

**U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID)**  
**Report to Congress on USAID’s Youth in Development Policy**

The U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) submits this report, pursuant to Section 7019(e) of Division K of P.L. 117-103, the Department of State, Foreign Operations, and Related Programs Appropriations Act, 2022, which incorporates by reference the requirements of House Report 117-84:

*Youth Engagement: The Committee directs the USAID Administrator to conduct a review of, and update to, its youth policy and report to the Committees on Appropriations, not later than 180 days after enactment of this Act, on its findings.*

**Background**

The current global youth<sup>1</sup> population is 2.4 billion, the largest youth population in history. The growing number of young people poses both an opportunity and a challenge to USAID’s development goals. When youth contribute to economic, social, and civic life, they help lift their countries out of poverty, ensure greater stability, and create healthier societies. Alternatively, peace, progress, and prosperity can stall when these opportunities are unavailable or unattainable and countries are unable to meet the basic needs of their youth.

USAID’s updated [Youth in Development Policy](#) (the Policy) guides our programming in this area toward an overarching goal: **Increase the meaningful participation of youth within their communities, schools, organizations, economies, peer groups, and families, enhancing their skills, providing opportunities, and fostering healthy relationships so they may build on their collective leadership.** In pursuit of this vision, the Policy puts forward three related objectives:

1. **Access:** Youth are better able to access high-quality information, safe services, and livelihood opportunities and build the skills they need to lead healthy, productive, and engaged lives.
2. **Participation:** Youth have the right to fully participate in decision-making as key partners to contribute to individual, household, community, and national well-being.
3. **Systems:** Youth have a stronger collective voice in, and are better served by, local and national systems through more coordinated and effective services, practices, and policies that embody the principles of Positive Youth Development<sup>2</sup>.

USAID is a global leader in youth programming. We work across sectors and in partnership with other U.S. government (USG) Departments and Agencies, the private sector, national

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<sup>1</sup> [https://www.usaid.gov/sites/default/files/documents/Youth\\_Population\\_USAIDs\\_Definition\\_and\\_Data\\_Source\\_1.pdf](https://www.usaid.gov/sites/default/files/documents/Youth_Population_USAIDs_Definition_and_Data_Source_1.pdf)

<sup>2</sup> USG-wide approach to youth development. Defined by USAID as, “Positive Youth Development (PYD) engages youth along with their families, communities and/or governments so that youth are empowered to reach their full potential. PYD approaches build skills, assets and competencies; foster healthy relationships; strengthen the environment and transform systems.”

governments, and civil-society and faith-based organizations around the world to assist youth in their transition from childhood to adulthood.

At the foundation of USAID’s youth efforts is an approach called “Positive Youth Development” that ensures meaningful opportunities for youth to contribute in resolving challenges and promoting positive change in their own communities and countries. To achieve the objectives of the Policy, USAID invested approximately \$281 million<sup>3</sup> in funding from Fiscal Year (FY) 2021 in youth programming and approximately 434,254 youth learned a broad set of skills including management, leadership, social, and/or civic-engagement skills.

This report provides a snapshot of 2021 results and a description of the mechanisms for monitoring and evaluation, structure, human resources, and budgeting that make this work possible.

### **Mechanism for Monitoring and Evaluation and Results during 2021**

To measure progress on the Youth in Development Policy, USAID projects and activities use five Standard Foreign Assistance Indicators for youth:

- Number of youth trained in soft skills/life skills through USG-funded programs. *In FY 2021, USAID trained 436,744 youth in soft skills/life skills.*
- Number of laws, policies, or procedures adopted or implemented with USG assistance designed to promote youth participation at the regional, national, or local level. *In FY 2021, three laws, policies, or procedures were adopted or implemented with USG assistance designed to promote youth participation at the regional, national, or local level.*
- Percentage of participants in USG-assisted programs designed to increase access to productive economic resources for youth (ages 15–29). *In FY 2021, 31 percent of participants in USG-assisted programs designed to increase access to productive economic resources were youth.*
- Percentage of youth who participate in civil-society activities following soft-skills/life-skills training or initiatives from USG-assisted programs. *In FY 2021, 71 percent of youth participated in civil-society activities following soft-skills/life-skills training.*
- Number of youth who complete USG-assisted leadership programs. *The Office of Foreign Assistance Resources at the U.S. Department of State added a new indicator in FY 2021, and aggregated numbers for this indicator are not yet available.*

The indicators in the [Standard Foreign Assistance Framework](#) also are relevant for youth programming across five technical sectors: economic growth, health, basic and higher education,

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<sup>3</sup> \$281 million is the approximate amount reported for FY 2021 funds as of April 30, 2022. Additionally, \$256 million was programmed in FY 2021 for implementation of USAID’s Global Health PEPFAR DREAMS programming. As obligations are finalized, this number may change.

democracy and governance, and resilience and food security. Many of the indicators can be disaggregated by age to identify youth if programming is not exclusive to youth participants.

USAID tracks youth-related programming through annual reports on budget obligations in the FactsInfo system as well as through descriptions of youth programming in the Youth Development Key Narrative. As cross-sectoral youth activities increase, USAID is strengthening our tracking of youth-related activities across all sectors through Mission annual reporting.

### **Mechanisms for Coordination and Collaboration**

USAID intentionally integrates our youth programming across sectors, Missions, and Operating Units and coordinates with multiple USG Departments and Agencies. USAID ensures alignment of the various actors and efforts through the following:

*Interagency Working Group on Youth Programs (IWGYP):* Composed of representatives from 21 U.S. Federal Departments and Agencies, the group meets monthly to improve the coordination and effectiveness of programs that serve youth. USAID's Agency Senior Advisor on Youth represents USAID on the IWGYP.

*USAID Senior Champions for Youth Working Group:* Composed of senior leadership from every Regional and Technical Bureau, the group meets on an as-needed basis to coordinate Agency-wide responses to opportunities and challenges.

*USAID YouthCorps Working Group:* Composed of representatives from every Regional and Technical Bureau, the group meets monthly to produce tools and guidance to improve youth programming. Outputs during FY 2021 included a publicly available Global Leadership and Education for Advancing Development (LEAD) toolkit, internal guidance to support USAID's Missions with youth integration based on the updated Youth Policy, and the curation and leadership of on-site training in Positive Youth Development for Mission staff.

*USAID DRG Youth Working Group:* Composed of staff from across the DRG Center, Regional Bureaus and Operating Units, the DRG Youth Working Group (YWG) focuses on discussing new programs, evidence, and challenges impacting youth in civic and political life. The Working Group hosts scholars, implementing partners, and young leaders to unpack the latest research and approaches that improve the participation, representation, and leadership of young people in decision-making processes.

*USAID GH Youth Working Group:* Composed of staff from across the Bureau for Global Health (GH) offices, the GH Youth Working Group is focused on elevating youth as a priority in global health programming in service of the USAID Youth in Development Policy. The working group endeavors to: build staff capacity in youth programming; highlight potential synergies for meaningful youth engagement across health programs; and share best practice approaches in PYD to support implementing partners and health communities of practice.

*USAID RFS Youth Champions League:* Composed of staff from the Bureau for Resilience and Food Security (RFS) Centers and Offices to design and implement youth-inclusive and

youth-targeted activities in the areas of inclusive agriculture-led growth, food security, nutrition, resilience, and water security, sanitation, and hygiene. Its objectives are to: strengthen RFS's collective capacity to advance youth inclusion in inclusive, resilient and sustainable agriculture, food and water systems; establish liaisons across centers and offices with the RFS Program Office Inclusive Development Youth Team to improve our connectedness and streamline reporting and communication.

## **Youth Integration Across Sectors**

USAID is successfully integrating youth programming across all sectors and leveraging intra-agency resources to ensure we address youth needs in as much of our work as possible.

*Education:* The [U.S. Government Strategy on International Basic Education \(2019–2023\)](#) promotes education from early childhood through workforce development and vocational training and acknowledges the potential of a Positive Youth Development approach when combined with high-quality education. The *Strategy* commits nine USG Departments and Agencies to work with partner governments, civil society, and the private sector to remove barriers to education for youth and provide programs for out-of-school youth to develop skills that will either help them re-enter formal schooling or prepare them for the workforce. The [USAID Education Policy \(2018\)](#) highlights youth as one of four priority areas, specifically: “Youth gain the skills they need to lead productive lives, gain employment, and positively contribute to society.”

*Protection:* The [Advancing Protection and Care for Children in Adversity: A U.S. Government Strategy for International Assistance \(2019–2023\)](#) ensures that USG investments for the most vulnerable children and adolescents promote early childhood development; support those most vulnerable children and adolescents who are, or are at risk of, living outside of family care; and protect children from violence, exploitation, abuse, and neglect.

*Democracy, Human Rights, and Governance (DRG):* USAID's DRG programs and policies support human dignity, greater social cohesion, cooperation, and the inclusion of marginalized groups and provide direct and positive alternatives to terrorism and extremism, especially for youth. In FY 2021, USAID's Center of Excellence on Democracy, Human Rights, and Governance (DRG Center) within the Bureau for Development, Democracy, and Innovation (DDI) developed an online [toolkit](#) and training on the integration of youth on democracy, rights, and governance issues.

The DRG Center administered a 10-country survey to more than 7,000 youth, entitled [Youth Civic Engagement Snapshots](#), to learn about youth civic engagement with a specific focus on how concerns about economic constraints and conflict motivate civic and political action and behavior. The DRG Center also developed a global [Youth Programming Assessment Tool](#) to help organizations improve youth integration and engagement.

*Health:* The Bureau for Global Health (GH) supports evidence-based Positive Youth Development approaches across health elements; prioritizes cross-sectoral initiatives; measures youth health outcomes; addresses youth-specific quality of care; and partners with youth to

transform social/gender norms and promote positive health behaviors. GH recognizes that youth development is essential for strengthening, sustaining, and multiplying global health gains for individuals, families, and communities in the future. In FY 2021, USAID was the lead implementer for The United States President's Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief (PEPFAR)'s Determined, Resilient, Employed, AIDS-Free, Mentored, and Safe (DREAMS) program. \$256 million of DREAMS funding was programmed for adolescent girls and young women's (AGYW) comprehensive HIV prevention efforts including reproductive health services.

*Resilience and Food Security:* The Bureau for Resilience and Food Security (RFS) recognizes the central importance of strengthening youth engagement, particularly that of girls and young women, in agri-food and water systems to achieve the promise of agriculture-led growth; nutrition; resilience; and water security, sanitation, and hygiene. A dedicated Inclusive Development Division focuses on gender, youth, digital technologies, and local capacity development to support Cross-cutting Intermediate Result 3 of the [Global Food Security Strategy](#) (GFSS) on youth empowerment and livelihoods. In FY 2021, RFS engaged hundreds of youth in consultations to inform the GFSS, the USAID Climate Strategy, White House [Generation 2030 event](#) and the [UN Food Systems Summit \(UNFSS\)](#). RFS co-funded and developed with DDI the [Youth Data Dashboard](#) and implemented the [YP2LE RFS Youth in Agri-food Systems Learning Activity](#) to strengthen evidence-based programming with youth.

### **Youth Integration at the Mission-Level**

USAID's YouthCorps works with our Missions to develop systemic, scalable solutions to address youth challenges. Since 2018, 20 USAID Missions have carried out cross-sectoral youth assessments to ensure that their *Country Development Cooperation Strategies* (CDCS) are responsive to the context-specific needs of youth. In Central America, USAID's youth programming focuses on preventing crime, recruitment by gangs, and other factors that contribute to mass migration. In sub-Saharan Africa, USAID's youth programming focuses on education, democratic resilience, employment, and health.

Many USAID Missions have successfully adopted the Positive Youth Development approach. The USAID Mission in the Republic of Kenya continued to partner with more than 21,000 youth councils in the implementation of Basic Education, workforce development, democracy and governance, leadership and health related priorities. The USAID Missions in the Republic of Kosovo and in Eastern and Southern Caribbean both funded the formation of a Youth Advisory Board to ensure youth input into, and leadership of, work to equip socially excluded youth with the skills necessary to participate in their communities and economies.

### **Human Capital**

The Agency Senior Advisor on Youth oversees implementation of the *Youth in Development Policy* and sits in the Inclusive Development Hub in the DDI Bureau. A Technical Specialist on Youth Issues and a Youth Engagement and Partnerships Specialist support the Youth Portfolio. The Bureaus for Resilience and Food Security, Global Health, and Development, Democracy, and Innovation, and all Regional Bureaus (Asia, Middle East and North Africa, Africa, Latin

America and the Caribbean, and Europe and Eurasia) have youth expertise while 82 USAID country and regional Missions have a Youth Advisor or designated Youth Point of Contact.

### **Budgetary Mechanisms and Expenditures**

USAID has attributed approximately \$281 million in funding from FY 2021 to youth programming. The following youth-serving, global mechanisms are active as of June 2022:

*[YouthPower 2](#)*: USAID launched *YouthPower 2* (YP2) to build on progress under the original *YouthPower* (2015) mechanism. YP2 is an Annual Program Statement (APS) that allows our Missions, Bureaus, and Independent Offices to design cross-sectoral programming that applies the Positive Youth Development approach. To date, \$168 million in addenda have been issued across 14 awards. The first opportunity under YP2, *[Youth Excel](#)*, supports new partnerships to increase the capacity of youth-led and youth-serving organizations for cross-sectoral programming.

*[YP2 Learning and Evaluation](#)*: The *Learning and Evaluation* component of YP2 provides rapid-response technical assistance to USAID staff to design, implement, and evaluate youth activities; it is a three-year contract with an optional two-year extension and a ceiling of \$23.7 million.

*[HELIX](#)*: USAID launched the *Higher Education for Leadership, Innovation, and Exchange* (HELIX) mechanism to encourage USAID's Missions, Bureaus, and Independent Offices to develop cross-sectoral programming for higher education to provide youth with a continuum of opportunities for advanced education and training. To date, \$155 million in addenda have been issued or anticipated across 11 awards.

USAID also funds programming across technical areas focused on youth through numerous other mechanisms related to higher education, civic education and civil society, global health, peace and security, and food security.