve learning outcomes
2. Expand access to quality basic education for all, particularly marginalized and vulnerable populations

 USAID works with a local NGO in Port-au-Prince, Haiti to integrate students who are blind and visually impaired into the classroom. Photo: Aaron Rossi, USAID.

OBJECTIVE 1

Improve Learning Outcomes

Learning is essential for individuals to gain the skills necessary to be productive members of society and the workforce.²⁸

The READ Act states that the U.S. Government Strategy on International Basic Education shall include promoting quality basic education to “measurably improve the quality of basic education and learning outcomes.” Since 2000, school enrollment increased and the number of out-of-school children and youth was nearly cut in half.²⁹ Dramatic progress has been made toward gender parity, mainly in access to primary education. However, despite these improvements in access, significant gaps persist, and hundreds of millions of children and youth around the world are reaching adulthood without even the most basic life skills.

Achieving universal primary and secondary education would help to lift more than 420 million people out of poverty, reducing the number of poor in the world by more than half.³⁰ In addition, societies that provide their population with inclusive, quality education are less prone to violent conflict.³¹

While continuing to make progress in equitable access is important, particularly in areas affected by crisis and conflict, the immediate next challenge is education quality. Learning is a critical instrument for promoting shared prosperity and reducing poverty. Fortunately, a focus on learning outcomes has increasingly become a priority for education systems and programs around the world.

It is important for children, youth, and adults to continue to learn through each stage of life. This will require education that is relevant, adaptable, and reflective of context. The U.S. Government will work with the public and private sector in partner countries at each stage of an individual’s education to help ensure learners gain the skills they need to successfully move on to the next stage in their educational journey.

The U.S. Government will work with partner countries to continue to prioritize learning by:

1. Providing children with a strong foundation;
2. Improving basic skills; and
3. Preparing individuals for a productive future.

“By giving young people in impoverished regions the tools to read and write, we will put them down a positive path where they are better able to care for themselves, the needs of their families, and their communities. The opportunity for a basic education will also help these children live longer, healthier lives and will promote stability in areas of the world suffering from conflict.”

— Representative Dave Reichert [R-WA]

SPOTLIGHT

U.S. Department of Education Builds the Evidence Base on Early Learning Non-Academic Outcomes

The U.S. Department of Education (ED) continues to invest in and use the results of research both funded by the Department and published by independent researchers to inform program policy, implementation, and continuous improvement. Use of evidence by both ED and its grantees remains a crucial component of improving teaching and learning for all students.

Research on early childhood points to the preschool years as a crucial and unique time to intervene in the development of cognitive and socio-emotional skills, as tremendous brain development occurs during this window.⁴⁹ Though we often think of the purpose of formal education as purely academic, education involves much more than teaching children to read, write, add and subtract—it includes teaching them to navigate social interactions, form relationships, set goals, and persist in tasks.

ED will continue to provide research on early childhood academic and non-academic outcomes through ED-funded Technical Assistance Centers, and this research will be utilized to inform the international basic education work of the U.S. Government.



 Photo: Boy and Girl reading. USAID South Sudan.

Provide Children with a Strong Foundation

The U.S. Government understands the importance of a strong foundation and will work with local communities to provide children with the support and resources needed to build skills for academic and life-long success.

High-quality early childhood education pays huge dividends later in life in terms of a child's long-term development and learning.³² Early childhood education increases the likelihood of a child enrolling in primary school, while also preparing them to learn.

However, in low-income countries, just one in five children has access to a quality preschool.³³ Nearly one-third of all children enter primary school without the cognitive, social-emotional, and language skills needed to fulfill their potential. Children who do not receive the developmental support they need at the earliest stages of life are vulnerable to many risks, including impaired cognitive function and stunted physical growth. These risks often exacerbate inequality and the cycle of poverty.

The U.S. Government understands the importance of a strong foundation and will work with local communities, including parents and caregivers, to provide children with the support and resources needed to build skills for academic and life-long success. U.S. Government interventions will be adapted to meet the specific contexts of each community and country.

U.S. Government programs, in both state and non-state schools, will focus on two areas in early childhood—child nutrition and health programs and preschool programs—that foster the physical, cognitive, linguistic, and social-emotional development of young children.

Improve Basic Skills

The U.S. Government will prioritize measurable learning outcomes, especially in literacy, numeracy, and other basic skills.

The ability to read, write, and do math is necessary for all future learning, skills development, and employment. Yet worldwide, 387 million children and youth cannot read or do basic math, even though more than two-thirds of them have attended four or more years of school.³⁴

While more children and youth than ever are attending school, many are not learning while they are there. The lack of basic skills leads to lower attendance, increases dropout rates, and results in unsuccessful school careers and transitions to the workforce.

Within its work in basic education, the U.S. Government will prioritize measurable learning outcomes, especially in literacy, numeracy, and other basic skills (including soft skills such as social-emotional skills and problem-solving).

The U.S. Government will work with partner countries to increase the percentage of students who attain a minimum proficiency in reading and math, particularly at the end of primary school. To accomplish this, U.S. Government programs, where appropriate, will encourage schools to utilize student-centered learning and to teach in a language children speak and understand; assist schools in the acquisition of high-quality learning materials and textbooks; provide teachers with quality training and ongoing support; encourage the use of assessments to support instruction; provide daily school meals to increase attendance and attentiveness; provide hearing and vision screening; and support opportunities for learners to put their newly acquired skills and knowledge to practice.

Supporting teachers and instructors with practical and transformative professional development standards and

SPOTLIGHT

USAID Works with the Government of Kenya to Improve Literacy

In Kenya, primary school enrollment rates have increased across the country, but attendance does not always translate to improved literacy skills. USAID and Kenya's Ministry of Education, Science, and Technology agree that literacy helps people break the cycle of poverty and have collaborated in developing and implementing the Tusome (Let's Read) Early Grade Reading activity.


The goal of Tusome is to improve the literacy skills of 5.4 million children who are in the foundational years of primary school in Kenya. The decision to focus on reading came in 2012, when improving early grade learning was embedded in the National Education Sector Plan (2013-2018). Tusome, building on prior joint programming, reaches an annual 1.1 million Kenyan children, half of whom are girls, to build basic reading skills across 23,000 public schools.

Tusome is creating positive impact by addressing several factors that can improve learning outcomes. Because access to quality reading materials can be the single greatest factor in achieving literacy, Tusome will distribute more than 24 million English and Kiswahili textbooks, workbooks and supplemental readers by 2019.

Tusome is uploading real-time learner performance data and making it available to local and national education stakeholders to help strengthen the education system and foster accountability throughout the system. And

Tusome is using innovative teaching methods as well as supporting a sustainable system to provide continuous instructional leadership to teachers and administrators because there is no substitute for well-trained and supported teachers.



 Rashid Ngala, student in the Tusome Early Grade Reading program. Photo: Eric Onyiego, USAID Kenya.

SPOTLIGHT

MCC Working with El Salvador to Strengthen the Education System

A shortage of skilled labor is a key factor that limits investment in El Salvador's export sector as well as its competitiveness in global markets.

MCC invested \$30 million as part of its first compact with El Salvador to help students in the poorest area—the Northern Zone—to develop the necessary skills to work in the country's growth industries. The compact supported renovating 20 secondary technical schools, developing demand-driven curricula, training teachers, and providing scholarships.

The second MCC compact, the \$277-million El Salvador Investment Compact, will focus on strengthening the national education system by reforming the

laws, policies, and operations that govern teacher continuous professional development, student assessment, and information systems. Teacher training will enhance teachers' knowledge in key subject areas as well as pedagogical training in active learning methods. To help teachers apply the training, curricular learning plans and improved methods to assess student learning will be developed, as will a system of teacher performance management.

The compact will also implement the full-time, integrated school model, which extends the school day from part-time to full-time, provides instruction using active learning methods in core subjects including English, math, science, and information technology, and focuses on competency development. MCC will make significant investments in infrastructure and equipment to improve the learning environment and ensure that a high school will exist in each cluster of schools, allowing greater attainment at the secondary level.



 Photos courtesy of MCC.

benchmarks to measure progress is critical to ensure they are well equipped to teach. At the secondary level, programs will build on basic skills by also supporting the development of critical life skills, workforce-readiness skills, and soft skills (such as social-emotional learning), particularly for children affected by child labor or conflict and crisis.

Prepare Individuals for a Productive Future

The U.S. Government will work with partner countries and the private sector to improve primary and secondary school retention rates, decrease dropout rates, remove barriers to education for youth of secondary-school age, and improve the quality of formal and non-formal education opportunities.

The majority of the world's youth live in developing countries. Due to economic circumstances, the opportunity cost of staying in school versus engaging in the workforce increases every year. Without opportunities to learn and gain relevant skills, many drop out of school—particularly at the transition point from primary to secondary—or never enroll in the first place. In most developing countries, the likelihood of dropout increases with age. On average, 15- to 17-year-olds are four times as likely to be out of school as children aged 6 to 11.³⁵ This trend places many youth on a path toward violence, exploitation, underemployment, unemployment, and marginalization.

Once individuals, particularly youth or women, leave the formal education system, most developing countries lack the “on-ramp” to allow them to upgrade their skills or get a second chance. New job opportunities are being developed by private sector employers or through entrepreneurship, but these individuals do not have the skills necessary to problem-solve, innovate, or adapt to changing market demands. Advances in technology and

growing globalization increasingly demand a higher-skilled and agile workforce. In today's global knowledge economy, employees with relevant skills are critical to a country's productivity and business's competitive advantages.

To best prepare out-of-school youth for a productive future, U.S. Government programs will work to ensure they have necessary and relevant basic skills—such as literacy and numeracy—while helping them to develop job skills, including soft skills and digital literacy. Programs will create pathways to re-enter the formal school system through alternative or accelerated education opportunities that allow for second chances to achieve primary or secondary school equivalency. Programs will also work with youth to overcome barriers that cause dropout, such as child labor, child, early, and forced marriage, and early pregnancy for adolescent girls and young women.

Global youth unemployment and under employment remain disproportionately high, while at the same time, many of the world's employers report that job candidates lack the technical and soft skills needed to fill available positions.³⁶ The quality and relevance of education and training in developing countries are often poor, as traditional education institutions are frequently ill equipped to respond to the quickly changing demands of the labor market.

To counter these trends, education systems must teach market-relevant skills at the secondary level. By engaging the private sector and ministries of labor or employment in education systems, countries can best ensure formal schooling, technical vocational education and training (TVET) institutions, and other youth workforce development programs are preparing young people to enter and succeed in the workforce.

The U.S. Government will work with partner countries and the private sector to improve primary and secondary school retention rates, remove barriers to education for youth of secondary-school age (with a focus on girls and other marginalized populations), and improve the quality of formal and non-formal education opportunities.

For out-of-school youth, programs will focus on providing a range of skills—from basic skills they may have missed in formal education, such as literacy and numeracy, to soft skills and technical skills—that will either help them re-enter formal schooling or prepare them for the workforce (in safe and age-appropriate work) through workforce development programs and vocational training.

For those learners who remain in school through their youth, the U.S. Government will continue to prioritize learning, in particular the knowledge and skills needed for successful livelihoods. U.S. Government programs will help schools integrate a combination of soft skills, other market relevant skills, and civic-minded materials into their curricula.

For youth nearing the end of their education or training, best efforts will be made to help them understand how to navigate the job market and make connections with potential employers, particularly through partnerships with the private sector, including apprenticeships. These types of in-depth experiences can deepen their knowledge and create successful career pathways.



Reducing Child Labor through Viable Paths in Education and Decent Work

Hayat was in the sixth grade when she dropped out of school to try to help take care of her mother, sick father, and four brothers, one of whom was suffering from cancer. But with little education or training, she found she had few options for a bright future.

Now 18 years old, she is a chef at a top-ranked restaurant in Marrakech, where she also completed an internship. This transformation in Hayat's life from vulnerable and out-of-school to skilled and employed is thanks to the Promise Pathways project, funded by the U.S. Department of Labor. "When Promise Pathways reached out to me, I benefited from many things: studying baking and pastries, medical care for me and my family, and getting an ID card and a business card." The project provided Hayat with vocational training and the opportunity to access a safe and fulfilling career. It also gave her the psychosocial support needed to chart a new course for her future. Among her fellow chefs and the restaurant manager, Hayat is a star employee. She is self-confident and optimistic about the road ahead. "Because of this project my life has changed, and I am at a happy place now."

 Photo courtesy of the Department of Labor.

OBJECTIVE 2

Expand Access to Quality Basic Education for All, Particularly Marginalized and Vulnerable Populations

For individuals to learn, they should be in safe, equitable, and quality learning environments.

Over the last two decades, remarkable progress has been made to provide access to primary education for children around the world. Since 2000, the number of out-of-school children of primary-school age fell drastically—by 42 percent as of 2012. Despite this progress, 263 million children and youth are still out of school.³⁷

To expand access to quality education for all, particular focus is needed for marginalized and vulnerable groups. Progress made since 2000 on getting children and youth into school was not equitable—millions continue to be marginalized and remain out of school. These include girls; individuals who either live in or have fled communities torn apart by crises or conflicts; those who are marginalized or vulnerable due to poverty, ethnicity, location, and disability; and/or persons denied the opportunity to receive an education by individuals or organizations intent on exploiting them. Exclusion, marginalization, and vulnerability are heightened when these factors are combined.

The READ Act states that the U.S. Government Strategy shall promote quality basic education by “seeking to equitably expand access to basic education for all children, particularly marginalized children and vulnerable groups.”

No country can achieve its development objectives if a large swath of the population is denied access to a quality education. Therefore, the U.S. Government will work with partner countries to break down barriers and expand access to safe, equitable, and quality education opportunities for all, especially the most marginalized and vulnerable.

The U.S. Government recognizes the importance of receiving a quality education in a positive learning environment, as well as the negative impacts on society when populations are left behind. It will focus its efforts on working with partner countries to provide the most marginalized and vulnerable groups with equal access to safe and quality education.

“ Passage of the READ Act will help provide children, particularly girls, with a quality education and empower them to improve the lives of their families and change the course of nations. This bipartisan achievement will help unleash the potential of children across the globe and arm them with the necessary tools to break the cycles of poverty, violence, and extremism.”

— Senator Richard Durbin [D-IL]

This includes:

1. Children and youth affected by crisis and conflict, especially those who are displaced;
2. Individuals who experience discrimination and marginalization, including girls; and
3. Children and youth vulnerable to violence, abuse, and exploitation, particularly child laborers, married adolescents, and victims of trafficking.

Crisis- and Conflict-Affected Children and Youth

For the 75 million children and youth living in countries affected by violence, conflict, and humanitarian crises, access to education is an immense challenge.³⁸ Schools are destroyed, armed groups attack students, and teachers and families flee violence, poverty, and famine.

Children living in the most fragile environments make up about 20 percent of the world's primary-school-age population, yet they represent about 50 percent of those not in school.³⁹ Education can be disrupted for years on end—the average time a refugee spends displaced is 17 years, an entire childhood.⁴⁰ Crisis and conflict can lead to whole generations being denied an education.

Communities often identify education as their number-one priority during conflict and crisis. Parents and caregivers want their children to attend school and have a chance at a better future. When education is offered in these environments, it can have far-reaching, positive effects. Schools provide emotional and physical protection, instill a sense of routine and hope for the future, foster positive relationships, support the resilience and stabilization of communities, and build livelihood skills.

The U.S. Government understands the tremendous stress placed on education during crisis and conflict. Given the dynamic and fluid nature of these environments, U.S. Government education programs will collaborate to respond to short-term educational needs while also working with stakeholders from partner countries to address long-term, systemic reforms needed to mitigate future crises and build individual, community, and institutional resilience. The U.S. Government will work with local institutions and across programs to appropriately respond to each circumstance.

Education programs will be based on an analysis of education needs and opportunities; seek to support and align with the partner country's education needs and plans; be flexible and adaptive based on the environment; integrate conflict sensitivity; and adhere to the principle of “do no harm” by using research to learn and adapt.


SPOTLIGHT

U.S. Department of Defense Assisting Children Affected by the Conflict in Syria

In 2015, U.S. Central Command (USCENTCOM) provided 20,000 back-to-school kits for primary schools in the five regions of Lebanon impacted by the influx of Syrian refugees.

The influx of refugees along Lebanon's borders increased the number of students in the public school system. USCENTCOM implemented the project with security and transportation assistance from the Lebanese Armed Forces. This project enhanced the Government of Lebanon's capacity to provide essential services while demonstrating DOD's efforts to enhance credibility of the Government of Lebanon. The project also helped mitigate a source of instability arising from increased numbers of impoverished families living in Lebanon.



 U.S. Army Sgt. Joshua Smith, 82nd Airborne Division's 2nd Battalion, 504th Parachute Infantry Regiment, 1st Brigade Combat Team, talks to group of Afghan children during a combined patrol clearing operation in Afghanistan's Ghazni province. Photo: Courtesy of the U.S. Army.

SPOTLIGHT

The State Department Expands Access to Education for Displaced Persons


Today, more people are displaced around the world than at any time since World War II.

These displaced persons include internally displaced people (IDPs), asylum seekers, and refugees, many of whom are children and youth. Of the 6.4 million school-age refugees, more than half of them—3.5 million—are not in school. In addition, these children and youth are now spending longer periods of time in displacement, increasing the need for a collective response from host countries, neighboring countries, and the global community to ensure entire generations do not miss out on an education.

The Department of State's Bureau of Population, Refugees and Migration (PRM) aims to expand access to education for refugees and others affected by conflict through support to humanitarian programs that provide education as well as through humanitarian diplomacy. PRM considers education critical to the protection of displaced populations as it can provide life-saving information, address psycho-social needs, and offer a place safe from conflict and crisis. PRM also considers education a key intervention in promoting refugee self-reliance and preparing for durable solutions as education can help provide necessary skills to earn a living and pursue productive and meaningful lives. PRM supports a range of NGO programs to improve education by investing in teachers, ensuring schools are inclusive and safe, conducting outreach to increase access for girls, and providing alternative programs such as accelerated learning, catch up or bridge support, and vocational training.

JOHN LUIS, 13

More than 1.5 million South Sudanese refugees have fled to neighboring countries in the region, around half of which are located in Uganda. With the future of an entire generation of South Sudanese children at stake and with few prospects of a quick resolution to the conflict, it is imperative that in countries of asylum, like Uganda, humanitarian and development partners come together to invest in the future of refugee children—life skills, education, peace-building, and reconciliation.

 Thirteen-year-old South Sudanese refugee John Luis, from Juba, South Sudan, at Ofonze Primary School in Bidibidi refugee settlement, Yumbe District, Northern Region, Uganda. Photo courtesy of the Department of State. © UNHCR/David Azia.



The U.S. Government will prioritize sustaining and expanding access to quality education services and training opportunities for individuals in crisis-affected environments by:

- Carrying out rapid assessments to gauge the needs and risks associated with education;
- Supporting access to quality, protective education services at the onset of a humanitarian emergency, particularly for refugees and displaced populations;
- Strengthening local institutions, both state and non-state, to effectively deliver quality formal and non-formal education and training that result in measurable improvements in literacy, numeracy, soft skills, and other relevant skills (including social-emotional skills);
- Providing safe, accessible, and supportive learning environments for students and teachers;
- Supporting teachers and other education personnel to acquire the necessary skills and abilities to address the unique needs of conflict-affected children and youth;
- Working to ensure that education programs advance humanitarian-development coherence so that emergency programs respond to immediate needs but also consider long-term quality education service delivery; and
- Fostering local accountability by empowering and engaging students, out-of-school youth, parents, and communities to actively improve education opportunities.

Individuals Experiencing Discrimination and Marginalization, Including Girls

Hundreds of millions of people are denied access to a safe, quality education because of their gender, sexual orientation, location, poverty, ethnicity, or disability.

Hundreds of millions of people are marginalized due to circumstances beyond their control. For them, the learning crisis is amplified. They are denied access to a safe, quality education because of their gender, sexual orientation, location, poverty, ethnicity, or disability—and individuals often experience more than one of these at the same time, leading to even greater marginalization.

Gender affects educational attainment and completion for both girls and boys. Globally, however, girls are more likely to be out of school than boys—62 million girls between the ages of six and 15 are not in school.⁴¹ In conflict-affected countries, adolescent girls are at particular risk—girls are 90 percent more likely to be out of secondary school than girls in stable countries.⁴² Girls around the world face enormous obstacles to getting a quality education. Among them are poverty; geographical isolation; minority status; disability; inadequate infrastructure, including water, sanitation, and hygiene (WASH) facilities; child, early, and forced marriage; early pregnancy; gender-based violence; and traditional attitudes about the roles of girls and women.

Significant numbers of boys also drop out of school early due to poverty and work obligations. Research shows that men with less education are more likely to hold discriminatory views of women, be violent in the home, and be less involved in childcare as fathers.⁴³

Between 93 million and 150 million children are estimated to have disabilities.⁴⁴ In developing countries, disability hinders access to education even more than socioeconomic

status, rural location, or gender. Girls with disabilities can be especially marginalized.⁴⁵ Barriers exist or are constructed that marginalize these individuals and deny them the same opportunities as their non-disabled peers. Barriers include attitudes such as social stigma and discrimination; physical barriers, such as remote or inaccessible schools; and political and economic barriers, such as school cost.

The U.S. Government recognizes that providing the most marginalized and vulnerable populations with access to a safe, equitable, and quality education can have far-reaching and deep-seated positive effects on individuals and their households, communities, and countries. Quality education helps forge cohesive societies, contributes to peace, and strengthens democracy.

The U.S. Government will work with local actors to:

- Analyze the allocation and distribution of education resources, and support reforms in education policies and financing to overcome institutional barriers;
- Support interventions that directly support integrated, as well as targeted, policies and programs that expand access to, and improve the quality of, education for marginalized and vulnerable populations;
- Design quality education programs that are inclusive and culturally sensitive, promote the reduction of discrimination and inequality, and are accessible in local languages, particularly for indigenous communities and ethnic minorities;
- Use curricula and teaching and learning approaches that are inclusive and sensitive to vulnerabilities; and
- Create safe, violence-free, and inclusive school environments that empower individuals to learn.

Children and Youth Vulnerable to Violence, Abuse, and Labor Exploitation

The risks of child, early, and forced marriage; trafficking; child labor; and recruitment by extremist groups are all exacerbated by poverty and crisis. Individuals and organizations exploiting vulnerable children and youth often force them to drop out of school or prohibit them from attending in the first place.

For millions of children and youth, school-related violence is a major obstacle to receiving a quality education. In 2014, approximately 246 million girls and boys worldwide experienced some form of school-related violence.⁴⁶ The extent and forms of school-related violence that girls and boys experience differ. Evidence suggests that girls are at greater risk of sexual violence, verbal abuse, and harassment, and boys are at greater risk of physical violence.⁴⁷ School-related gender-based violence results in adverse psychological, social, and health consequences, and children and youth who have experienced any form of violence in childhood are less likely to remain in school.⁴⁸

SPOTLIGHT

Peace Corps Volunteers Ensuring Education is Inclusive

In Georgia, Peace Corps Volunteer Atka Bol teaches English in a mixed ability classroom. When she first arrived at her partner school, she noticed that her Georgian counterparts were hesitant to work with students with disabilities because they felt it “slowed them down.”

Bol has been working with her counterparts to develop lesson plans that engage all students in their classroom, regardless of ability. Now, when they co-plan lessons, Bol always asks, “Can everyone participate in this activity?” By showing her counterparts that there are ways to modify lessons to reach each student, Bol says she considers her work to include disabled students to be her biggest success.



U.S. Government Efforts to Empower Girls and Women through Basic Education

Gender norms can affect educational attainment and learning outcomes for girls and boys, but more girls than boys remain out of school.

An estimated 16 million girls will never set foot in a classroom.⁵⁰ This inequality can have repercussions continuing into adulthood. Two-thirds of the 750 million adults lacking basic literacy skills are women.⁵¹


Research shows that girls face unique barriers to staying in and succeeding in school during adolescence. Age 14 is the time most girls go through puberty and are most likely to drop out of school due to poverty, discrimination, the burden of household chores, pressure to marry, or teen pregnancy.⁵²

Youth unemployment disproportionately affects young women. Globally, only 37 percent of young women participate in the labor force, compared to 54 percent of young men.⁵³ When young women are excluded from economic opportunities, inequality is reinforced, and they are less able to invest in their own health, education and safety—and that of their children. The barriers young women face to entering and succeeding in the workforce start early, as societal norms and expectations often keep girls and women from pursuing education and skills training, particularly in higher-wage, high-growth occupations, such as science, technology, engineering, and math (STEM) where men are disproportionately employed.

The U.S. Government recognizes that for societies to truly prosper, girls and women must have the education and skills needed to be productive members of society alongside men. The various departments and agencies included in this strategy are working to empower girls and women through education.

SUMAIYA AKTER, 12

It is difficult for Rohingya girls to obtain an education because of requirements to help parents with work at home, social pressures against educating girls, early marriages, and a general lack of access to higher education. The United Nations High Commission on Refugees (UNHCR) supports as many girls as possible to attend school in Kutupalong refugee camp, Bangladesh where many of the 688,000 Rohingya who fled Myanmar in 2017 sought safety.

 Sumaiya Akter, 12, is a Rohingya refugee living in Kutupalong camp, Bangladesh. She says the UNHCR school she attends — with support from the U.S. Department of State — is a place of fun, happiness, and knowledge.





Educating Girls in Safe Environments

In Pakistan, attacks on schools have disrupted education for many children, particularly girls. In response, USAID has reached more than 492,000 girls through reading programs; enrolled or re-enrolled more than 213,000 girls in areas of the country affected by conflict; and built or rehabilitated more than 520 co-educational or girls' schools since 2015.⁵⁴

 Young students in Pakistan. Photo: USAID, Aabira SherAfgan.



Women's Economic Empowerment

The 2017 NSS makes women's economic empowerment a government-wide priority when it states, "Societies that empower women to participate fully in civic and economic life are more prosperous and peaceful. [The U.S. Government] will support efforts to advance women's equality, protect the rights of women and girls, and promote women and youth empowerment programs."

Workforce development and skills training for women and girls help pave the way for economic empowerment. Improving women's and girls' access to quality education and training, including training closely linked to employer needs, can lead to higher-paying, middle-skill jobs in high growth, in-demand occupations, such as those in the STEM fields.⁵⁵

 Photo courtesy of MCC.



Staying in School Improves Health Outcomes

In much of Africa, adolescent girls and young women are being left behind. Every year, 280,000 of them are infected with HIV—that's 5,400 new infections every week, and more than 750 infections every day. Alarming, adolescent girls in sub-Saharan Africa are up to 14 times more likely to be newly infected with HIV than their male counterparts. Staying in school reduces the disproportionate risk of HIV infection faced by adolescent girls and young women. The U.S. President's Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief (PEPFAR) launched the Determined, Resilient, Empowered, AIDS-free, Mentored and Safe (DREAMS) public-private partnership on World AIDS Day 2014. DREAMS is delivering a core package of evidence-based interventions that address structural factors shown to increase girls' HIV risk, including poverty, inequality, sexual violence, and a lack of access to secondary education.

 Photo: PEPFAR Two Girls Reading Together. © Robert Sauer/USAID Ethiopia.

No child should have to endure violence and abuse, or be taken from home and forced to work, or have to choose work over school to meet basic needs. Ensuring children and youth who are victims of, or vulnerable to, exploitation, abuse, and violence are able to receive an education is essential to breaking cycles of poverty and violence.

A quality education has the potential to foster a sense of individual and communal identity; build skills and resilience to bias, discrimination, and violent extremist narratives; and change attitudes and behaviors toward violence, abuse and exploitation.

The U.S. Government recognizes that excluding the most vulnerable from education can fuel poverty, future violence, extremist ideologies, and recruitment of children and youth into organized crime networks. To help ensure that vulnerable children and youth have access to a quality education, the U.S. Government will work in coordination at the global level, and with partner countries and stakeholders, to address the barriers to education that these children and youth face.

Tackling these barriers may include working to ensure that:

- Laws and policies are in place and enforced to promote equitable access to quality education, and to enforce prohibitions against child labor that interferes with schooling;
- Curricula and teaching and learning approaches are inclusive and sensitive to vulnerabilities;
- Education is accessible and affordable for marginalized groups;
- Barriers to education for girls are assessed and systematically addressed;
- Adequate and accessible educational facilities exist;
- Violence is prevented in and around schools, including gender-based violence;
- Norms around gender and disability that lead to violence and exclusion, including child, early, and forced marriage, are identified and shifted; and
- Advancement opportunities through learning and training are available, as well as livelihood or employment support and services. These include accelerated learning programs and workforce training alternatives.

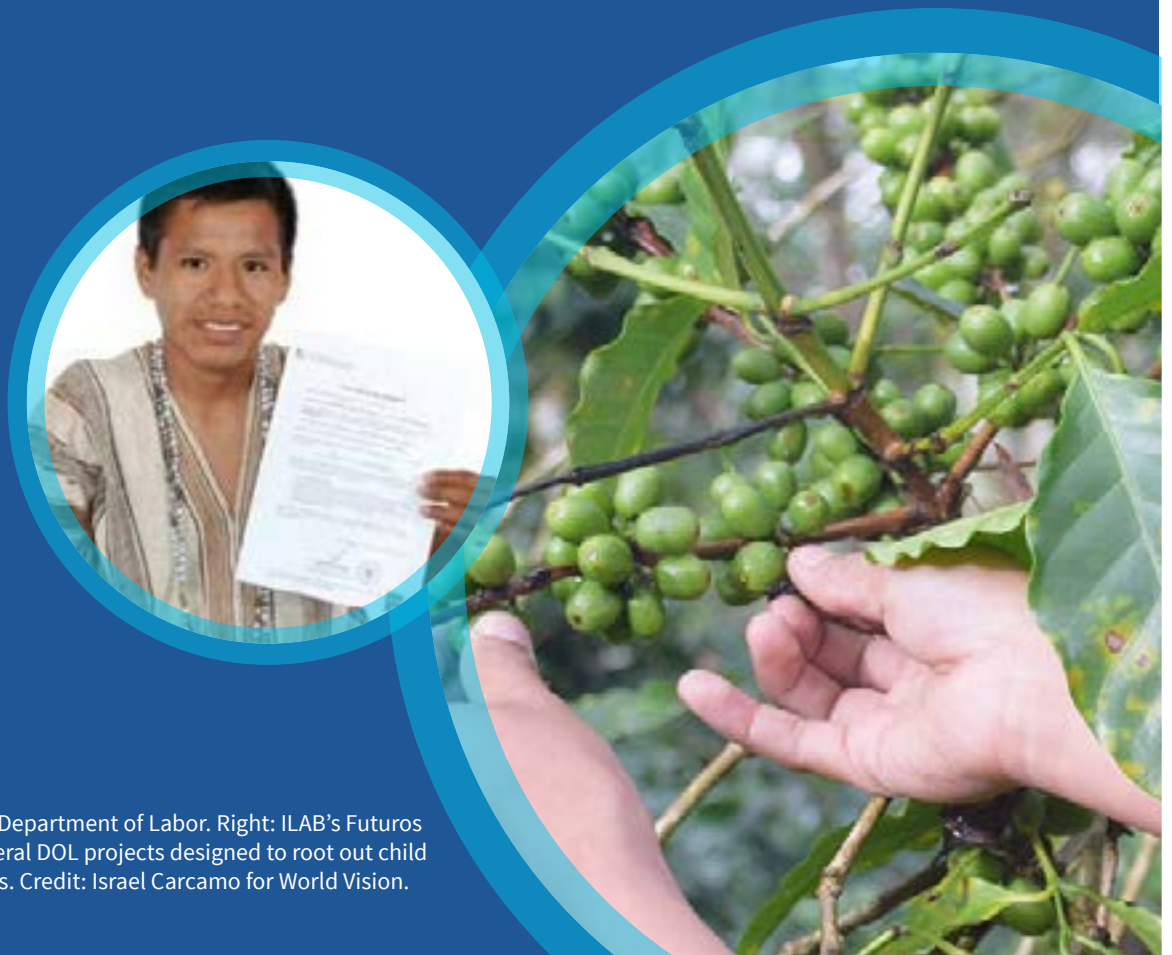
SPOTLIGHT


U.S. Department of Labor Programs Provide Alternatives for Child Laborers in Peru

David lives in a native community in Pampa Julián, Peru that does not have a secondary school. Local youth who want to continue their studies must move to more urban communities or walk several hours to the nearest school. Students who do not want to migrate to pursue their secondary education, or who cannot afford to migrate, ultimately drop out and join the workforce at a very young age.

This was the case for David, who, despite a physical disability in one of his arms, began working in the coffee fields for his father.

Fortunately, a U.S. Department of Labor-funded program—“Secondary Tutorial”—was recently launched in Pampa Julián, allowing David to finish secondary school. The local community is heavily involved in the program, and the Peruvian government is interested in replicating it in other native and rural communities.



 Left: David, courtesy of the Department of Labor. Right: ILAB's Futuros Brillantes project is one of several DOL projects designed to root out child labor from coffee supply chains. Credit: Israel Carcamo for World Vision.

Measuring Results & Reporting

Measuring Results

To achieve education objectives cost-effectively, programs must be targeted, designed, and implemented based on the best available data and evidence—or deliberately designed as pilots to build evidence around cost-effective approaches. Through its programs, the U.S. Government will contribute to this body of data and evidence over time, strengthen evidence-driven decision-making in partner countries, and incorporate the flexibility to learn and adapt at all levels. Programs will monitor and maintain accountability for results, making course corrections as necessary in order to achieve the objectives of the U.S. Government Strategy on International Basic Education.

Programming is more focused when designed to achieve specific, measurable outcomes, such as improved literacy, numeracy, social and emotional skills, or employment. To help ensure transparency, accountability, and quality across all U.S. Government programs, the Interagency Working Group will outline key principles for monitoring, evaluation, and learning as part of the implementation of this Strategy.

The Interagency Working Group will build collaborative practices over the life of the Strategy, including harmonizing common project-level indicators to supplement existing agency indicators, and using global indicators and definitions wherever possible. U.S. Government departments and agencies will continue to address these individual policies and mandates for rigorous monitoring, evaluation, evidence generation, and public reporting, capitalizing on opportunities for coordination when practical and appropriate. The U.S. Government will also strengthen data, evaluation, decision-making, evidence generation, and public reporting in partner countries.

Comparable indicators, norms, and methodologies will help build a common body of evidence that can be used to continuously improve the effectiveness of basic education foreign assistance programs. This effort will be supplemented by increased coordination of U.S. Government departments and agencies at the global and country level to help facilitate the sharing of data, research, findings from impact evaluations, program information, technical expertise, and effective practices.



Reporting

An annual public report to Congress will include a description of the efforts of each department and agency to implement the Strategy, and a description of progress made toward meeting the goals and objectives of the Strategy, with particular emphasis on whether there are demonstrable and quantifiable improvements, such as in literacy, numeracy, or other basic skills.

Reporting will reflect the collective contributions of U.S. Government departments and agencies engaging in international basic education assistance. These contributions may include policy engagement, as well as more direct services to beneficiaries. Reporting will also, to the extent practicable, reinforce strategic principles including country ownership and coordination with other donors and actors. These reporting objectives can be met through a combination of:

- Internationally comparable indicators that report broad, partner-country progress toward Strategy objectives and give context regarding the progress;
- Output indicators that provide a sense of individual department/agency contributions to these objectives;
- Outcome indicators;
- Evaluation results; and
- Process indicators that provide a sense of the degree of coordination between U.S. Government departments and agencies present in the country.

ANNEX ONE

Coordination Roadmap

The U.S. Government will build on past progress, learn from our experiences, and take into consideration emerging trends to achieve three principal coordination goals:

1. Strengthen transparency and accountability and streamline reporting;
2. Work to ensure a consistent level of quality across programs; and
3. Improve coordination and reinforce a “One U.S. Government” approach while optimizing each department and agency’s strengths to achieve maximum impact of taxpayer dollars.

Achieving these coordination goals will take thoughtful analysis, planning, resources, and commitment. The following activities will facilitate the achievement of these goals, and in turn, the Strategy’s objectives.

Short- and Mid-Term Activities

Strengthen transparency and accountability, and streamline reporting

- Outline key principles for monitoring, evaluation, and learning.
- **Harmonize common indicators and definitions for programming and reporting**, as appropriate. Each Agency will continue to have a full list of indicators to meet their individual programmatic needs. In addition, the agencies will define a core set of basic education indicators, and disaggregates will be defined for agencies to report against, to the extent practical and appropriate. This core set of indicators will ensure accurate reporting on the U.S. Government Strategy on International Basic Education and consistent levels of quality across all programs and will be used to build evidence around outcomes and impact.*

**The Interagency will build this collaborative practice in fiscal year 2019, with the goal of developing harmonized definitions of indicators in FY 2019 and beginning to report harmonized indicators with programs beginning in FY 2020.*

Work to ensure a consistent level of quality across programs

- **Maintain an inventory** of U.S. Government education programs at the country level.
- Include language in contracts and agreements that **outlines practices for sharing information, data, and research**, to the extent practical and applicable.
- Explore a **common platform for improved knowledge management**.

Improve coordination and reinforce a “One U.S. Government” approach while optimizing each department and agency’s strengths to achieve maximum impact of taxpayer dollars

- Departments and agencies will **engage collectively** with the partner-country government, other donors, multilaterals, and local stakeholders to leverage existing relationships and help ensure programs are well coordinated, sustainable, and reflective of country need. This will ensure the U.S. Government is speaking together with “one voice” at the country level.
- All work at the country level should seek to **support and align with the partner country’s education needs and plans**, which will allow for focused investments to achieve sustained impact. Interagency teams in country will work together to update existing or develop new plans in alignment with this strategy and build upon experience and evidence.
 - Departments and agencies should identify the most relevant education priorities to pursue through the Integrated Country Strategy (ICS) process, or other relevant strategic planning processes, and integrate country-specific targets and objectives, approaches to coordinate implementation, and strengthened monitoring and reporting. Additionally, each relevant department and agency’s specific country strategy (for example a USAID Mission’s Country Development Cooperation Strategy or an MCC country compact) should define the specific education objectives for that agency, as applicable.
- Identify opportunities to **build cross-agency relationships and convene staff**, such as at USAID’s Education Summit and regional trainings and MCC education forums. Such opportunities will increase field staff’s understanding of the new U.S. Government Strategy, provide relevant training, and allow for greater sharing of research, evidence-based best practices, and information on each agency’s education programming.
- **Identify a small number of countries** where the U.S. Government currently devotes significant resources to basic education through multiple departments and agencies to identify opportunities for coordinated programs and co-design at the earliest planning stages. The best practices and lessons learned from the identified countries will inform future programmatic coordination.

Mid- and Long-Term Activities

Strengthen transparency and accountability, and streamline reporting

- **Report annually** using the agreed upon indicators and disaggregates; continuously learn and adapt programs using the agreed upon principles for monitoring, evaluation, and learning.
- **Disaggregate data** and use this information to improve the quality of programs.

Work to ensure a consistent level of quality across programs

- **Create guidance on evidence-based best practices** for U.S. Government Education programming.
- **Embed effective practices for cross-sectoral programming**, such as gender and inclusive education analyses, in education interventions.

Improve coordination and reinforce a “One U.S. Government” approach while optimizing each department and agency’s strengths to achieve maximum impact of taxpayer dollars

- **Co-design evidence-based programs**, as appropriate, to leverage agency technical expertise, modes of investing, partners, and strengths, based on the focus of the program.
- **Share materials and commodities** across departments and agencies to eliminate redundancy with the goal of creating products of the U.S. Government to use across programs, as appropriate, to better leverage taxpayer dollars.



Department of Defense

The Department of Defense's Commitment to International Education



The Department of Defense (DoD) conducts Humanitarian Assistance (HA) projects, including education sector projects, in support of DoD and U.S. Government national security objectives. DoD HA activities are categorized into one of five sectors of assistance or focus areas: disaster preparedness and risk reduction, health, education, basic infrastructure, and humanitarian mine action. DoD HA provides a valuable resource for Geographic Combatant Commands (GCCs) to support security cooperation and Theater Campaign Plan strategic objectives, particularly in regions where humanitarian needs are most acute and where there may be a lack of respect for universal human rights.

DoD HA projects are distinct from development assistance efforts, which fall under the purview of other U.S. Government departments and agencies, because DoD does not conduct HA projects with the objective of promoting development of the partner nation. Closely coordinated with the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) and other U.S. Government interagency partners, DoD HA activities improve DoD's visibility, access, and influence and foster collaborative relationships with partner nation governments. DoD HA activities help generate long-term positive perceptions of DoD and the U.S. Government with the partner nation local communities and its civilian and military institutions.

Although DoD conducts HA education sector projects to support the GCCs' Theater Campaign Plan strategic objectives, they also complement U.S. international basic education assistance. DoD HA projects target vulnerable populations and build partner nation government capacity to provide universal access to education. In alignment with other U.S. Government programs, DoD HA education sector projects foster the resilience of the civilian populace by supporting the basic literacy and knowledge necessary for self-reliance. School-based education projects in support of the partner nation Ministry of Education (or relevant government institution) provide equal access to all demographics of the population.

From Fiscal Year 2015 through Fiscal Year 2018, DoD completed 236 education projects globally, totaling approximately \$18.5 million. Project examples include construction, expansion, or improvement of primary and secondary education facilities, as well as the provision of books and school furniture. DoD manages and tracks education sector projects in the Overseas Humanitarian Assistance Shared Information System (OHASIS), which includes details such as project status, location, beneficiaries, and cost.



Department of Education

The Department of Education's Commitment to International Education



The U.S. Department of Education's mission is to promote student achievement and preparation for global competitiveness by fostering educational excellence and ensuring equal access. The Department's international strategy is designed to simultaneously advance two strategic goals: strengthening U.S. education and advancing our nation's international priorities. The strategy has three objectives:

- Increase global and cultural competencies
- Learn from other countries
- Engage in education diplomacy

The international strategy affirms the Department's commitment to preparing today's youth, and our country more broadly, for a globalized world, and to engaging with the international community to improve education. It reflects ongoing work in implementing international education programs, participating in international benchmarking activities, and working closely with other countries and multilateral organizations to engage in strategic dialogue. Since the strategy was first established in 2012, it has been used to guide the Department's activities and engagement.

The Department's *Framework for Developing Global and Cultural Competencies to Advance Equity, Excellence and Economic Competitiveness* is the product of a working group with representatives from across the Department and discussions with the education community (see <https://sites.ed.gov/international/global-and-cultural-competency>). This work builds on existing research and provides a framework for the development of global and cultural competencies beginning in early childhood through postsecondary education and bases it on a foundation of discipline-specific knowledge. It is designed as a guide to consider how these competencies are developed over time and at various stages of education.

The Department defines globally and culturally competent individuals as those who are proficient in at least two languages; aware of the differences that exist between cultures; critical and creative thinkers, who can apply an understanding of diverse perspectives; and able to operate at a professional

level in intercultural and international contexts. These competencies are not isolated skills, but rather interrelated skills and areas of knowledge that are used together to enable individuals to understand the world and take action.

For many years, the Department has supported programs designed to increase expertise in world languages and international studies through the Department's Office of International and Foreign Language Education (IFLE). Currently, IFLE administers approximately \$72 million for domestic international education programs authorized under Title VI of the Higher Education Act and overseas international education programs authorized under the Fulbright-Hays Act. Collectively, these programs provide U.S. students, teachers, researchers, and administrators with unique opportunities to gain proficiency in world languages, and expertise about the regions where these languages are used, in preparation to meet our nation's ongoing global needs.

Consistent with the *Framework's* interrelated content-based knowledge and competencies, IFLE programs are intentionally interrelated and complementary in their purposes, including training a globally competent workforce able to engage with a multilingual and/or multicultural clientele at home and abroad; increasing teaching and research expertise on international business and global issues; and expanding access to international education and training, especially for traditionally underserved students.

The *Framework* also supports IFLE's program administration and monitoring initiatives, assisting the Department in gauging program relevance and the extent to which programs provide meaningful and productive academic and career opportunities. The Department acknowledges that program recipients not only need to acquire relevant global skills, they also must have opportunities to put those skills into practice. To that end, IFLE has established competitive priorities for its Title VI and Fulbright-Hays competitions that encourage meaningful and sustained professional development and collaboration with Minority Serving Institutions and/or community colleges, the development and dissemination of language-learning materials for the K-16 education community, and work-based experiences, such as internships for international business students.

Contributions to the Strategy

IFLE has implemented assessment and monitoring strategies intended to produce quantifiable data about the impact of the Title VI and Fulbright-Hays programs it administers.

Training a globally competent workforce able to engage with a multilingual and/or multicultural clientele at home and abroad.

The Foreign Language and Area Studies (FLAS) Fellowships program provides academic year and summer fellowships to meritorious undergraduate students and graduate students undergoing training in performance-based world language training and area and international studies programs. IFLE conducts a FLAS-tracking survey every two years to collect data to assess the post-graduate career trajectory of FLAS fellows.

Increasing teaching and research expertise on international business and global issues.

IFLE’s online performance reporting system—International Resource Information System (IRIS)—requires grantees to report on outputs that demonstrate program-specific impact. Grantees report on indices such as student enrollments in international business courses by discipline and degree, job placements of students, and degree programs.

Expanding access to international education and training, especially for traditionally underserved students.

Since FY 2014, IFLE has implemented priorities for all of its program competitions that are intended to reach underserved institutions and students. IFLE monitors the extent to which priority activities are being conducted at grantee institutions through performance reports, site visits, and virtual technical assistance meetings.

Because the Department focuses on promoting student achievement and ensuring equal access, it is well positioned to provide technical assistance on topics related to identifying, generating, and disseminating best practices, research, and knowledge to support the work of the U.S. Government Strategy on International Basic Education Assistance. Part of the Department’s positioning in this regard stems from its history of supporting evidence-based work. The Department has been both a consumer and generator of evidence, with the goal of supporting grantees to achieve the shared goal of improving the performance of all students and closing achievement gaps. Statutory requirements have guided some of these efforts.

The Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965 (ESEA) required and continues to require grantees to bring evidence to bear on the work they do to support teaching and learning. The ESEA as amended by No Child Left Behind required “scientifically based research” in various places throughout the statute (e.g., school wide reform strategies were required to be based on scientifically based research).

The ESEA as amended by the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) replaced scientifically based research with “evidence based” and provided a definition of evidence-based. Specifically, section 8101(21) of the ESEA defines evidence-based as four increasingly rigorous tiers of evidence:

1. Demonstrates a rationale for a particular activity, strategy, or intervention based on high-quality research findings or positive evaluation that shows such activity, strategy, or intervention is likely to improve student outcomes or other relevant outcomes;
2. Promising evidence from at least one well-designed and well-implemented correlational study with statistical controls for selection bias;
3. Moderate evidence based on at least one well-designed and well-implemented quasi-experimental study, and
4. Strong evidence based on at least one well-designed and well-implemented experimental study.

These tiers allow for innovation and the building of evidence where evidence does not exist and known effective activities, strategies, or interventions where evidence does exist. The Department's use of these evidence standards regarding best practices, research, and knowledge ensures meaning and common understanding among Department staff and grantees.

In addition to the identification and generation of best practices, research, and knowledge, the Department has long worked to disseminate such information. Through various Department-funded technical assistance centers, it has shared information internally to build staff capacity and externally to grantees to support their reform efforts.

For example, both the Institute of Education Sciences (IES) and the Policy and Program Studies Service (PPSS) within the Department publish studies and resources to support State education agency (SEA) and district staff. The IES practice guides and intervention reports are among the most actionable resources (available here: <https://ies.ed.gov/ncee/wwc/FWW>). These resources describe activities, strategies, and interventions supported by various levels of evidence and IES makes them available in both PDF and e-book formats. PPSS publishes program implementation studies to help inform staff internally as well as grantees externally.

The Department also funds a variety of technical assistance centers that provide direct support to grantees. Specifically, IES funds ten Regional Educational Laboratories (RELs), which conduct applied research and trainings, with a mission of supporting a more evidence-based education system (see <https://ies.ed.gov/ncee/edlabs>).

The Office of Elementary and Secondary Education funds not fewer than 20 comprehensive technical assistance centers to provide technical assistance to States to benefit school districts and schools, especially those in need of improvement (see <https://www2.ed.gov/about/contacts/gen/othersites/compcenters.html>). Through these technical assistance centers, the Department builds capacity internally in order to support grantees externally and provides direct technical assistance to grantees. These centers have established communities of practices as a way to leverage and share high-quality, evidence-based work identified in States and districts.

Overall, the Department can call upon lessons learned and its history of using best practices, research, and knowledge to inform the work of the Government Strategy on International Basic Education Assistance. The Department's engagement in this important work will be mutually beneficial as the Department continues to serve the students in America most in need of support in order to be successful in school and work beyond school.

The Department supports diplomacy through almost all of its international activities. By building and fostering relationships with government officials, policymakers, researchers, educators, students and other professionals around the world, providing leadership on education issues, collaborating with other U.S. government agencies, and learning with other countries, the Department is helping to further global stability and progress and, in turn, facilitate a world-class education at home and abroad. This soft diplomacy contributes to our national security, our credibility as a leader among nations and,

ultimately, our national prosperity. The Department addresses this objective by engaging bilaterally with other countries, participating in multilateral organizations, and hosting visitors who come to the United States to learn about U.S. education and share information about their countries.

The Department addresses education-related issues with individual countries on a bilateral basis and with multilateral organizations—such as Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC), Organization of American States (OAS), and Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD)—and multilateral forums—such as the G20 and the Summit of the Americas. This can range from information sharing on career and technical education to promoting equity to facilitating the learning of other languages. In these activities, the Department works with its counterparts to share best practices and lessons learned in order to improve education here and abroad.

The Department also regularly hosts visitors in key fields as part of the State Department's International Visitors Leadership Program (IVLP). This program helps to strengthen U.S. relations with other countries by providing emerging leaders the opportunity to experience firsthand U.S. political, economic, social and cultural life and to build long-lasting connections between Americans and delegates from other countries. In addition, the Department hosts high-level government officials who come to engage with the Secretary and other senior officials in order to learn about current initiatives in U.S. education and to share information about their countries' education systems and political conditions.

Since 2000, the Department of Education has also collaborated with the U.S. Department of State to celebrate the importance and benefits of international education in the United States and around the world through the annual International Education Week.



Department of Labor

The Department of Labor's Commitment to International Education



For over two decades, the U.S. Department of Labor's (DOL) Bureau of International Labor Affairs (ILAB), Office of Child Labor, Forced Labor, and Human Trafficking (OCFT) has been a leader in the fight to eradicate child labor, forced labor and human trafficking around the world. The Department of Labor combats these international labor abuses by:

- **Researching and reporting on these abusive labor practices;** helping inform U.S. foreign policy, trade policy, and cooperative initiatives;
- **Engaging with governments, civil society, and businesses** to ensure that each does their part to make these unscrupulous practices a relic of the past; and
- Piloting innovative **technical cooperation strategies and building capacity** in over 90 countries to eliminate the most hazardous and exploitative forms of child and forced labor, including by providing access to basic education and vocational training to vulnerable children, youth and adults.

Lack of access to basic education is considered a major factor contributing to the vulnerability of children to child labor. Child labor refers to work by children in violation of national labor laws and international labor standards. It includes work that is harmful to a child's health, physical and mental development, and work that interferes with a child's ability to participate in and complete required schooling. Child laborers are more likely to do poorly in school or drop out. For this reason, DOL promotes basic education as a means to prevent and combat the worst forms of child labor and help vulnerable children develop skills needed to secure better jobs as adults. Such support breaks the cycle of poverty contributing to child labor.

DOL encourages efforts to make child laborers a key target group in broader basic education initiatives, including those aimed at mainstreaming these children into national and donor-funded education policies and programs. DOL has contributed to the knowledge base on the role of education in combating child labor globally. DOL strives to work cooperatively with other organizations and groups to reduce duplication and promote synergy of programs to combat child labor through education. It also seeks to promote innovation and continuous improvement in the development of education programs that combat child labor through support for research, advocacy, sharing of information and lessons learned, and monitoring and evaluation.

DOL has been funding international technical assistance programming to combat child labor and forced labor since 1995 and has funded over 320 projects to combat child labor and forced labor in 97 countries. In recent years, DOL's annual funding for such programming has been approximately \$50-60 million annually. As of June 30, 2018, DOL is funding more than 50 projects in 54 countries, worth approximately \$280 million. Projects funded by DOL raise awareness of the importance of education for all children and mobilize a wide array of actors to expand educational opportunities. They work to improve formal and non-formal education systems that encourage working children and those at risk of working to attend school. They aim to strengthen national institutions and policies to support education and combat child labor in order to promote long-term sustainability of these efforts. Furthermore, DOL has funded impact evaluations to strengthen the evidence base on what interventions or programs are effective in reducing school dropouts and thus child labor. In recent years, DOL funded eight organizations to conduct 18 impact evaluations in 14 different countries. This included DOL support for randomized controlled trials, the gold standard methodology. DOL's efforts to reduce child labor and get children into school also helps ensure fair competition and a level playing field for U.S. workers and businesses, which should not have to compete unfairly with countries or companies that produce goods using child labor.

Contributions to the Strategy

The Department of Labor will contribute to the Strategy by:

1. Conducting annual Congressionally mandated research on the worst forms of child labor, including collecting information on where children have limited access to school;
2. Promoting policies and institutional strengthening around the world to reduce labor law violations that limit children's access to education;
3. Expanding access to education for marginalized and vulnerable children overseas, involved in or at risk of child labor; and
4. Sharing good practices and lessons learned over two decades on how to expand access to education by vulnerable populations involved in child and forced labor.

Programmatic Contributions

Objective One: Improve Learning Outcomes: There is evidence that children tend to learn less when they have to combine child labor with schooling and are more likely to drop out of school. DOL collects data on learning outcomes for children at risk of or removed from child labor. Such existing data can be useful to draw lessons for the design, replication or expansion of future education projects targeting this demographic.

Objective Two: Expand Access to Quality Basic Education for All, Particularly Marginalized and Vulnerable Populations. The READ Act calls for the development of strategies so that education opportunities are available to all children, especially the most marginalized and vulnerable. DOL has

substantial experience in addressing the needs of vulnerable and marginalized populations. Many of these groups identified by the READ Act are also vulnerable to child labor, as outlined in the International Labor Organization’s (ILO) Convention 182 on the Worst Forms of Child Labor. Furthermore, Article 7 of ILO Convention 182 specifies that access to free basic education is a means to prevent and eliminate the worst forms of child labor.

Table: READ Act’s Marginalized and Vulnerable Groups

Groups	Child labor/Worst Forms of Child Labor (ILO Convention 182) ⁵⁶
Girls	There tends to be a prevalence of girls in certain forms of child labor, including child domestic work, and commercial sexual exploitation; girls are also victims of trafficking and are considered a population of special focus under ILO Convention 182.
Children affected by or emerging from armed conflict or humanitarian crises	Child soldiers are considered to be in a worst form of child labor under ILO Convention 182. Migrant or refugee child workers could also be in the worst forms of child labor.
Children with disabilities	Children can be disabled by injuries sustained in hazardous child labor, such as mining. Children with disabilities may also be exploited for use in begging.
Children in remote or rural areas	Most child labor around the world is in agriculture.
Religious or ethnic minorities	These groups often have higher rates of child labor.
Indigenous peoples	These groups often have higher rates of child labor.
Orphans and children affected by HIV/AIDS	These children often become heads of household and engage in child labor.
Married adolescents	Adolescents under 18 who work to support families can be involved in child labor, including hazardous child labor.
Victims of trafficking	Child trafficking victims are considered to be in a worst form of child labor under ILO Convention 182.

In order to meet the READ Act's policy objectives, policy, institutional and social constraints must be addressed to make programs more effective and sustainable. DOL supports strengthening capacity to combat child labor in all of the international projects it funds. Improved capacity can be at the local, regional, national, and sectoral levels. Increased capacity means enhanced knowledge and ability of governments, individuals, communities, and organizations to effectively achieve goals and develop laws, policies, programs, systems, and sustain in those achievements. DOL also requires the development of sustainability plans for most projects.

DOL looks for progress at six different levels of capacity. Below are *illustrative examples* of outcomes of strengthened education system capacity at each level:

- 1. The adaptation of the legal framework to meet international labor standards** – Education laws are passed that address child labor concerns.
- 2. Formulation and adoption of specific policies, plans or programs to combat child labor or forced labor** – An example would be a Ministry of Education adopting a policy on combating child labor within the education system.
- 3. The inclusion of child labor or forced labor concerns in relevant development, education, anti-poverty, and other social policies and programs** – For example, reduction of child labor is included as an indicator in poverty reduction, development or educational strategies. In some countries, ensuring that children go to school and do not work has been set as a condition for families to benefit from social and stipend programs.
- 4. Establishment of a child labor monitoring system (CLMS)** – Involves the identification, referral, protection, and prevention of child labor through coordinated multi-sector monitoring and referral that covers all children in a geographical area. CLMS systems also track children after their removal from work. Such systems often keep records on the extent and nature of child labor and school participation by children engaged in or at-risk of child labor.
- 5. Institutionalization of child labor and forced labor research (including evaluation and data collection)** – Child labor outcomes and indicators are an area of analysis in impact evaluations, institutional monitoring and evaluations systems, government surveys, and evaluations/assessments of educational strategies.
- 6. Institutionalization of training on child labor or forced labor issues** – For example a, Ministry of Education adopts a curriculum to train teachers on child labor prevention.

DOL's annual *Findings on the Worst Forms of Child Labor* report, required under the Trade and Development Act (TDA) of 2000, also addresses improved capacity by focusing on the efforts of certain U.S. trade beneficiary countries and territories to eliminate the worst forms of child labor through legislation, enforcement mechanisms, policies, and social programs. The TDA Report analyzes and assesses progress made by approximately 140 countries and territories to eliminate the worst forms of child labor and provide education to children involved in or at risk of child labor. The TDA Report discusses barriers to education and provides suggested legislative, policy and programmatic actions to increase access to education to children in or vulnerable to child labor.

Technical Contributions

DOL-funded projects targeting child labor have developed educational models that:

- Help children who drop out of school to engage in child labor return to formal schooling and support their academic performance so that they are more likely to stay in school.
- Develop, adapt and replicate innovative and gold standard after-school programs to retain children in school for more of the day to prevent them from engaging in child labor when out of school.
- Develop and implement effective, accelerated basic education programs for older children who have dropped out of primary or secondary school to work.
- Develop community-based innovations to combat child labor through education.
- Develop and implement effective education and training programs that address specific gender vulnerabilities that inhibit educational pursuits.
- Develop partnerships with businesses, including through apprenticeships, to promote the hiring of vulnerable youth of legal working age into good jobs.

Leadership

DOL has been a global leader in combating international child labor by promoting educational and policy alternatives and since 1995, DOL has provided funding to more than 52 organizations to combat child labor and forced labor. These programs have helped to rescue nearly 2 million children from exploitative child labor and offer them education and training opportunities. Through projects and research, DOL engages bilaterally with countries throughout the world, coordinating its efforts with the State Department, U.S. embassies and USAID missions. Moreover, DOL's work to monitor and enforce the labor provisions of trade agreements and preference programs, which include prohibitions on child labor and forced labor, helps ensure fair competition and a level playing field for U.S. workers and businesses.

Impact and Results

Collectively, DOL projects have rescued and provided education to close to 2 million children and supported nearly 170,000 families to meet basic needs without relying on child labor. All DOL international child labor projects from FY 2010 onward that provide direct services measure common indicators, as applicable. These include the following:

- Number of children engaged in or at high risk of entering child labor provided education or vocational services (Education Indicator 1, E1);
- Number of households receiving livelihood services (Livelihood Indicator 1, L1);
- Number of countries with increased capacity to address child labor or forced labor (Country Capacity Indicator 1, C1);
- Percentage of direct service participant children who regularly attend school;
- Percentage of direct service participant children engaged in child labor; and
- Percentage of livelihood service participant households with all children of compulsory school age regularly attending school.

DOL's projects also capture specific information about a project's work in education, livelihoods, and capacity building. DOL also requires international projects to undergo independent mid-term and final performance evaluations to identify lessons learned, emerging practices, areas for performance improvement, course corrections, and to enhance the design of future interventions. DOL is working to build an evidence base on what interventions and programs are effective in keeping children in school. It has provided \$11 million to conduct 18 impact evaluations in 14 different countries using rigorous, randomized controlled trials to test interventions including education.



Department of State

The Department of State's Commitment to International Education



The U.S. Department of State advances the interests of the American people, their safety and economic prosperity, by leading America's foreign policy through diplomacy, advocacy, and assistance.

As outlined in the National Security Strategy, some of the greatest triumphs of American statecraft result from helping fragile and developing countries become successful societies. These successes, in turn, create profitable markets for American businesses, allies to help achieve favorable regional balances of power, and coalition partners to share burdens and address a variety of problems around the world. Over time, the United States has helped create a network of states that advance our common interests and values.

Inclusive, quality education is transformational and a driver for accelerating development in other sectors. Education creates pathways to better health, economic growth, sustainable environments, and peaceful, democratic societies. Improving literacy skills for all girls and boys, prioritizing educational access including for those affected by conflict, and promoting lifelong learning are important elements of the Department's work.

The Department focuses our investments where we can have the most impact. In order to achieve our education goals globally, we partner with other nations, multilateral agencies, NGOs, and the private sector. These partnerships are based on shared goals and shared interests to establish the conditions for a more secure and prosperous world.

Contributions to the Strategy

Bureau of Population, Refugees and Migration. The mission of the Bureau of Population, Refugees, and Migration (PRM) is to provide protection, ease suffering, and resolve the plight of persecuted and uprooted people around the world on behalf of the American people by providing life-sustaining assistance, working through multilateral systems to build global partnerships, promoting best practices in humanitarian response, and ensuring that humanitarian principles are thoroughly integrated into U.S. foreign and national security policy. Education is a key component to PRM's mission in providing protection and durable solutions for refugees. Education provides displaced children and adolescents with a sense of normalcy and stability,

while developing essential skills for self-reliance, improving their job prospects and boosting their sense of self. Yet conflict and displacement often present significant barriers and challenges for children's access to education. PRM contributes to the U.S. International Basic Education Strategy through humanitarian assistance and diplomacy. Each year PRM supports IO partners, such as the UN High Commissioner for Refugees and the UN Children's Agency, to provide quality and protective education for vulnerable children. PRM also supports a range of NGO programs to improve education by investing in teachers, ensuring schools are inclusive and safe, conducting outreach to increase access for girls, and providing alternative programs such as accelerated learning, catch up or bridge support, and vocational training. Additionally, PRM and other Department of State officials advocate globally and at the country level through our Embassies to encourage host country governments to allow refugee children into national education systems.

The Office of Global Women's Issues (S/GWI) will strive to ensure that girls and young women have the opportunity to grow into empowered, educated, healthy women engaged in productive livelihoods. Globally, adolescent girls and young women face gender-specific challenges in their communities that perpetuate gender inequality, including poorer educational outcomes; gender-based violence, harmful practices such as child, early, and forced marriage and female genital mutilation/cutting; higher vulnerability to disease and infections, such as HIV/AIDS; and a disproportionate share of household and unpaid work. Research indicates that intervening to empower girls during adolescence is among the most efficient and cost-effective means available to end cycles of poverty, disease, and insecurity. Conflict and crisis imperil women and girls' access to education opportunities, and can limit opportunities to unleash their full potential.

In development of education policy and programs, it is crucial that women and girls be considered at the outset to ensure U.S. foreign policy is optimizing every opportunity to promote women's equality and inclusive economic growth. S/GWI's efforts include: involving girls and young women as participants in all education-related programming; organizing public diplomacy engagements for and on topics related to the issues adolescent girls face and the importance of laying the groundwork for their economic and social participation; and creating programs to prevent gender-based violence and promote STEM education, vocational training, and linkages between education and economic opportunities. While these programs may be short-term, they often, through foreign policy work and diplomatic advocacy, lead to long-term outcomes and advance the status of women and girls globally.

The Bureau of International Organization Affairs (IO), domestically and through its six diplomatic missions in Geneva, Montreal, Nairobi, New York, Rome, and Vienna, and its presences in Embassies London and Paris, develops and implements U.S. policy in the United Nations, its specialized and technical agencies and funds and programs, and certain other international organizations.

With regard to international education for development efforts, IO ensures overall coordination of U.S. policy across UN bodies and international organizations, including the UN Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC), the UN Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), the UN Children's Fund (UNICEF), the UN Refugee Agency (UNHCR), the UN Girls Education Initiative (UNGEI), and UN Women, among others. This includes advocating for priorities that reflect and complement U.S. education policy and monitoring international education programs to ensure they support and are consistent with U.S. policy and priorities.

In October 2017, the United States announced its withdrawal from UNESCO, effective December 31, 2018. However, U.S. withdrawal from UNESCO does not affect the U.S. policy of supporting international cooperation in education efforts when such activities advance U.S. interests.

The Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs (ECA) supports exchange programs which help to foster relationships and networks, share expertise, and improve understanding between the people of the United States and the people of countries around the world. ECA's Fulbright Teacher Exchange Programs provide professional development to international and U.S. K-12 teachers. International teachers are hosted at U.S. university schools of education and complete field experiences in U.S. schools, while U.S. teachers participate in exchanges to share and learn from other countries to internationalize their classrooms and their teaching.

The Office of the Global AIDS Coordinator coordinates the President's Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief (PEPFAR), the US Government's landmark International HIV program that has not only saved and improved millions of lives, but also transformed the global HIV/AIDS response. PEPFAR invests heavily in programming to transition and retain adolescent girls and young women (AGYW) in secondary school through the DREAMS partnership in 14 African countries and Haiti. Using education subsidies to pay tuition and other associated fees, DREAMS is reducing new HIV infections in AGYW with a multi-faceted core package of interventions. According to a study in Botswana, one additional year of education for adolescents can reduce HIV acquisition by one third, and nearly half for young women. For AGYW, school has also shown to be protective against other events that influence HIV acquisition, including early pregnancy and child, early, and forced marriage.

Impact and Results

The State Department measures the progress of its diplomatic and development efforts against the National Security Strategy, the State Department and USAID Joint Strategic Plan (JSP), and the Integrated Country Strategies at every mission around the world. The efforts of the United States also contribute to progress on the Sustainable Development Goals and other internationally developed measures and benchmarks.

Specifically, the Department's Managing for Results (MfR) framework links the critical components of strategic planning, budgeting, managing programs, and learning. The purpose of the MfR framework is to help bureaus and missions achieve improved outcomes by conducting policy, resources, and programmatic decision-making that is informed by strategic planning and data gleaned through rigorous monitoring and evaluation practices. The Office of U.S. Foreign Assistance Resources (F) partners with the Bureau of Budget and Planning (BP) to develop and administer the guidance and tools necessary for the Department to implement MfR.

Creating and reinforcing feedback loops between these processes strengthens decision-making about strategic priorities and trade-offs; assesses what's working or not to inform decisions; improves coordination within and outside of the Department; and increases transparency and accountability.



Department of the Treasury

The Department of Treasury's Commitment to International Education



The Department of Treasury leads the Administration's engagement in the multilateral development banks (MDBs), which include the African Development Bank, the Asian Development Bank, the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development, the Inter-American Development Bank, and the World Bank. Treasury promotes U.S. policy priorities on education in developing countries through our position on the Executive Boards of the MDBs. The Boards provide strategic direction to each institution and also approve all key institutional and policy decisions and projects through a voting process. The United States is represented at each of the MDBs by a presidentially appointed, Senate-confirmed Executive Director who is supported by advisors that staff the Office of the U.S. Executive Director (OUSED). The OUSEDs are influential in the Board processes, consistent with the United States' position as the largest or one of the largest shareholders at each institution. Treasury has strongly supported education activities through our role on the MDB Boards. In addition to our engagement at the Boards through the OUSEDs, Treasury regularly conducts additional assessments of processes, strategies, and policies at each of the MDBs, and also monitors education programs across the MDBs to ensure coherence with U.S. policy priorities.

Treasury aims to leverage a few key comparative advantages of the MDBs to contribute to the Strategy. One, the MDBs have the convening power needed to bring together bilateral, other multilateral, private sector, and civil society actors in-country to advance development objectives. In that vein, they have particular value-add in building partnerships in crisis and conflict-affected situations, which require a continuum of development and humanitarian assistance. Further, the MDBs can leverage resources from multiple donors to increase the impact of U.S. bilateral assistance. In addition, the MDBs play an important role globally in data collection, research, and knowledge generation and sharing, which in turn are key to fostering data-driven decision making. The MDBs are thus particularly valuable to achieving the following objectives of the Strategy: improving in-country coordination among donors; amplifying the impact of U.S. financial resources; assisting youth in crisis and conflict-affected situations; and strengthening evidence-driven decision making in education programs. Treasury will continue to utilize its leadership role at the MDBs to advance these objectives.

To ensure impact and results, Treasury is a strong supporter of the MDBs' oversight and accountability functions (e.g., audit, independent evaluation, independent accountability mechanisms) and regularly

reviews the MDBs' overall performance. These reviews cover operational performance, such as efficiency or financial indicators, and development impact, as captured by quantitative and qualitative development results. Treasury also conducts reviews of individual MDB project proposals. These reviews consider a range of issues including, but not limited to, development impact, sustainability, safeguards compliance, cost-benefit analyses, alignment with U.S. and institutional priorities, and consistency with legislative provisions. Treasury economists lead an interagency process aimed at harnessing the expertise and experience of all relevant parts of the U.S. Government. Treasury and the OUSEDs work together to try to improve proposed projects and determine U.S. voting positions on the projects that are ultimately considered for Board approval. Treasury economists consider about 1,600 projects a year. Treasury also seeks to monitor a select number of priority MDB projects (e.g., innovative or high-risk projects) across their lifecycle.

The MDBs collectively have education programs across a wide range of countries. The countries and types of education programming vary by MDB, in line with each institution's relative strengths, overall financial management priorities, allocation policies, and organizational and country strategies. Institution-specific information on education activities is detailed below.

African Development Bank (AfDB)

Approach to Education

AfDB's priorities in this sector include post-basic education, technical and vocational education and training (TVET), and higher education, in line with its 2008 Higher Education Science and Technology Strategy and 2014 Human Capital Strategy. This focus aligns with the AfDB's broader efforts to enhance human capital to contribute to Africa's economic transformation. The AfDB Board approved 70 education/training projects totaling \$2 billion over the period 2005-2017.

Despite the AfDB's predominant focus on post-basic education, it regularly participates in dialogue on basic education issues. For example, the AfDB hosts the Association for the Development of Education in Africa (ADEA) and plays an active role in its constituent groups, including its Executive and Steering Committees that determine the direction of its work. In this same vein, the AfDB has recently cooperated with ADEA in commissioning a study on how to augment financing of education through more innovative domestic resource mobilization strategies.

Impact and Results

From 2013-2015, AfDB projects provided 1.2 million people with better access to education, over 700 thousand of them female, and 8,000 people with vocational training. The AfDB's Tanzania TVET project provides a concrete example of what contributes to these figures. The project focuses on the technical vocational education and training sub-sector and on teacher education, with the aim of increasing the supply of skilled labor and building capacity for teacher education. The expected outputs include expanded infrastructure at 13 institutions; expanded and extensive use of ICT in instruction at 53 institutions; and increased capacity for teaching, policy formulation, planning and quality assurance in technical vocational education, and teacher education. The project is leading to increased access to and improved quality and equity of technical vocational education and training, as well as improvements in secondary and primary teacher education in science and mathematics.

Asian Development Bank (ADB)

In July 2018, the ADB Board approved Strategy 2030, a new long-term strategy to respond to the changes brought about by a rapidly evolving Asia and the Pacific. As a result of strong U.S. advocacy, along with the support of other Board members, the Strategy clearly makes the connection between education and training outcomes and poverty reduction. Strategy 2030 also notes an increased focus on education as well as a strong focus on gender, vulnerable groups, and those impacted by conflict. More broadly, OUSED strongly advocates for a focus on women and girls, as well as vulnerable groups and the poorest. In addition to advocating for education activities at an institutional level, OUSED also engages with the ADB on education issues during the development of country partnership strategies, which the ADB develops for each of its countries of operation every three to five years. In discussions about country partnership strategies, OUSED has voiced strong support for high-quality projects in the areas of education, health, and human capital development and has pressed for fiscal reforms to ensure adequate funding to public services such as education. OUSED has also strongly supported individual projects related to education and regularly engages with staff to note U.S. appreciation for ADB engagement in the sector.

Knowledge Generation and Collaboration Initiatives

ADB conducts a range of analytical studies to prepare new projects and facilitate policy dialogue around lessons learned and best practices in the education sector that help developing member countries formulate policies for better educational services. Many ADB research studies are made publicly available on the ADB website, contributing to the availability of knowledge products for use by both developing member countries and donors. In addition, the ADB convenes government representatives, experts, practitioners, researchers, and private sector leaders biannually at the International Skills Forum to showcase and share new ideas and issues in education and skills development. By cultivating external partnerships with other development agencies and private sector partners, ADB creates synergies and efficiency gains in shared priority areas within the education field.

Investments in Education

ADB lending toward education spans 22 countries and has grown from \$1.76 billion in 2012-2014 to \$2.40 billion in 2015-2017, with projections to further increase over the 2018-2020 period. ADB educational loans have consistently exceeded 4 percent of total ADB loans and grants in recent years, moving towards a target of 6-10 percent of total funding by 2020.

Impact and Results

Under ADB operations from 2014-2017, 9.5 million students benefited from new or improved educational facilities, including earthquake resilient classrooms, libraries, laboratories, separate toilets for girls, and clean water access. Over twenty-six million students learned under improved quality assurance systems, and 1.9 million teachers were trained with quality or competence standards. Over the last 5 years, between 80-100 percent of projects were rated Successful or Highly Successful on an annual basis.

Based on ADB operations to be completed from 2018 to 2021, 33.1 million students are expected to benefit from new or improved educational facilities, 64.7 million students from improved quality assurance, and 0.6 million teachers from quality and competency standards training.

European Bank for Reconstruction and Development (EBRD)

Treasury is a strong advocate for private-sector focused professional training programs and economic inclusion work through the EBRD's Economic Inclusion Strategy (EIS) framework. Access to skills and employment is a key focus area for EIS, which was established in May 2017 and aims to ensure full and fair access to labor markets, finance and economic opportunity across age, gender, and geographic location.

Approach to Education

The EBRD's distinct approach to economic inclusion leverages the EBRD's strong private sector engagement to support its clients in addressing operational challenges. For instance, the lack of a well-trained and motivated work force often results in high staff turnover, lower productivity, and an inability to expand operations, constituting a barrier to innovation and growth. Inclusion projects aim to address these challenges by improving local training provision or supporting clients to develop new products and services to access underserved market segments. At a policy level, the EBRD brings together employers and education authorities to improve national skills standards or apprenticeship models based on labor market needs. In combination, these approaches create effective progression routes into jobs or support entrepreneurship for young people, women, populations in less advanced regions and other groups. Examples of operational responses the EBRD undertakes to deliver on this priority in the EIS include:

- Support the private sector in the introduction of high quality local training and work based learning opportunities (such as apprenticeships, internships or traineeships) in partnership with local education institutions at vocational and tertiary levels, including the creation of enhanced and expanded curricula, improved career guidance, teacher training, upskilling/re-skilling options as well as life-long learning, specifically in changing, new or innovative sectors; and
- Establish policy dialogue to bring together employers and education authorities to introduce improved national skills standards that reflect current and expected future labor market needs based on private sector (EBRD client) input;

Impact and Results

In conjunction with the EIS, the EBRD has developed a performance monitoring framework to track the EBRD's progress in improving access to employment and skills in terms of both output and outcomes. The framework tracks workforce development projects across output indicators measured as the number of investments that improve access to employment and skills, fund technical cooperation in support

of COO transitions to inclusive, market-based economies build capacity, and facilitate policy dialogue activities. The EBRD measures program outcomes through sex-disaggregated data on the number of people receiving new skills and target groups accessing employment, as well as the institutional, legal, and regulatory changes implemented.

Inter-American Development Bank (IDB)

Approach to Education

IDB educational support for countries in Latin America and the Caribbean (LAC) seeks to promote effective teaching and learning for children and youth. In its active portfolio, the IDB's public sector window has 35 loans totaling \$2.9 billion, of which approximately 65 percent are for strengthening primary and secondary education. The IDB's efforts in this sector are defined in its Education and Early Childhood Development Sector Framework Document (SFD), revised in 2016, which sets forth five "Dimensions for Success" based on the lessons learned from educational systems around the world and the IDB's own experience in the sector.

The IDB OUSED actively participated in the development of the Education and Early Childhood Development SFD and has supported U.S. policy objectives for international education assistance through its review of country-specific strategies and projects presented to the IDB Board for approval.

The five SFD dimensions are:

1. Ambitious learning goals should guide education at every level;
2. New students should enter the system ready to learn;
3. All students should have access to effective teachers;
4. All schools should have adequate resources and can use them for learning and developing skills; and
5. All children and young people should acquire the necessary skills to be productive and contribute to society.

The SFD also describes the IDB's strategic position in the education sector, including continued sectoral and multi-sectoral technical dialogue as well as the presence of experts who offer technical and operation support for projects and ensure significant presence in the most vulnerable countries with the biggest institutional weaknesses.

The IDB's private sector window, known as the Inter-American Investment Corporation and operating under the brand IDB Invest, has also implemented a complementary strategy to engage in education programs in the region to improve access to quality education and skills training through private education providers and increased access to university education and vocational training.

World Bank

Approach to Education

The World Bank's (Bank) efforts on education are driven by its Education Strategy 2020. The Strategy focuses on helping countries provide education services that are integrated, universally accessible, and high quality.

Investments in Education

The Bank's investments in education span the cycles from early child development (ECD), basic education, secondary education, tertiary education to skills and workforce development. In FY17, investment from the IBRD and IDA in education totaled \$2.8 billion. These projects run from providing accelerated teacher training in Haiti, to identifying and providing education to out-of-school children in conflict-affected states in Nigeria, to improving transparency and monitoring of staff, students, and school infrastructure in Pakistan. In terms of girls education, the World Bank has fulfilled a key commitment to invest \$2.5 billion over five years in education projects directly benefiting adolescent girls. In fact, over \$3.2 billion has been invested since 2016, three years ahead of schedule. The investments, largely concentrated across Sub-Saharan Africa and South Asia, are helping provide adolescent girls with access to quality education at the secondary level, and ensuring they remain in school using scholarships, conditional cash transfers, and basic school facilities.

Knowledge Generation

Through systematic research, analytical work and impact evaluations, the Bank identifies good practices in education development around the world. The Bank makes its research public through its online publications and policy reports. Since 2000, more than 2,500 education-related knowledge pieces have been generated and shared from activities and experiences in 159 countries. These pieces include system assessments, impact evaluations and policies, in the form of papers and books. Good practices are also shared through south-south exchanges and thematic conferences. For example, the 2018 World Development Report "Learning to Realize Education's Promise" has four main themes: (i) education's promise; (ii) the need to shine a light on learning; (iii) how to make schools work for learners; and (iv) how to make systems work for learning.

Impact and Results

At an aggregate level, the Bank assesses impact through a range of tools, including portfolio reviews and client surveys. Moreover, the Independent Evaluation Group (IEG) has a specific mandate to evaluate the development effectiveness of the World Bank Group. It provides evaluative evidence to help the World Bank Group deliver better services and results to its clients. IEG has a program of sectoral and thematic evaluations, recent examples of which include: Higher Education for Development and World Bank Support to Early Childhood Development.



Millennium Challenge Corporation

The Millennium Challenge Corporation's Commitment to International Education



The Millennium Challenge Corporation (MCC) is an independent U.S. Government agency that partners with the best-governed poor countries to reduce poverty through economic growth. MCC's business-like approach is based on selectivity, evidence-based decision-making, country ownership, and accountability, which are widely recognized as key tenets of effective foreign assistance. MCC works closely with the private sector to leverage its expertise and incentivize policy reforms that promote market opportunities. MCC advances American security, values, and prosperity by holding the agency and partner countries accountable for results and continued good governance.

Decisions at MCC are based on data and rigorous analysis, and the results are monitored, measured, and publicly shared. MCC uses third-party data to inform a competitive selection process that aims to provide economic development assistance to countries that demonstrate a commitment to good governance and sound economic and social policies. Partner countries are selected for either Compacts or Threshold Programs. Compacts are implemented over a period of five years and are largely focused on investments in infrastructure and policy reforms, while Threshold Programs are implemented over three to four years and focus on policy and institutional reforms. In April 2018, MCC was granted authority to enter into concurrent compacts with partner countries for purposes of regional economic integration, increased regional trade, and to facilitate cross-border collaborations.

The development of a Compact or Threshold Program begins with an analysis of the constraints to economic growth in the partner country, along with an initial gender and social inclusion assessment and an investment opportunity assessment, which is completed jointly with the partner country's government and includes consultations with civil society and the private sector. In the next phase, a root cause analysis of those constraints, and detailed sector analysis allow evidence to play a central role in the design and selection of projects, with a particular focus on investing in projects that demonstrate cost effectiveness. All MCC investments are monitored throughout implementation, and reports on key performance indicators are published quarterly to inform and adjust projects in real time. Finally, all

MCC projects are independently evaluated in accordance with the agency's Monitoring and Evaluation Policy (<https://www.mcc.gov/resources/doc/policy-for-monitoring-and-evaluation>), and all evaluations are published on MCC's website (<https://data.mcc.gov/evaluations/index.php/catalog>). The process of reporting independent results keeps MCC accountable to taxpayers and helps MCC and other donors learn from these investments.

Country-driven project development and implementation is one of MCC's guiding principles. MCC staff work closely with partner countries to develop project proposals that address the countries' most significant barriers to broad-based economic growth. Compacts and Threshold Programs are implemented through a Millennium Challenge Account established by the partner country and overseen by a local Board of Directors. Partner countries maintain responsibility to generate and sustain results. To ensure the capacity of partner countries to deliver long-term results from projects, MCC's interventions focus on strengthening local institutions responsible for operation and maintenance of MCC-financed infrastructure after program closure.

As of the July 2018 signing of the second Mongolia compact, MCC has signed 36 compacts with 29 countries totaling \$13 billion of obligated funds, with more than \$948 million invested in education and training programs. To date, MCC has constructed or rehabilitated 791 educational facilities and trained 216,101 learners. The impact is expected to grow rapidly in coming years as the Republic of Georgia, El Salvador, Morocco and Guatemala complete implementation of substantial education investments, and Cote d'Ivoire finalizes project design and begins implementation.

Contributions to the Strategy

Country-owned and demand-driven project identification. MCC works closely with partner governments to conduct a *Constraints Analysis*—a disciplined exercise to identify factors that limit economic growth the most. Economic theory has held labor, or human capital, as a key factor in economic growth. In recent years, education-related constraints have been identified in two scenarios:

- In *Lower Middle Income Countries*, including Georgia and Morocco, countries have made strides in access to education but must now focus on the education quality, inclusion of girls and vulnerable populations, and relevance of training to meet the needs of an evolving, modern economy.
- In *Lower Income Countries*, particularly in vulnerable states—including Côte d'Ivoire, Timor Leste, and Burkina Faso—education access is still low, especially at the secondary level. Education quality is also very poor. Technical and vocational training programs are either non-existent or obsolete. Generally, these economies are focused on agriculture and extractives, and seeking to industrialize and diversify. However, low levels of literacy, numeracy, and soft skills hold back the development of local industry and constrain foreign investment.

MCC programs target a specific country's root cause to the identified constraint, meaning MCC can support partner countries in basic education areas that span children (i.e. counter-stunting programs, construction of education facilities) to adults (i.e. workforce development programs, university

programs). Most MCC programs contain a significant investment in infrastructure, along with policy and institutional reforms, capacity building, and community engagement and communications. Examples of MCC's international education investments which demonstrate the agency's contribution to the Strategy include:

Preparing Individuals for a Productive Future. MCC investments aim to improve the employability of project participants and enhance the productivity of the private sector by improving access to, quality of and labor market relevance of basic and technical skills.

In Morocco, MCC will support Technical, Vocational Education and Training (TVET) centers that will train women and men in relevant skills demanded by the private sector, and provide career counseling to connect them with firms that need their expertise. A similar activity in Cote d'Ivoire will aim to create a new TVET model that increases private sector involvement to provide training to students in the skills and knowledge that are demanded by the private sector.

Systems strengthening. MCC supports partner countries in transforming their education systems. This often means changing or introducing new laws, strengthening data systems and using evidence for decision making, adjusting institutional roles and processes, and building the capacity of local institutions, such as ministries, schools, training institutions, and associations to implement quality education and skills programs. MCC's approach of putting the partner country in the lead for implementation increases effectiveness and promotes the sustainability of new behaviors, structures, and decision-making for continued impact.

MCC engaged in education system strengthening in Namibia through supporting the Ministry of Education to launch a continuous professional development program and implement new policies and for facilities and textbook management and maintenance. The El Salvador Investment Compact focuses on strengthening the national education system by reforming laws, policies and operations that govern the continuous professional development of teachers, student assessment, and information systems. This includes investments in teacher training, curricular learning plans, infrastructure and equipment.

Building Data Skills and Ecosystems. Through the Data Collaboratives for Local Impact (DCLI) program (<https://www.mcc.gov/initiatives/initiative/mcc-pepfar-partnership>), a partnership with the President's Emergency Plan for Aids Relief (PEPFAR), MCC is improving data ecosystems in Tanzania and Côte d'Ivoire. DCLI builds the skills of individuals, communities and organizations—as well as local and national governments officials—to apply data analytics, visualizations, data science and technology to health, education, and economic empowerment challenges.

Expand Access to Education. MCC works to expand access to education through provision of education infrastructure, including schools and TVET centers, labs and equipment, and teacher training centers.

MCC conducted a rigorous, 10-year follow-up evaluation of the BRIGHT program, which focused on providing access to girl-friendly primary schools in rural Burkina Faso. The evaluation found that the project caused an increase in primary school enrollment of 6 percentage points overall and a 10

percentage point increase for girls. The program also had positive impacts on Math and French test scores for both sexes and increased primary school completion rates by 13.5 percent.

The learning crisis is particularly amplified for women and girls, whose access to a safe, quality education is limited because of gender. To combat the bias, MCC focuses on **Women and Girls as Marginalized Learners**. Through its Gender Policy (<https://www.mcc.gov/resources/doc/gender-policy>), MCC requires that gender based barriers are identified and addressed throughout its work, from the initial country selection and assessment to the development and design of programs, project implementation, the monitoring of program results, and evaluation of program impacts. Women, who are often marginalized from formal education systems as children, may need to develop skills later in life and in non-traditional education systems.

MCC investments support gender integration in institutional reform, infrastructure development, entrepreneurship, access to finance, workforce development and skills training. MCC programs include grants, training and mentoring, which can help women gain employment and earn income. MCC's investments also create opportunities for women in sectors such as construction and electricity.

In Cote d'Ivoire, MCC's Secondary Education Activity seeks to reduce or mitigate gender disparities in the Ivorian education system to address the associated implications on women's economic opportunities. MCC funding will be used to create and operationalize a Gender in Education Policy, a 5-year implementation plan, and a new gender action unit within the Ministry of National Education. Additionally, the activity will support the implementation of priority actions identified in the Gender Policy to increase girls' and women's' access to secondary education and TVET.

Community development and inclusive approaches to development. To foster project impact and sustainability, it is critical to have appropriate engagement with project participants and other stakeholders using evidence-based methodologies throughout the life of the project. MCC's objectives and ongoing efforts are rooted in rigorous participatory approaches to development which include: using new systems and technologies that directly engage design and feedback from project participants and other stakeholders; strengthening local governance to improve service delivery; and achieving sustained impact through improved governance systems.

MCC's relationship with other donors. Globally, donors and partner countries are investing significantly to improve education and training systems. However, current resources are insufficient to meet the need of preparing tomorrow's global workforce; global funding would need to quintuple from \$16 billion to \$89 billion a year.⁵⁷ Often, other donors are focused on primary school, and areas such as early grade reading and math. MCC investments have historically been in the areas of education access, secondary education, TVET, higher education, and adult literacy. Due to MCC's model of country-driven project development and evidence-based project selection and approval, it is impossible to forecast the focus areas of future MCC education sector investments. However, MCC is committed to continue to regularly engage with other donors in Compact and Threshold countries to help ensure that future investments continue to move in lock-step with other U.S. Government Agencies and international donors, and views the U.S. Government Basic Education Strategy as an opportunity to strengthen coordination.

MCC's value added in education and training is derived from its model. MCC uses evidence to diagnose the key problems in the system to tackle what's most important to the individual partner country work through the government and their system; provide project financing; require key policy and institutional reforms for leverage and sustainability; and provide close oversight and measurement of results.

MCC's Impact and Results in International Education

One of the unique aspects of MCC's evidence-based approach to delivering U.S. foreign assistance is an in-depth economic analysis of its grants, projects, which inform investment decisions, estimate the expected increases in real incomes attributable to a proposed MCC investment relative to its projected costs, and examine the expected distribution of benefits among the project's likely beneficiaries.

Each cost-benefit analysis model, its estimated economic rate of return, and beneficiary analysis is available on MCC's website. Accountability and transparency are key principles to MCC; MCC has ranked as one of the most transparent aid donors in the world for the past six years, and in 2018 was ranked as the most transparent U.S. Government entity.⁵⁸

Monitoring and Evaluation

For all MCC investments, the partner country develops a program logic that demonstrates a clear theory of change. It explains how MCC's investments will result in the intended impacts on target beneficiaries. The program logic is the basis for identification of appropriate monitoring indicators, and the foundation for the evaluation methodology. As with all of MCC's projects, MCC is committed to monitoring and evaluating its education-related investments to measure progress in implementation, evaluate project outcomes, and provide evidence to better inform future policy and programming. MCC requires that evaluation findings be presented to partner country stakeholders and publicly disseminated after compact closure to ensure transparency, accountability, and the opportunity to learn and improve.

MCC's Education Common Indicators

MCC's Policy for Monitoring and Evaluation develops sector-specific common indicators for use across education sector Compact and Threshold programs. It also establishes that, where feasible, indicator data be disaggregated by gender and by relevant socioeconomic and ethnic groups. Indicators E-1 through E-8, below, make up the common indicators for the education sector. Other examples of indicators which are often used and are tailored to each program are also included.

Process indicators

- **(E-1) Value of signed educational facility construction, rehabilitation, and equipping contracts:**
The value of all signed construction contracts for educational facility construction, rehabilitation, or equipping (e.g. information technology, desks and chairs, electricity and lighting, water systems, latrines) using compact funds.
- **(E-2) Percent disbursed of signed educational facility construction, rehabilitation, and equipping**

contracts: The total amount of all signed construction contracts for education facility works or equipping divided by the total value of all signed contracts.

Output Indicators

- **(E-3) Legal, financial, and policy reforms adopted:** The number of reforms adopted by the public sector and attributable to compact support that increases the education sector's capacity to improve access, quality, and/or relevance of education at any level, from primary to post-secondary.
- **(E-4) Educational facilities constructed or rehabilitated:** The number of educational facilities constructed or rehabilitated according to standards stipulated in MCA contracts signed.
- **(E-5) Instructors trained:** The number of classroom instructors who complete MCC-supported training focused on instructional quality as defined by the compact training activity, disaggregated by gender.

Outcome Indicators

- **(E-6) Students participating in MCC-supported education activities:** The number of students enrolled or participating in MCC-supported educational schooling programs, disaggregated by gender.
- **(E-7) Graduates from MCC-supported education activities:** The number of students graduating from the highest grade (year) for that educational level in MCC-supported education, disaggregated by gender.
- **(E-8) Employed graduates of MCC-supported education activities:** The number of MCC-supported training program graduates employed in their field of study within one year after, disaggregated by gender.

Other Indicators (used as applicable)

- Percentage improvement on standardized cognitive assessments (literacy, numeracy, subject-specific, etc.).
- Job retention rates of students placed in jobs.
- Grade-to-grade promotion/transition rates of students in MCC-supported schools.
- Attendance rate of students in MCC-supported schools.
- Attendance rate of teachers in MCC-supported schools.
- Number of additional classrooms constructed.
- Number of schools with extended school days.
- Infrastructure conditions assessment on school facilities.
- Implementation of improved operations and maintenance practices.



Peace Corps

Peace Corps' Commitment to International Education



Eighty-four percent of Peace Corps posts engage in Education projects. Typically, Volunteers are placed in rural areas with limited education opportunities or in underserved or marginalized communities. Volunteers – whether they have backgrounds as teachers or begin service as generalists – can be trained to support student learning, engage in professional communities of practice, and promote love of learning in the most far-flung, hard-to-reach communities. Peace Corps Education projects can flex to fit national priorities in countries of operation through collaboration and support from national and regional partners.

The Peace Corps strategy for education exemplifies the agency's unique approach to development, sending Volunteers to strengthen the long-term capacity of host country individuals, groups, and communities rather than providing short-term monetary assistance. The Peace Corps uses the term “development” in people-to-people terms: partnering with people to help them develop the capacity to improve their own lives. Within this human capacity-building framework, the focus of the work is on the development of people, not things. This approach focuses on helping individuals identify what they would like to see changed, use their own strengths to implement solutions, and learn new skills to pursue their priorities.

Peace Corps' strategy is embodied in the agency's three goals:

- 1.** To help the people of the interested countries in meeting their need of trained men and women.
- 2.** To help promote a better understand of Americans on the part of the peoples served.
- 3.** To help promote a better understanding of other peoples on the part of Americans.

Peace Corps' approach to development is grounded in the belief that promoting cultural understanding is integral to effectively strengthening the capacity of individuals, groups, and communities (Goal One). Volunteers serve as cultural ambassadors, tasked with building a better understanding of Americans in host country communities (Goal Two) and increasing Americans' knowledge of other cultures (Goal Three). These three goals are intertwined: By speaking local languages, promoting intercultural understanding, and living and working side by side with local partners, Volunteers learn and teach, build mutual trust, and develop a deep understanding of community needs and capacity. This unique approach to development enables the Peace Corps to contribute to sustainable results at the local level—where the world's most persistent development challenges have a direct human impact.

Broadly stated, the Peace Corps aims to provide children, youth, and adults with sustainable educational opportunities that foster learning and promote the skills they need to develop and thrive in their communities. This goal directly contributes to international efforts, which have evolved over the past decade from simply increasing quantities of trained teachers, enrolled students, and functioning schools to improving the quality of education. *Relevance* and *equitable access* help to define educational quality.⁵⁹

Toward this end, the Peace Corps' Education sector consists of three project areas, which are guided by the development priorities expressed by host country governments:

- **TEFL:** Volunteers generally work in upper primary school, middle school, and high school teaching English. An emphasis on co-teaching and community of practice activities is encouraged. It should be noted that English is the medium of instruction in 24 countries with Peace Corps education projects, and that English is seen as essential for participation in the global economy in countries as diverse as Benin, China, Costa Rica, Ethiopia, Georgia, Mongolia, and Panama.
- **Literacy:** Volunteers generally work in early grades through upper primary grades to conduct literacy interventions in mother tongue and/or English, use a co-teaching approach when possible, and emphasize activities that engage parents and community members in education.
- **STEM:** Volunteers work in secondary schools in Africa to teach sciences (physics, chemistry, biology and/or math) with methods that address gaps in learners' foundational skills and integrate project-based learning.

Education-Integrated Activities

- **Gender:** Volunteers are trained to lead and report on activities that enhance access to educational opportunities and promote success of learners who have been marginalized for a variety of reasons. These activities support gender-equitable teaching, respond to bullying, reduce corporal punishment, engage in culturally responsive teaching, support learners with special needs, and prevent gender-based violence in schools.
- **Youth:** Volunteers teach and co-facilitate extracurricular activities, such as camps, clubs and mentoring support, to increase opportunities for youth to practice what they learn in school. They also support the development of organizational and life skills using positive youth development (PYD), an evidence-based approach that links Volunteer activities together.
- **Learners with Disabilities:** Empowering learners with disabilities is explicitly built into the Peace Corps' Charter. Whenever possible, Peace Corps' approach to programming for people with disabilities is to partner with local institutions and organizations. In addition, the Peace Corps recruits and places Volunteers with disabilities.

Contributions to the Strategy

Peace Corps' Education projects contribute to the U.S. Government Strategy on Basic International Education Assistance in the following ways:

Objective One: Improving Learning Outcomes

All Peace Corps Education Projects have three major objectives: (1) building counterpart teaching capacity, (2) increasing student achievement, and (c) community engagement.

1. Building Teacher Capacity: Building counterpart teacher capacity is the ultimate goal of all Education Volunteers. Regardless of the Volunteer's contribution to learner success, if the skills of counterpart teachers are not improved, the effect of the Volunteer contribution will less likely be sustained after their departure.

Volunteers focus on developing counterpart capacity building through teacher communities of practice (COPs) where all are peers and all can contribute to skill building and understanding, each according to their abilities and interests, to deepen teacher expertise for all.

Evidence indicates that when possible co-teaching and co-planning is the optimal mechanism for capacity building. This is the ideal Volunteer-counterpart dynamic. Co-planning, while difficult at times due to host-country teacher commitments, allows Volunteers and counterparts to work together to create lesson plans, strengthen curricula, and create additional classroom resources.

In scenarios where co-teaching is not feasible (due to a lack of teachers), Volunteer-led teaching communities of practice of teachers can still succeed in building counterpart capacity.

2. Increasing Student Achievement: In the classroom with other teachers, Volunteers can work in groups or one-on-one with students who need additional time and attention so that they too can succeed in school. Also, Volunteers provide after-school study groups, clubs, and camps which can reinforce classroom learning in ways that are more contextualized, community-centered and fun. Volunteers also improve classroom assessment by modeling and discussing techniques for formative assessment and basic principles of test design.

3. Community Engagement in School Improvement and Student Learning: Sustaining educational gains made in the classroom requires support for education in the community and at home. Education projects that work at the community level should encourage community involvement and support for both student learning and school improvement activities. Examples of successful activities include working with parents to help them understand the benefit of their involvement in classrooms and extracurricular activities.⁶⁰

Objective Two: Expand Access to Quality Basic Education for All, Particularly Marginalized Populations

Globally, Peace Corps' strategy has always been to focus on rural, underserved, or marginalized communities. The Volunteer's role in the community as well as the school is as a human resource. Volunteers work directly with learners, counterparts, and community members to identify barriers to access and opportunities to improve learning outcomes.

Inside the school, Peace Corps supports:

- General teaching practices that promote inclusion and gender equity, and optimize the environment for learning in the classroom. These practices are discreet, replicable techniques within a Volunteer's or counterpart's sphere of control and engage all learners by setting and positively reinforcing expectations for participation and accountability.⁶¹
- In addition, Volunteers are given specific training in and can report on practices to help them support gender-equitable teaching, accommodate students with special needs, implement culturally responsive teaching, and prevent school-based violence. In terms of students with physical disabilities, in addition to recruiting and placing Volunteers with disabilities, Peace Corps' approach is to partner with locally-based institutions such as Mobility International, the Soros Foundation, and World Vision. Special Olympics is a Peace Corps global partner.

Outside the classroom:

- Volunteers work with community members to address barriers to access and adapt inclusive, gender-equitable practices to local contexts so that learners can attend school, be safe at school,⁶² and get safely to and from school.

In addition, Education Volunteers initiate and can report on youth activities outside the classroom, including teaching and co-facilitating activities such as camps, clubs, and mentoring opportunities. Positive youth development (PYD) is an evidence-based approach used to link these Volunteer activities together. PYD recognizes youth as a positive resource to be developed and promotes activities that build upon their existing knowledge and skills. This approach also builds youth skills to be active members of their school and their community.

Impact and Results

As mentioned above, all Peace Corps Education Projects have three major objectives: (1) building counterpart teaching capacity, (2) increasing student achievement, and (3) community engagement. Each objective includes a series of project activities, outputs, outcomes, and corresponding indicators that Peace Corps posts use to develop a Logical Project Framework (including a Logic Model and Monitoring and Evaluation Plan) following a template developed at Peace Corps headquarters. Posts are responsible for training Volunteers to carry out the activities and measure their progress and results. Data collection tools and indicator reference sheets are provided to assist with this task. All data are uploaded into Peace Corps' Volunteer Reporting Tool (VRT), allowing Peace Corps headquarters to extract the data as needed.

Outcome indicators include:

- Number of teachers who demonstrate a minimum number of English/Literacy/STEM teaching skills;
- Number of teachers who demonstrate a minimum number of gender equitable teaching skills;
- Number of students who increase achievement in class content; and
- Number of community members who increase involvement in student learning or school improvement.



U.S. Agency for International Development

International Basic Education aligns with USAID's Mission



On behalf of the American people, the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) promotes and demonstrates democratic values abroad, and advances a free, peaceful, and prosperous world. USAID leads the U.S. Government's international development and humanitarian efforts through partnerships and investments that save lives, reduce poverty, strengthen democratic governance, and help people emerge from humanitarian crises and progress beyond assistance.

For partner countries to advance on a path to self-reliance, they need educated and skilled populations capable of leading and managing their own development.

USAID invests in education in developing countries because we know that its positive effects are far-reaching and that it serves as a driver for all other development. Increasing education levels around the world is good for American businesses and investors. These investments are in the direct interests of the American people and support Strategic Objective 2.2 of the Department of State and USAID Joint Strategic Plan (JSP) to “promote healthy, educated, and productive populations in partner countries to drive inclusive and sustainable development, open new markets and support U.S. prosperity and security objectives.”

From 2011-2017, USAID education programs directly benefited more than 83.4 million children and youth in more than 50 countries. During that time, these programs allowed 69.8 million children to receive early-grade reading instruction, 22.6 million children and youth living in crisis- and conflict-affected environments to receive access to education, including 4.1 million who were previously out of school; and 736,000 individuals to gain skills that helped them secure employment. USAID will build on its extensive experience in international education to implement the U.S. Government Strategy for International Basic Education.

USAID's Contribution to the U.S. Government Strategy on International Basic Education

Leadership

Coordination of the U.S. Government Strategy on International Basic Education

The Senior Coordinator for International Basic Education Assistance (Senior Coordinator), appointed by the President and housed within USAID, will lead the U.S. Government's interagency coordination efforts. The Senior Coordinator is responsible for facilitating program and policy coordination of international basic education programs and activities among relevant departments, agencies and officials; partner governments; multilateral institutions; the private sector; and non-governmental, faith-based, and civil society organizations.

In Washington, USAID will lead the coordination of both the Agency Advisory Group and the Interagency International Basic Education Working Group, as outlined in the Strategy. In partner countries where USAID supports education programs, the Agency will play a central role in coordinating the U.S. Government's basic education assistance.

Presence in Partner Countries

USAID is the largest bilateral donor to basic education in the world, with a strong field presence in more than 40 countries. USAID will maintain this comparative advantage, which enables policy dialogue and network-building on the ground with relevant government ministries and local stakeholders. USAID will continue building strong bilateral development relationships, which, in turn, support strong political and economic relationships between the U.S. Government and partner-country governments and help advance U.S. foreign policy objectives.

Global Engagement

Globally, USAID is uniquely positioned to leverage resources while providing technical guidance, leadership, and convening authority. The Agency will continue to engage with multilateral institutions, international organizations, and global funds—such as the Global Partnership for Education, Education Cannot Wait, and other donors and development partners—to expand the Agency's reach, ensure the representation and promotion of U.S. interests, and maximize the efficient use of taxpayer dollars.

Programmatic

USAID Education Policy

An Agency-wide Education Policy will support the overall objectives of the U.S. Government Strategy on International Basic Education and foster self-reliance in partner countries. To achieve these objectives, the policy will clearly state that the *top priority for USAID programming in the education sector is sustained improvements in learning outcomes and skills development*.⁶³ The policy will work to strengthen education systems, including public and private institutions, in partner countries to promote sustainability and advance

self-reliance. The policy will also ensure that USAID's investments support country partners in delivering on the following key outcomes:

- Children and youth, particularly the most marginalized and vulnerable, have increased access to quality education that is safe, relevant, and promotes social well-being;
- Children and youth gain literacy, numeracy, and social-emotional skills that are foundational to future learning and success; and
- Youth gain the skills they need to lead productive lives, gain employment, and positively contribute to society.

USAID will build on the progress and significant investments it has made in the education sector, while adapting our approach to new global developments.⁶⁴ The Agency has acquired substantial experience, expertise, and momentum through its focus on targeted outcomes in basic education, particularly in early grade reading, education in crisis and conflict, and the skills young people need to be successful in work and life. USAID has also strengthened its own organizational capacity by improving professional development and training for education officers, investing in evaluation and research, and building internal communities of practice linked to external experts.

Improving learning outcomes and skills-development for children and youth remains our key objective. To achieve this, we will ensure our policies are flexible and adaptable to the contexts in our partner countries, to allow programs to target a greater range of learning outcomes, education levels, and institutions. The USAID Education Policy will align education sector programs and investments with country-driven, context-specific approaches informed by data and research, and will support education reform. This will allow the Agency to identify where it is best-positioned to add value and help ensure our investments have a substantial impact on educational outcomes—from early childhood education through higher education.

USAID will continue to expand access to equitable, safe, and inclusive education across all programming, in both public and non-public institutions. In particular, the USAID Education Policy will highlight the importance of equality for girls and boys and disability-inclusive education throughout the Agency's programming. USAID will release new resources related to these topics that provide support and guidance to our education officers and implementing partners. USAID will promote inclusive education by breaking down barriers that keep children and youth from learning and leading.

Areas of Greater Emphasis

While maintaining our focus on learning outcomes and skills development, USAID will look to strengthen our education programs by:

- Renewing and increasing our emphasis on *education for children and youth facing adversity, conflict, and crisis*—with particular attention to girls and those who are displaced. USAID will: emphasize dual educational outcomes (learning and protection); incentivize national government leadership in the education sector to integrate refugees into host country systems; better serve internally-displaced peoples and children and youth affected by violence; and continue to support external coordination groups to increase coherence between humanitarian and development efforts in education.
- Increasing engagement with *non-state actors* and promoting *finance and delivery innovations* to expand

access to quality education—including with non-state schools and other education providers (such as not-for-profit, for-profit, faith-based, and community schools), the private sector, and the investment community.

- Improving country capacity to *generate and use education data* to drive transparency, accountability, and informed decision-making. This includes a range of types of data (on learning outcomes, students, staffing, finances, and infrastructure, among others). Improved data and analysis will help decision-makers, parents and caregivers, and stakeholders gain insight into the functioning of education systems, better target reforms and resources, and equitably improve outcomes.
- Transforming *teacher policies and professional development* systems to increase the number of qualified teachers and improve the quality of instruction by using research-based instructional approaches and materials to improve their practices in the classroom—thus improving student learning outcomes. This includes increasing engagement with universities and other pre-service teacher training institutions.

Technical

Learning and Research

USAID will build on its strong focus on data and evidence to develop and implement learning agendas⁶⁵ that correspond to the priority areas in its education policy, close evidence gaps, and improve technical and operational approaches.

Knowledge Sharing Platform

USAID will launch and support “EducationLinks,” a new, publicly available, online platform for education practitioners and policymakers to find the latest USAID programming guidance and global evidence in the field of international education. The Agency will post information and resources developed through learning agendas to make them publicly available. The platform will also feature resources from all other U.S. Government departments and agencies involved in international basic education.

Strengthening the Capacity of Partner Countries to Gather and Process Data

USAID will work to strengthen the capacity of partner countries to collect and use education data—including on learning outcomes, displaced and disadvantaged populations, and those who are out-of-school. This verifiable, disaggregated data will increase transparency and accountability in partner countries and inform decision-making to improve learning outcomes.

Improving the Accessibility, Use, and Collection of USAID Data

USAID will increase the accessibility of its education datasets in the Development Data Library (DDL) (<https://www.usaid.gov/data>), USAID’s public repository of Agency-funded data. The DDL includes data on all priority areas in the education policy, such as the extensive collection of datasets from early grade reading assessments. USAID will also work to collect more comprehensive cost data for its programs. This information will inform our own investments, as well as decisions in partner countries, pertaining to scaling and replicating programs, increasing the effectiveness and efficiency of activities, and promoting sustainability.

Impact and Results

USAID will work with partner country counterparts to develop and implement ambitious programs to improve learning outcomes and skills development measurably, while also reaching the most marginalized and vulnerable. USAID will develop policy guidance to support our Missions in setting bold targets to improve learning outcomes and strengthen system capacity in areas such as teacher training and the engagement of parents and communities (see list under Foreign Assistance Indicators below). Guidance will draw from country-level data, analysis, and projections in annual planning and reporting processes.

Headquarter units will consolidate all education performance data from Missions and report on Agency-level progress and results on an annual basis. USAID will also take the lead in developing a consolidated U.S. Government annual results report, which will be publicly available.

Additionally, USAID has identified “percentage of students attaining a minimum proficiency in reading at the end of primary school” as a key Self-Reliance Metric (<https://www.usaid.gov/selfreliance/what-self-reliance-metrics>). This important indicator, along with others, can show the extent to which education institutions in partner countries are fulfilling their responsibility to deliver high-quality education for all children and youth.

Education-Related Standard Foreign Assistance Indicators

USAID will continue to update and refine its standard foreign assistance indicators for education and workforce development (<https://www.state.gov/f/indicators>), and provide additional resources to develop custom indicators for specific projects and activities. As part of the U.S. Government Strategy on International Basic Education, USAID will collaborate with its U.S. Government department and agency partners to develop and report on common indicators. USAID currently uses the following standard indicators (<https://www.state.gov/f/indicators/>) below, disaggregated by sex, for basic education, in addition to custom indicators developed for individual projects and activities:

Learning Outcomes

- Percent of learners who attain a minimum grade-level proficiency in reading at the end of grade two with U.S. Government assistance; and
- Percent of learners who attain minimum grade-level proficiency in reading at the end of primary school (or grade six, whichever comes sooner) with U.S. Government assistance.

Learners and Students Reached

- Number of learners in primary schools and/or equivalent non-school based settings reached with U.S. Government education assistance;
- Number of learners in secondary schools or equivalent non-school based settings reached with U.S. Government education assistance; and
- Number of learners reached in reading programs/interventions at the primary level.

Teachers

- Number of primary or secondary educators who complete professional development activities with U.S. Government support;
- Number of primary school educators who complete professional development activities on implementing evidence-based reading instruction with U.S. Government assistance;
- Number of primary or secondary school educators who complete professional development activities on teaching students with special educational needs with U.S. Government assistance; and
- Number of primary or secondary school educators who complete professional development activities on peace education, conflict sensitivity, or conflict transformation with U.S. Government assistance.

Teaching and Learning Materials

- Number of primary or secondary textbooks and other teaching and learning materials (TLM) purchased with U.S. Government assistance; and
- Number of primary school classrooms that receive a complete set of essential reading instructional materials with U.S. Government assistance.

Management and Administration

Number of education administrators/officials who complete professional development activities with U.S. Government support.

Parent and Community Engagement

Number of parent-teacher associations (PTAs) or community-governance structures engaged in primary or secondary education supported with U.S. Government assistance.

Infrastructure

Number of primary or secondary classrooms built or repaired with U.S. Government assistance.

Employment

- Number of individuals with new employment following their completion of U.S. Government-assisted workforce-development programs; and
- Number of individuals with increased earnings following their completion of U.S. Government-assisted workforce-development programs.

Skills Development

Number of individuals with improved skills following their completion of U.S. Government-assisted workforce-development programs.

Individuals Reached

Number of individuals who complete U.S. Government-assisted workforce-development programs.

ANNEX **THREE**

Definitions

BASIC EDUCATION —

- (i) Measurable improvements in literacy, numeracy, and other basic skills development that prepare an individual to be an active, productive member of society and the workforce;
- (ii) workforce development, vocational training, and digital literacy informed by real market needs and opportunities and that result in measurable improvements in employment;
- (iii) programs and activities designed to demonstrably improve—
 - (I) early childhood, preprimary education, primary education, and secondary education, which can be delivered in formal or non-formal education settings; and
 - (II) learning for out-of-school youth and adults; and
- (iv) capacity building for teachers, administrators, counselors, and youth workers that results in measurable improvements in student literacy, numeracy, or employment.⁶⁶

BEST PRACTICE—A method or approach shown by research and experience to produce optimal results and that is established or proposed as a standard suitable for widespread adoption.⁶⁷

CHILD LABOR—Defined by the International Labour Organization’s Conventions 138 on the Minimum Age⁶⁸ and 182 on the Worst Forms of Child Labor.⁶⁹ It includes employment below the minimum age as established in national legislation, hazardous unpaid household services, and the worst forms of child labor: all forms of slavery or practices similar to slavery, such as the sale or trafficking of children, debt bondage and serfdom, or forced or compulsory labor including the forced or compulsory recruitment of children for use in armed conflict; the use, procuring or offering of a child for prostitution, for the production of pornography or for pornographic purposes; the use, procuring or offering of a child for illicit activities; and work which, by its nature or the circumstances in which it is carried out, is likely to harm the health, safety or morals of children.

CHILDREN WITH DISABILITIES—Those who have long-term physical, mental, intellectual or sensory impairments, which in interaction with various barriers may hinder their full and effective participation in society on an equal basis with others.

COMMUNITY OF LEARNING—A holistic approach to education and community engagement in which schools act as the primary resource center for delivery of a service to the community at large, leveraging and maximizing the impact of other development efforts and reducing duplication and waste.⁷⁰

CONFLICT SENSITIVITY—The ability of an organization to: (1) understand the context in which the organization operates; (2) understand the two-way interaction between its intervention and that context; and (3) act upon this understanding to minimize negative impacts and maximize positive impacts on conflict.⁷¹

CONFLICT-AFFECTED—Describes a country, region or community that has experienced armed conflict and/or recently terminated armed conflict, which is contention over the control of government and/or territory that results in armed force between two parties, at least one being a government of a state. Conflict-affected also includes countries, regions or communities indirectly impacted by conflict due to population displacement, reallocation of government resources or diminished capacity.⁷²

CRISIS-AFFECTED—Describes a country, region or community that is experiencing or recently experienced a crisis. This also includes countries, regions or communities indirectly impacted by a crisis due to population displacement, reallocation of government resources or diminished capacity. Crises include natural hazards, health epidemics, lawlessness, endemic crime and violence, and climate vulnerabilities.⁷³

"DO NO HARM"—An approach which helps to identify unintended negative or positive impacts of humanitarian and development interventions in settings where there is conflict or risk of conflict. It can be applied during planning, monitoring, and evaluation to ensure the intervention does not worsen the conflict but rather contributes to improving it. "Do No Harm" is considered an essential basis for the work of organizations operating in situations of conflict.⁷⁴

EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION—Programs that are typically designed with a holistic approach to support children's early cognitive, physical, social and emotional development and introduce young children to organized instruction outside of the family context.⁷⁵

GENDER PARITY IN BASIC EDUCATION—Equal access to quality basic education for boys and girls.⁷⁶

INCLUSIVE EDUCATION—Having one system of education for all students, at all levels (early childhood, primary, secondary and post-secondary), with the provision of supports to meet the individual needs of students. Inclusive education focuses on the full and effective participation, accessibility, attendance and achievement of all students, especially those who, for different reasons, are excluded or at risk of being marginalized.⁷⁷

INTERNALLY DISPLACED PEOPLE (IDPs)—Persons or groups of people who have been forced or obliged to flee or to leave their homes or places of habitual residence, in particular as a result of or in order to avoid the effects of armed conflict, situations of generalized violence, violations of human rights or natural or human-made disasters, and who have not crossed an internationally recognized border.⁷⁸

LIFE SKILLS—Psycho-social abilities for adaptive and positive behavior that enable individuals to deal effectively with the demands and challenges of everyday life. These skills are loosely grouped

into three broad categories: cognitive skills for analyzing and using information, personal skills for developing personal agency and managing oneself, and inter-personal skills for communicating and interacting effectively with others.⁷⁹

LOCAL EDUCATION SYSTEMS—The people, public and private institutions, resources, and activities whose primary purpose is to improve, expand, and sustain education outcomes.

MARGINALIZED CHILDREN AND VULNERABLE GROUPS—Includes girls, children affected by or emerging from armed conflict or humanitarian crises, children with disabilities, children in remote or rural areas (including those who lack access to safe water and sanitation), religious or ethnic minorities, indigenous peoples, orphans and children affected by HIV/AIDS, child laborers, married adolescents, and victims of trafficking.⁸⁰

NATIONAL EDUCATION PLAN—A comprehensive national education plan developed by partner country governments in consultation with other stakeholders as a means for wide-scale improvement of the country’s education system, including explicit, credible strategies informed by effective practices and standards to achieve quality universal basic education.⁸¹

NATURAL HAZARD—A process, phenomenon or human activity that may cause loss of life, injury or other health impacts, property damage, social and economic disruption or environmental degradation. Natural hazards are predominantly associated with natural processes and phenomena. Hazards may be single, sequential or combined in their origin and effects. Each hazard is characterized by its location, intensity or magnitude, frequency and probability. Biological hazards are also defined by their infectiousness, toxicity, or other characteristics of the pathogen such as dose-response, incubation period, case fatality rate and estimation of the pathogen for transmission.⁸²

NON-FORMAL EDUCATION—Non-formal educational activities do not correspond to the definition of formal education. Non-formal education takes place both within and outside educational institutions and caters to people of all ages. It does not always lead to certification. Non-formal education programs are characterized by their variety, flexibility and ability to respond quickly to new educational needs of children or adults. They are often designed for specific groups of learners such as those who are too old for their grade level, those who do not attend formal school, or adults. Curricula may be based on formal education or on new approaches. Examples include accelerated ‘catch-up’ learning, after-school programs, literacy, and numeracy. Non-formal education may lead to late entry into formal education programs. This is sometimes called ‘second-chance education’.⁸³

POSITIVE YOUTH DEVELOPMENT—Defined by the U.S. Government Inter-Agency Working Group on Youth as an intentional, pro-social approach that engages youth within their communities, schools, organizations, peer groups, and families in a manner that is productive and constructive; recognizes, utilizes, and enhances youths’ strengths; and promotes positive outcomes for young people by providing opportunities, fostering positive relationships, and furnishing the support needed to build on their leadership strengths.⁸⁴

PRIMARY EDUCATION PROGRAMS—Programs typically designed to provide students with fundamental skills in reading, writing and mathematics (i.e. literacy and numeracy) and establish a solid foundation for learning and understanding core areas of knowledge, personal and social development, in preparation for lower secondary education. They focus on learning at a basic level of complexity with little, if any, specialization.⁸⁵ The Strategy will follow partner countries' laws, regulations, policies and definitions regarding education level.

POST-CONFLICT—The period up to 10 years after battle-deaths fall below the level of 1,000/year, regardless of whether or not this was accompanied by a peace accord, as long as conflict does not resume.⁸⁶

POST-SECONDARY EDUCATION PROGRAMS—All education beyond secondary school level, including that delivered by universities, further education colleges and community providers.⁸⁷

RELEVANT EXECUTIVE BRANCH AGENCIES AND OFFICIALS—The Department of State, the United States Agency for International Development, the Department of the Treasury, the Department of Labor, the Department of Education, the Department of Agriculture, and the Department of Defense, the Chief Executive Officer of the Millennium Challenge Corporation, the National Security Advisor, and the Director of the Peace Corps.⁸⁸

LOWER SECONDARY EDUCATION PROGRAMS—Programs typically designed to build on the learning outcomes from primary education level. Usually, the aim is to lay the foundation for lifelong learning and human development upon which education systems may then expand further educational opportunities. Some education systems may already offer vocational education programs at this level to provide individuals with skills relevant to employment. Programs at this level are usually organized around a more subject-oriented curriculum, introducing theoretical concepts across a broad range of subjects. Teachers typically have pedagogical training in specific subjects and, more often than at the primary education level, a class of students may have several teachers with specialized knowledge of the subjects they teach.⁸⁹ The Strategy will follow partner countries' laws, regulations, policies and definitions regarding education level.

UPPER SECONDARY EDUCATION PROGRAMS—Programs typically designed to complete secondary education in preparation for tertiary education or provide skills relevant to employment, or both. Programs at this level offer students more varied, specialized and in-depth instruction than programs at the lower secondary level. They are more differentiated, with an increased range of options and streams available. Teachers are often highly qualified in the subjects or fields of specialization they teach, particularly in the higher grades.⁹⁰ The Strategy will follow partner countries' laws, regulations, policies and definitions regarding education level.

COUNTRY SELF-RELIANCE—A country's ability and commitment to plan, finance, and implement solutions to solve its own development challenges.⁹¹

SOFT SKILLS—Cognitive, social and emotional skills,⁹² behaviors, and personal qualities that help people to navigate their environment, relate well with others, perform well, and achieve their goals. Soft skills are expressed in the form of observable behaviors, generally in the performance of a task.⁹³

YOUTH—For the purposes of this strategy, youth means a life stage that starts in adolescence and continues through young adulthood. The specific age range associated with those stages may vary by the socio-cultural context, programmatic context, and the organization funding or implementing the program.⁹⁴

WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT (WFD) PROGRAMS—The programs and policy efforts that support young people and adults in gaining the specific skills and attitudes they need to be productively employed.

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