

WORKFORCE CONNECTIONS

Quarterly Report #5
October 1st, 2014 – December 30th, 2014



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Acronyms

AU	African Union
AUP	African Union Partnership
COP	Community of Practice
CT	ChildTrends
E3	Bureau for Economic Growth, Education and Environment
EDC	Education Development Center
EIG	Education for Income Generation
ERA	Education and Research in Agriculture
FIELD	Financial Integration, Economic Leveraging, Broad-Based Dissemination and Support
InnovATE	Innovation for Agricultural Training and Education
LAC	Latin American in the Caribbean
LEVE	Local Enterprise and Value Chain Enhancement
LWA	Leader with Associates
PAD	Project Appraisal Document
RTI	Research Triangle Institute
USAID	United States Agency for International Development
WC	Workforce Connections
WFD	Workforce Development

1. Background

Program Overview

Workforce Connections (WC) seeks to bring together evidence and best practices from three technical areas to form a cohesive and widely accessed body of knowledge that is consistently applied in USAID programming and beyond. The three technical areas to be “connected” are: education systems alignment with labor market demand, positive youth development, and economic growth approaches to job creation and demand-driven skills development. Since 2008, USAID has invested approximately US\$925 million in youth workforce programming.¹ Given the global nature of the current youth employment crisis, the outlook suggests continued or even increased funding to the workforce development (WFD) area. Within that context, Workforce Connections has been designed to support USAID’s E3 Office of Education in its learning, outreach, and technical leadership activities to advance the achievement of Goal 2 of the Education Strategy: “improved ability of tertiary and WFD programs to produce a workforce with relevant skills to support country development goals by 2015.”

Objectives

Component 1: Generate, Synthesize, and Disseminate Evidence

- To create a dedicated community of practice in the USAID sphere focusing on youth workforce development, and provide opportunities for USAID staff, implementing organizations, and a broader set of stakeholders to exchange knowledge and disseminate evidence of positive and less positive results.

Component 2: Provide Technical Leadership and Field Support

- To respond to requests from USAID/Washington or USAID missions in the field for specific research deliverables, as well as pursue a focused set of research objectives throughout the project.

Component 3: Build Capacity for a Range of WFD Stakeholders

- To enhance the knowledge of and interest in WFD among USAID staff, particularly Education and Economic Growth Officers, but also serve the broader WFD community.

2. Activities from this Quarter

Summary of Achievement

The fourth quarter of Workforce Connections’ first year (July-Sept 2014) saw the completion of two labor market assessments (Kenya and Lebanon) and the consolidation of learning from the field work. In the first quarter of the second year (Oct-Dec 2014) the team conducted a third labor market assessment (Zimbabwe) and significant progress was made on the labor market assessment toolkit. Based on the cumulative learning from the labor market assessment work, a series of community of practice events were held in November and December. In addition, in the first week of year two, the project’s second three-day training designed for USAID staff was delivered, this one focusing on workforce development in rural and food economies. Facilitators included Lara Goldmark and John Lindsay from FHI360’s

¹ Preliminary data from a program inventory compiled by the Workforce Connections program between August and January of 2013.

Workforce Connections team, Rachel Blum of USAID, and two facilitators from the Virginia Tech InnovATE program. Child Trends also made progress on the soft skills research, completing the first draft of the white paper before the end of December.

Component 1: Generate, Synthesize, and Disseminate Evidence

Activity 1: Launch the Workforce Development Community of Practice

Focus at the beginning of Year 2 has been on ramping up Community of Practice (COP) activities.

WC organized Labor Market Assessment Event on November 25th at FHI 360 Washington, DC Conference Center. Presenters were Bryanna Mills (Technical Advisor) and Eleanor Sohnen (Workforce Specialist), and the event was moderated by Lara Goldmark (WC Project Director). This event centered on the need for improving assessment and analysis tools. During this session, facilitators presented an inventory of existing tools and methods identified to date, a proposed decision tree for labor market analysis, and a summary of new “open source” tools currently in development. At the end of the event, participants were asked to propose topics for further exploration through collaborative working groups. Three working groups were identified: (1) understanding demand, formal/informal sector linkages, and the assessment process; (2) workforce development systems; and (3) segmenting target populations. Building on the momentum of the Labor Market Assessment Event, three working group discussions were held in early December, 2014. Dates have been set for follow-on meetings at the beginning of 2015.

Key Highlights for Component 1

- Second Advisory Board meeting held
- Held Labor Market Assessment event and three subsequent working group sessions
- Upgraded project website and developed new content

The Workforce Connections web portal, www.wfconnection.org, is a repository of technical learning and a key element of the Community of Practice. New content was added from the Making Cents Global Youth Economic Opportunities Summit in early October 2014 – including the ChildTrends presentation on their research on soft skills (see Activity 2). In addition, labor market assessment tools have been posted as new technical resources in support of the open Labor Market Assessment event and first round of working group meetings. A recording of the Labor Market Assessment event was also posted as an open resource. Updates to the website included a variety of new events, Design Space tools, and technical resources.

The second Workforce Connections Advisory Board meeting was held at the FHI 360 offices on December 1st, 2014. Participants were as follows:

- Roma Arellano, Intel
- Michael Bzdak, Johnson & Johnson
- Adrianus Melkert, former Minister of Social Affairs and Employment, the Netherlands
- Lisa Neuberger-Fernandez, Accenture
- Rachel Blum, USAID/Office of Education
- Lara Goldmark, WC Project Director
- Kim Ouillette, Youth Representative
- Michaella Munyuzangabo, Youth Representative
- Tadzoka Pswarayi, Youth Representative

The Advisory Board discussion began with an overview of “Workforce Connections: the original vision and what we have achieved” led by Lara Goldmark (FHI 360) and Rachel Blum (USAID). This was followed by a presentation called “The evolution of our thinking” which featured key concepts and insights from the project’s work via graphics and visuals that Workforce Connections has developed over the course of the year. This stimulated a lively discussion that culminated in thoughts for Workforce Connections’ next steps.

Component 2: Provide Technical Leadership and Field Support

Activity 2: Research on Soft Skills

Workforce Connections hosted a one-hour breakout session on soft skills to kick off the Workforce Development track of the Youth Economic Opportunities Summit in October, based on a session proposal prepared by FHI 360 with input from ChildTrends and USAID. ChildTrends presented findings to date – including the preliminary shortlisting of skills based on counts of search terms from the database --and consulted practitioners and other experts on follow-up steps. Participants broke into groups for dialogue around a series of guiding questions such as whether the skills were teachable/malleable and whether they were relevant to international youth workforce contexts. Notes were recorded and incorporated into the analysis by ChildTrends alongside other stakeholder input. The session was well-attended and over 20 participants requested and received an electronic copy of the PowerPoint presentation (which has also been posted to the web portal). Summit organizers reported that the session was highly rated by reviewers.

In order to obtain input for the ChildTrends work from international youth and employers, FHI 360 facilitated discussion groups and interviews in Zimbabwe (as part of the Zimbabwe Labor Market Assessment) and in Mozambique. These meetings explored topics such as the skills and characteristics most valued by employers when hiring and promoting workers. Working youth described the skills and characteristics most important for success in their workplaces. Both employers and youth were asked to describe the skills in terms of behaviors so that they could be compared against skills identified in the literature. Interview and discussion group notes were recorded and shared with ChildTrends for consideration in interpreting and framing the results.

A coordination call was held with representatives of ChildTrends, FHI 360, USAID, the MacArthur Foundation, Mastercard Foundation, and IE3 to discuss opportunities for collaboration on current and planned initiatives. IE3 is undertaking a mapping of evidence gaps, in partnership with MasterCard and MacArthur. They are doing a systematic literature review to identify interventions and outcomes by creating a matrix of interventions (200+, including apprenticeships, peer groups, edutainment, etc.) in rows against outcomes (such as employment, skills, learning outcomes, and demographic outcomes such as marriage or pregnancy) in columns. The goal is to identify evidence gaps and summarize knowledge on the link between methods and related outcomes in a white paper. The call was productive in identifying synergies among ChildTrends and IE3 and opportunities for collaboration moving forward.

From November through December, ChildTrends drafted and shared key sections of the white paper. This included an overview of the methodology and a presentation of the “competencies” that enjoyed

the strongest support in the literature review, overall and according to four specific outcome groups (getting a job, wages, performance, and entrepreneurship). A variety of appendices were also drafted. The draft was reviewed by FHI 360 and USAID and ChildTrends hosted a meeting with the three parties to present and discuss the findings. Meeting participants agreed on the need for additional dialogue in order to effectively frame the significance of the findings in the context of the international youth workforce development field, prior to disseminating the draft more broadly. As a result, the symposium, which had been anticipated in January, will be rescheduled and preceded by one or more smaller consultations prior with key experts and other stakeholders.

Detailed comments were provided to ChildTrends following the meeting and the draft will be finalized in the next quarter. The Symposium date will also be finalized and communicated externally at that time.

Activity 3: Develop or Refine USAID Workforce Development Assessment and Design Tools

Labor Market Assessments

During this quarter, Workforce Connections further developed the Labor Market Assessment toolkit to include templates for policy analysis, social network analysis, educational system stocks and flows, sector selection, and a stakeholder validation workshop.

Workforce Connections also provided technical support to two country-level labor market assessments conducted on behalf of USAID Missions (in collaboration with the FIELD-Support Leader with Associates project) in Kenya and Lebanon, for which the final reports were submitted during this quarter. In addition, the Zimbabwe labor market assessment report was submitted by team leader Roberto Matus (FHI 360).

Country Dashboards

Over the past quarter, Workforce Connections continued developing Country Data Dashboards, which provide a high-level overview of country-level economic trends relevant to labor markets. The data visualizations contained within help shed light on a range of economic, human resource, and policy trends, which aid researchers by identifying data gaps and directing further qualitative field-based research. To date, dashboards have been developed for Kenya, Zimbabwe, Lebanon, and Indonesia. Plans are being developed to build an interactive, dynamic, web-based dashboard, with the first step to design and launch a demo version of the dynamic tool.

In December, Alec Hansen, Technical Advisor with Workforce Connections, met with César Hidalgo at Massachusetts Institute of Technology (Cesar leads the product space work) to discuss opportunities for collaboration on the development of labor market information systems and more granular, targeted tools for analysis of employment trends at the sector and city levels.

Component 3: Build Capacity for a Range of WFD Stakeholders

Activity Group 4: Design and Deliver Technical Training on WFD to USAID and Other Stakeholders

Over the first three days in October (10/1-10/3) Workforce Connections conducted the second iteration of the Workforce Development training course at the USAID Washington Learning Center in Arlington, VA. This course, “Employment and Workforce Development Programming for Rural and Food-Based Economies” built on the first training held in February, this time including a specific focus on employment and income generation in rural and agricultural economies.

The course was administered over a three-day period, with each day consisting of a full day of training starting at 9am and finishing at 5pm. There were 21 USAID participants who attended all three days, in addition to the facilitators, who also actively took part in training activities. Participants consisted of USAID officers from a number of different technical and geographic areas who are involved in, or will soon be involved in, designing or improving workforce development projects, assessments, or related activities.

The training agenda was as follows:

Wednesday, 10/1/2014	Thursday, 10/2/2014	Friday, 10/3/2014
Arrival		
Opening Session – Introductions and Expectations	Structured Recap – Systems Thinking	Structured Recap – Best Practices
Module 1: Framing the Big Picture and Understanding WfD and AET as a System	Module 4: Getting the Results You Want – Project Presentations	Module: Gender Inclusiveness
Break		
Continued: Framing the Big Picture and Understanding WfD and AET as a System	Continued: Getting the Results You Want – Project Presentations	Module: Experiential Learning
Module 2: Introduction of Case Studies Forming Case Study Groups	Activity: Developing Program Outcomes	Activity: Assembling your PAD
Lunch		
Activity: Stakeholder Analysis for WfD	Module 5: Causal Modeling for Workforce Program Design	Activity: Presentations and Feedback
Module 3: Understanding Rural Economies and the Food Sector	Activity: Causal Modeling Exercise	
Break		
Continued: Asking the Right Questions - Assessment Approaches	Module 6: Youth Development and Engagement	Affirmation, Evaluation, and Closing
Activity: Assessment Exercise	Activity: Developing a Youth Engagement Plan	

These modules included participatory learning exercises, case studies, project examples, handouts, and infographics presented by facilitators with direct involvement in project implementation. Several implementers presented relevant examples of projects in workforce development that provided an opportunity for training participants to ask questions to guest speakers deeply familiar with these projects. Implementers and their respective projects included: Winrock International – EIG Nepal; RTI – LEVE Haiti; Virginia Tech – ERA Senegal; and EARTH University.

In addition to introducing the participants to the technical issues around workforce development, the training also guided the participants through the PAD development process. The participants formed five groups based on four case studies: Kenya, Senegal, Colombia, and Jordan. The outputs of the various modules were inputs in to each case study group’s PAD. On the final day each group presented their PAD to an expert panel including feedback from the panel on the PADs final design. The training was well received by the participants.

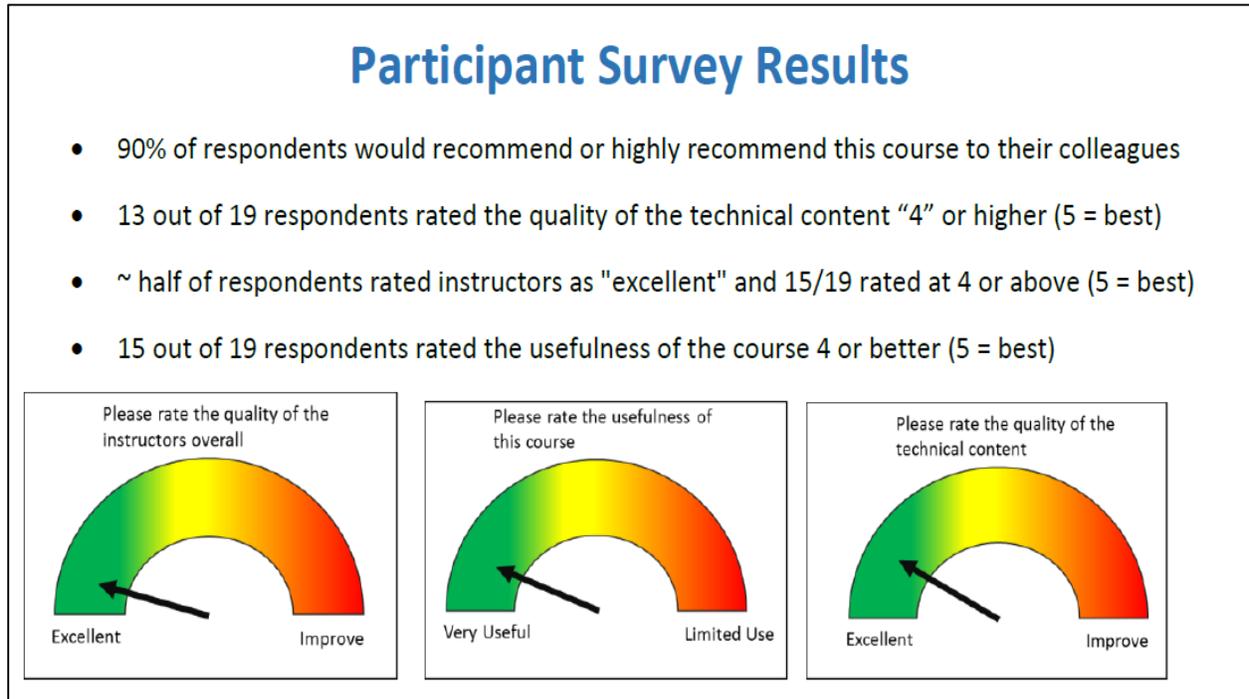


Figure 1. Participant Survey Results

The next iteration of the Workforce Development training course is expected to be held in early June. The focus of the upcoming edition will be “Workforce Development for Youth Employment: Program Design for Latin America and the Caribbean”. The training will target LAC Mission Officers and be held in Miami, Florida.

During this quarter work has already begun on the upcoming training including the first draft of the training outline, identification of potential technical and geographic area experts, and arrangements with SSG Advisors who will be responsible to the logistics of the training.

Activity Group 5: Talent Cloud and Youth Engagement

The Workforce Connections Talent Cloud entered an active phase in the last quarter, with two Youth Advisory Board members working with a consultant, Tadzoka Pswarayi, to develop an initial concept paper and action plan for getting the Talent Cloud up and running. The Talent Cloud is a professional development resource for those who work with or have a passion for addressing global youth unemployment challenges. Moving forward, it will provide members with networking mechanisms and opportunities, career resources, and will offer fellowships for students and practitioners around the world to provide an opportunity for direct involvement with Workforce Connections projects.

The WC internship program is ongoing; this quarter, interns Bill Johnson and Michelle Byusa contributed to almost all elements of the project, including the COP, trainings and Country Data Dashboards.

Management

Workforce Connections hired Elebthel Gebrehiwot in this quarter on December 15th, 2014 as a program assistant for the Workforce Connections. Consistent with Workforce Connections' philosophy of aiding and launching careers, former project associate Meredith Cann has been promoted to a different project within Economic Development and Livelihood department. Nora Sohnen, a consultant who has been working with WC since April 2014, was also hired at the end of December, as a technical specialist. Nora will continue to play a leadership role in the area of labor market assessment tools, and she will also take over some of Obie Diener's responsibilities related to the Community of Practice. Obie, in similar fashion, has been promoted to become director of a new project which grew out of Workforce Connections' work with the African Union, called the African Union Partnership (AUP). However, Obie will remain involved with Workforce Connections activities and will continue to lead the soft skills research activity. Last, Alec Hansen, formerly a consultant with FHI360, also joined as a senior advisor; he is expected to continue to contribute technical inputs and expertise to WC's work.

Financial

Project Name:	Workforce Connections				
Quarterly Report:	October - December 2014				
Agreement No.:	AID-OAA_LA-13-00008				
	Contract Budget	Incurred Costs Through Sep-14	Actual Costs Oct-14 through Dec-14	Total Costs Inception Through Dec-14	Remainder to Budget
1. Personnel & Consultants	\$1,189,531	\$329,200	\$185,370	\$514,571	\$674,960
2. Fringe Benefits	\$274,342	\$76,814	\$41,233	\$118,047	\$156,295
3. Travel & Transportation	\$283,320	\$39,001	\$62,362	\$101,363	\$181,957
4. Other Direct Costs	\$401,045	\$54,461	\$12,835	\$67,296	\$333,749
5. Contractual	\$976,453	\$274,251	\$0	\$274,251	\$702,202
6. Equipment	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
7. Total Direct Costs	\$3,124,691	\$773,727	\$301,801	\$1,075,528	\$2,049,163
8. Indirect Costs	\$864,938	\$202,334	\$115,126	\$317,459	\$547,479
9. Total Federal	\$3,989,629	\$976,061	\$416,927	\$1,392,987	\$2,596,642
10. Total Non-Federal	\$175,000	\$0	\$9,373	\$9,373	\$165,628
11. Grand Total	\$4,164,629	\$976,060.64	\$426,299	\$1,402,360	\$2,762,269
Contract Budget	\$4,164,629				
Obligated Funding	\$2,906,331				
Total Costs Incurred to Date	\$1,402,360				

Annexes

Indicator	Type	Data Source	Target (if appropriate)	Previous Quarters	Y2 Q1	Cumulative
Component 1: Generate, Synthesize, and Disseminate Evidence						
# participants in learning network	Output	Participant records from events, webinars, discussion forums	1500	245	1075	1320
# Knowledge Base publications	Output	Project reports	15	3	1	4
# publications exploring gender dynamics	Output	Project reports	5	1	1	2
# events organized or supported by WC	Output	Project reports	25	2	2	4
% of WFD influencers actively contributing to community of practice	Outcome	Survey of influencers, list of WFD influencer organizations	80%	N/A	N/A	N/A
# of new WFD actors engaged in knowledge production	Outcome	Project reports, advisory board records	10	0	0	0
# of country-based requests to apply and customize tools to local contexts	Impact	Project reports	3	2	1	3
Component 2: Provide Technical Leadership and Field Support						
# workforce development design and assessment tools developed or refined	Output	Project reports	3	N/A	0	0
A common framework for life skills measurement is developed and tested	Outcome	Project reports	n/a	N/A	N/A	N/A
# Guidance notes developed for practitioners	Output	Project reports	2	N/A	N/A	N/A
Component 3: Build Capacity for a Range of Workforce Development Stakeholders						
# USAID staff or other practitioners trained in workforce development	Output	Participant lists	100	18 8 female, 10 male Sectors: Economic Growth, Education, Youth	30 19 female, 11 male Sectors: Economic Growth, Education, etc	48
#USAID education staff trained in youth WFD	Output	Participant lists	75	8 3 female, 5 male	7 6 female, 1 male	15

USAID economic development staff trained in youth workforce development	Output	Participant lists	75	7 4 female, 3 male	0	7
# USAID staff or other practitioners in <u>adjacent technical fields</u> trained in youth workforce development	Output	Participant lists	25	3 1 female, 2 male	23 13 female, 10 male	26
# technical assistance engagements supporting USAID Missions	Output	Project reports	2	3	1	4
Funds leveraged through strategic partnerships with the private sector or other donors	Outcome	Project reports	\$500,000	Catalyst Fund \$99,947	Johnson & Johnson \$60,000	\$159,947
# of trained USAID Mission staff applying knowledge and tools in their countries	Impact	Survey of training participants	20	N/A	N/A	N/A
Component 4: Talent Cloud and Youth Engagement						
# of youth and women achieving key professional development milestones	Outcome	Project reports	25	2	0	2
% of trained USAID Mission staff with improved understanding of applying gender and youth development principles to WFD programming	Outcome	Survey	80%	N/A	N/A	N/A