

UP CLOSE



Promoting a Dual-Client Approach

Snapshot

Youth:Work employability programs utilize the International Youth Foundation's (IYF) dual-client approach to program design. Before any employability training is designed, the needs of its two primary clients — youth and employers — are assessed. Understanding what employers want in new hires enables Youth:Work partners to give youth the training that meets those needs. Knowing the profiles of youth participants also enables partners to match disadvantaged youth with courses appropriate for their aptitudes and aspirations. Once programs are implemented, ongoing monitoring and evaluation contribute to a deeper understanding of how to improve employability programs for youth and keep them relevant to changing local markets.

Employer and Market Analysis

Local market conditions directly influence the outcome of job training programs. By conducting surveys, working with knowledgeable local partners, and developing relationships with government and business leaders, Youth:Work obtains information on such factors as:

- Current local labor market conditions
- Employment trends by industry
- Immediate and projected staffing needs
- Training needs
- Labor laws and policies
- Financial incentives for employers and planned investments by governments and the private sector

Youth:Work programs use this knowledge to design comprehensive job training, job placement, and support activities that prepare youth for existing jobs and for jobs in growth industries. Training covers not only the technical skills necessary for particular vocational paths, but also life and employability skills to help youth perform in formal work environments. Employers can count on Youth:Work graduates to be qualified employees who have the full range of competencies it takes to excel at their jobs.

Youth Needs and Skills Analysis

In keeping with this dual-client approach, employability programs undertake a careful assessment of the needs and skills of target beneficiaries. Coupled with an understanding of local markets, screening can confirm that:

- Projects reach USAID target beneficiary groups, such as highly vulnerable youth, or residents of certain geographical areas
- Students have the minimum literacy and numeracy skills necessary to complete training, or can be equipped with remedial skills development, if needed
- Students are matched with the appropriate Youth:Work program, given their individual skills and professional aspirations

Other considerations based on USAID Mission goals are incorporated into the screening process to ensure target beneficiaries are matched with the training that will best serve youth, employers, and program objectives alike.

Monitoring and Evaluation

Through effective monitoring and evaluation, Youth:Work is able to measure outcomes, improve programming, keep employability programs relevant to changing local market needs, provide targeted technical assistance to local partners, and build a framework for program sustainability. This approach to M&E is guided by:

Relevance. Data generated through M&E activities are relevant to program learning and improvement.

Rigor. The highest possible standards in M&E efforts are used in the interest of promoting the credibility, quality, and utility of findings.

Practicality. M&E activities are appropriate, given available resources and capacity.

Regularity. Programs define and budget for their M&E activities at the design stage to ensure they conduct M&E according to a schedule and can integrate program improvements based on outcomes.

Accountability. Youth:Work shares M&E information with its partners and other stakeholders in the interest of transparency, improved program outcomes, and learning.

Youth:Work involves implementing partners in developing evaluation questions and collecting data. Quantitative and qualitative approaches are combined, enriching data interpretation with information from interviews and focus groups with employers, youth, and program staff. The results and outcomes measured by these approaches pertain to employers as well as to youth participants.

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M&E in Latin America

To benefit *entra21*, a US\$29 million initiative on job training and placement for disadvantaged youth in Latin America, IYF created a regional M&E system used by 33 organizations in 18 countries that allowed it to monitor project performance against key outputs and measure youth outcomes in the areas of employment rates and quality of jobs, human capital, and employer and youth satisfaction. Using qualitative and quantitative methods, data on more than 19,000 youth was collected and analyzed for a variety of learning products, including a final evaluation report of *entra21*/Phase I and 11 thematic reports on particular topics related to youth employment and training, including how to more effectively engage with and respond to the needs of the private sector. Employer satisfaction results were reported to the implementing organization to guide adjustments to the training curriculum.

Under Phase II of *entra21*, IYF upgraded the M&E system to collect and analyze data from 25 projects and an estimated 50,000 youth through 2011. Where possible, project impact will be evaluated through the use of control groups to compare outcomes across youth who participated in the project and those who did not.

