



USAID
FROM THE AMERICAN PEOPLE



DEVELOPING ETHIOPIA'S YOUTH

“We cannot always build the future for our youth, but we can build our youth for the future.”

– *Former U.S. President Franklin D. Roosevelt*

Of Ethiopia's 105 million people, 40.5 percent is under the age of 15 and 30 percent consists of youth aged 15 to 29. Many of Ethiopia's youths do not complete primary education or continue with secondary education, as indicated by a secondary school enrollment rate of under 30 percent. Those with at least a grade 10 education can participate in the national Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) program. However, in 2017, enrolment in the TVET system fell 14 percent from previous years, highlighting a need to assess accessibility, quality of instruction, and skills alignment with the labor market. To date, youth underemployment, defined as involuntary part-time work or underutilization of skills, is estimated at over 27 percent. Young females are twice as likely to be underemployed or unemployed as males. In addition, landlessness in rural communities have driven many youths to seek employment in urban areas, further straining resources in cities.

WHY IS THIS IMPORTANT FOR ETHIOPIA

Failure to engage the youth of today and tomorrow will hinder Ethiopia's Growth and Transformation Plan. With a significant portion of its human capital underused or unused, there is a potential for productivity loss and decreased consumption. Gaps in meaningful employment can handicap individuals for future jobs and result in lower earnings due to lack of skills and job training. This will reinforce poverty, fuel discontent, and increase the burden on state welfare. Ethiopia can only accelerate its development by focusing on youth and their health, education, and job prospects.

WHY IS THIS IMPORTANT FOR THE UNITED STATES

In 2012, USAID launched its Youth in Development Policy with an emphasis on integrating youth in our programming and enabling them to contribute to and benefit from more stable, democratic, and prosperous nations. The extent to which the growing youth population is involved in Ethiopia's journey to self-reliance will determine how committed and capable the country is to plan, finance, and implement solutions to its own development challenges. Partnering with Ethiopia to develop the skills of its future working-age generation will help it move from being an aid recipient to an emerging market economy with increased opportunities for US trade and investment.

PROGRAMMING

EXPANDING ECONOMIC OPPORTUNITIES: USAID's Building the Potential of Youth activity is implemented in the Southern Nations, Nationalities, and Peoples' Region (SNNPR), Afar, Somali, Oromia, Amhara and Tigray regional states. This activity focuses on providing unemployed and underemployed youth ages 15-29 in rural areas with the tools and social capital needed to increase their income and long-term economic self-sufficiency. It also works to develop the capacity of national and local institutions to deliver soft and hard skills training. Over 15,000 young people have received work-readiness training. A 2017 USAID evaluation revealed that almost three-quarters of the survey respondents were employed, with many of them being self-employed. Two-thirds saw an increase in income within six months after participating in the activity. Youth also reported better saving habits, healthier eating habits, increased self-confidence, and higher work satisfaction.

AGRICULTURE AND RESILIENCE ACTIVITIES: The Pastoralist Areas Resilience Improvement through Market Expansion (PRIME) activity provided assistance to communities in the Afar, Oromia, and Somali regions. Over five years, many unskilled youth transitioning out of pastoralism took advantage of vocational education and scholarships, received literacy training, and participated in school-led nutrition awareness campaigns. Under PRIME, youth benefited from training and contributed to the establishment and leadership of 767 village-level savings and loan associations that helped provide a buffer against sudden financial needs. In addition, a USAID Development Food Security Activity project partnered with M-Birr, the first mobile money service in Ethiopia, to support financial inclusion for over 4,000 youth clients, allowing them to obtain credit to start their own businesses.

HEALTH: Each year, our HIV prevention and care activities at youth-friendly services sites reach over 500,000 adolescents and young adults, as well as additional support to more than 250,000 orphans and vulnerable children. Partnering with the Government of Ethiopia, we have trained nearly 1,000 social workers, many of whom are youth and adolescent girls, who have found employment with the government and other civil society organizations as case managers and life skills coaches. As part of our school-based Social Behavioral Change Communication project, we have trained 20,000 youth in Amhara on malaria prevention and control. Youth-led efforts in this region, where seasonal migration has resulted in imported cases of malaria, helped identify 80 positive cases for treatment.

DEMOCRACY AND GOVERNANCE: USAID's Access to Justice and Legal Awareness Program supports 69 law students at Haramaya University to serve as paralegals at two USAID-supported legal aid clinics, where they receive practical training and mentorship opportunities. Alongside their peers, these students have provided free legal aid services to nearly 100,000 beneficiaries from low income or marginalized areas in Oromia and Harari. In addition, the USAID Sustained Dialogue Activity targets students across five universities to create a culture of trust and collaboration, produce more broad-minded graduates, and reduce inter-group violence.