USAID
FROM THE AMERICAN PEOPLE

USAID HUGUKA DAKORE AKAZI KANOZE, COURTESY OF EDUCATION DEVELOPMENT CENTER, INC.
PHOTO TAKEN WTH CONSENT

SOFT SKILLS AND YOUTH WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT IN SUB-SAHARAN AFRICA

A Review of the Literature

July 2021

Funding was provided by the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) from the American people under Contract No. AID-OAA-I-15-00019, Task Order No. AID-OAA-TO-16-00024. The contents are the responsibility of the USAID Research for Effective Education Programming - Africa (REEP-A) Project and do not necessarily reflect the views of USAID or the United States Government. USAID will not be held responsible for any or the whole of the contents of this publication.

SOFT SKILLS AND YOUTH WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT IN SUB-SAHARAN AFRICA

A Review of the Literature

Final Report

July 2021

Prepared for
Bureau for Africa
Office of Sustainable Development, Education and Youth Division
U.S. Agency for International Development
1300 Pennsylvania Avenue NW
Washington, DC 20523

Prepared by
Kristin Rosekrans and Tiffany Hwang (Independent Consultants)
Dexis Consulting Group
1412 Eye Street NW
Washington, DC 20005

Research for Effective Education Programming – Africa (REEP-A)
Contract No. AID-OAA-I-15-00019
Task Order No. AID-OAA-TO-16-00024

Cover Photo: USAID Huguka Dakore Akazi Kanoze, Education Development Center, Inc.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The authors of this report would like to thank the USAID Bureau for Africa's Office of Sustainable Development, Education and Youth Division for their close collaboration and guidance throughout the development of this report. In particular, Bradford Strickland and Megnote Lezhnev provided direction and feedback that made this report possible.

The authors would also like to thank Rebecca Westbrook and Kathryn Norris for their careful review and feedback during the research process and drafting of the report. Jennifer Shin and Ariel Fanger provided management and oversight of the research process, and Sherry Loveless offered editorial support.

Additionally, the authors are grateful to the experts who generously offered their time and insights through interviews and other communications to ensure that this report is comprehensive in the research that it synthesizes. For a full list of experts consulted, see *Annex C*.

SUGGESTED CITATION

Rosekrans, K. & Hwang, T. (2021). *Soft Skills and Youth Workforce Development in sub-Saharan Africa: A Review of the Literature.* Dexis Consulting Group.

CONTENTS

LIST OF TABLES

LIST OF FIGURES

ACRONYMS

3ie	International Initiative for Impact Evaluation
ABFI	Anchored Big Five Inventory
ACWICT	African Center for Women, Information and Communications Technology
ADEA	Association for the Development of Education in Africa
AGI	Adolescent Girls Initiative
AK	Akazi Kanoze
AK2	Akazi Kanoze 2
AKA	Akazi Kanoze Access
AoAV	Action on Armed Violence
AU	African Union
BPY	Building the Potential of Youth
CAP-YEI	Community and Progress – Youth Empowerment Initiative
CAPS	Curriculum Assessment Policy Statements
CASEL	Collaborative for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning
CASP	Critical Appraisal Skills Program
CDACC	Curriculum Development Assessment and Certification Council
DEC	Development Experience Clearinghouse
DFID	Department of International Development
DRC	Democratic Republic of the Congo
EDC	Education Development Center
EIG	Education for Income Generation
ELA	Empowerment and Livelihood for Adolescents
EMELI	Empowering Mauritanian Youth through Education, Leadership, and Self-Improvement

EPAG	Economic Empowerment of Adolescent Girls and Young Women
ERIC	Educational Resources Information Center
FGD	Focus Group Discussion
HDAK	Huguka Dukore Akazi Kanoze
HP LIFE	Hewlett-Packard Learning Initiative for Entrepreneurs
ICT	Information and Communication Technology
IEP	Inclusive Employment Program
IGA	Income Generating Activity
IRC	International Rescue Committee
IYDA	Integrated Youth Development Activity
IYF	International Youth Foundation
J-PAL	Abdul Latif Jameel Poverty Action Lab
K-YES	Kenya Youth Employment and Skills
KII	Key Informant Interview
LEAP	Leadership Effectiveness Accountability and Professionalism
LEI	Youth Leadership and Entrepreneurship Incubator
LMICs	Low- and Middle-Income Countries
LST	Life Skills Training
MLEYD	Ministry of Labour, Employment and Youth Development
MoEVT	Ministry of Education and Vocational Training
MYDev	Mindanao Youth for Development
NBER	National Bureau of Economic Research
NGO	Nongovernmental Organization
P.A.C.E.	Personal Advancement and Career Enhancement
PI	Personal Initiative

PPF	Programa Para o Futuro
ProExam	Professional Examination Services
PTS	Passport to Success
PYD	Positive Youth Development
RCT	Randomized Control Trial
REB	Rwanda Education Board
REEP-A	Research for Effective Education Programming–Africa
RQ	Research Question
SEL	Social and Emotional Learning
Sida	Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency
SILC	Savings and Internal Lending Communities
SRH	Sexual and Reproductive Health
SSA	Sub-Saharan Africa
STEM	Science, Technology, Engineering and Math
SYLP	Somalia Youth Livelihoods Program
TVET	Technical and Vocational Education and Training
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
USAID	United States Agency for International Development
VTC	Vocational Training Center
WBL	Work-Based Learning
WfWI	Women for Women International
WHO	World Health Organization
WRN	Work Ready Now
YBI	Youth Business International

YEP	Youth Empowerment Program

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

In sub-Saharan Africa (SSA), the youth population is estimated to increase from 195 million in 2015 to 284 million by 2030, with approximately 11 million youth entering the labor market each year over the next decade (The World Bank, 2015). This shift creates a demographic dividend that, if harnessed effectively, can stimulate economic development and reduce intergenerational poverty. However, youth—especially young women and those in conflict-affected environments—often struggle to enter the labor market (Chakravarty et al., 2017). To find and engage in productive employment, youth must acquire a range of skills. While employers value academic and technical skills, soft skills are consistently and increasingly prioritized (Burnett & Jayaram, 2012; Puerta et al., 2018; Valerio et al., 2014).

An array of domestic and international donors, including the United States Agency for International Development (USAID), fund interventions that provide soft skills and workforce training for youth in SSA. To maximize the effectiveness of these programs while achieving scale, they must be designed and implemented in alignment with evidenced-based approaches. However, evidence on what works has generally focused on high-income countries or low- and middle-income countries (LMICs) that are more industrialized than those in SSA. As such, local governments, implementers, and other stakeholders lack access to contextually relevant evidence from SSA. To fill this research gap, USAID under the Research for Effective Education Programming - Africa (REEP-A) Task Order, commissioned this literature review to examine the linkages between soft skills training and youth workforce development outcomes. This study aims to unearth evidence and lessons unique to sub-Saharan African countries and the specific contextual factors that exist within and across them to inform current and future programming.

This literature review will contribute to the field by: (1) synthesizing the most up-to-date evidence on the relationship between soft skills and youth workforce outcomes in SSA and other LMICs with similar labor market conditions for disadvantaged youth; (2) identifying and documenting examples of soft skills development in youth workforce training in SSA and in LMICs to inform programmatic decision making; (3) identifying practical applications of soft skills training in youth workforce development in SSA; and (4) highlighting gaps in the literature and areas for future research. Specifically, the research questions (RQs) this review aims to answer are:

RQ1. How are soft skills defined in the research literature, and what variations of these definitions exist, if any, in and across sub-Saharan Africa?

RQ2. What soft skills have the most impact on workforce outcomes for youth in low- and middle-income countries and in sub-Saharan Africa, in particular?

RQ3. What are the most effective mechanisms of teaching and nurturing soft skills among youth in low- and middle-income countries and within sub-Saharan African countries, in particular?

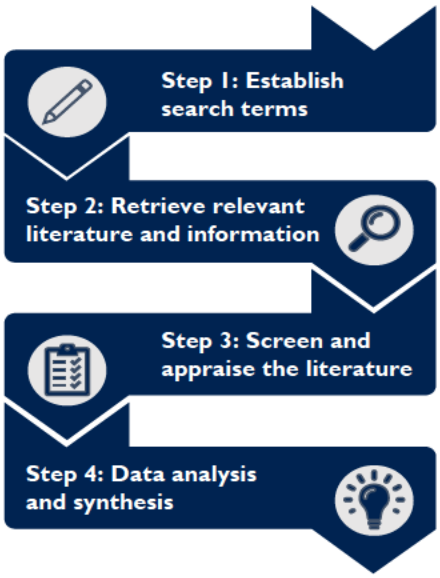
RQ4. How and to what extent and are soft skills included in secondary education and workforce development in sub-Saharan African countries?

RQ5. How do individual factors (such as gender and socioeconomic status) and contextual factors (such as culture, urbanicity, the presence of conflict, and job sector) influence the specific soft skills for workforce success?

METHODOLOGY

This study employed an integrative literature review approach, which allows for a comprehensive exploration of the evidence base (Whittemore & Knafl, 2005). This approach is favorable for the topic of this study because it enables examination of a wide array of literature as opposed to focusing exclusively on primary data sources and experimental studies, which are scarce in the context of youth (ages 15-29) in SSA. This review includes peer-reviewed literature, non-peer-reviewed literature, and grey literature. The research team also conducted interviews with subject-matter experts involved in research and implementation of soft skills training in SSA and other LMICs to uncover additional lessons learned and contextual factors to further triangulate the findings. Figure 1 describes the specific steps employed by the research team to conduct this literature review.

FIGURE 1. RESEARCH METHODS



This review faced several key limitations, including varying definitions and measurements of soft skills across contexts, the reliability and validity of tools that measure soft skills in SSA, as well as a lack of studies examining causal links between specific soft skills and workforce outcomes and a lack of external validity of many small-scale, rigorous studies included in the review.

In total, the literature search returned 177 publications that met the inclusion criteria. Of these, 98 articles had a focus on SSA, 30 on LMICs, and 49 covered both SSA and LMICs. Likewise, the publications retrieved included 43 empirical studies, 38 literature reviews, 60 program evaluations, eight policy documents, and 28 documents classified as "other."

HOW SOFT SKILLS ARE DEFINED

Rooted in different fields, the myriad constructs used to describe similar behaviors, attitudes, and abilities remains a significant challenge in soft skills research. No single definition of soft skills serves all countries, cultures, policymakers, and funders (Galloway et al., 2017; Ignatowski, 2017). This lack of consensus about conceptualizing soft skills limits the ability of researchers to compare the effectiveness of soft skills programming across contexts.

BOX 1. USAID DEFINITION OF SOFT SKILLS

Cognitive, social, and emotional skills, behaviors, and personal qualities that help people to navigate their environment, relate well with others, perform well, and achieve their goals.

Source: USAID, 2018, p. 48

USAID generally uses the term "soft skills" in workforce development and other youth programming. Soft skills are often considered complementary to "hard skills" that can be job-specific, easily defined, and easily measured such as writing, math, reading, computer literacy, and machine operations (Schaberg, 2019). Soft skills are generally teachable and malleable throughout the life cycle (Soares et al., 2017). In SSA, various governments and policymakers conceptualize soft skills as an investment in human capital. These actors believe several key soft skills lead to better governance and equitable development, including problem solving, social awareness, and creativity (Care et al., 2017). Adaptability and resilience in conflict and crisis contexts are also viewed as essential

competencies for citizens in the region. For youth across the globe, acquiring soft skills is critical for overcoming personal, social, and economic barriers (Gates et al., 2016; Reisman & Payan, 2015).

The most common methods of measuring soft skills in SSA tend to suffer from biases. For example, programs often use self-report scales. While programs may succeed in educating youth, self-reported scores of their soft skill development could appear to decrease as youth develop more self-awareness and more accurate perceptions of their skills. However, new tools, including anchoring vignettes and situational judgement items, are being adapted for the sub-Saharan context to ensure that they are culturally relevant, reliable, and valid.

IMPACT OF SOFT SKILLS ON WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT OUTCOMES

There is a growing body of research from SSA that demonstrates the impact of soft skills on workforce outcomes for youth. Based on the literature reviewed, five workforce outcome categories were identified: employment and employability, job performance, wages, entrepreneurship, and financial management. Table 1 below provides an illustrative overview of the soft skills that are causally linked to these workforce outcomes.

TABLE 1. ILLUSTRATIVE SOFT SKILLS CAUSALLY LINKED TO WORKFORCE OUTCOMES IN SSA

WORKFORCE OUTCOMES	SKILLS
Employment and employability	Self-confidence, self-efficacy
Job performance	Communication, teamwork, responsibility, problem solving, goal setting
Wages	Openness, emotional stability, conscientiousness
Entrepreneurship	Confidence, motivation, creativity, innovation
Financial Management	Leadership, interpersonal communication, personal development

Increased self-confidence and self-efficacy are linked to improving multiple workforce outcomes (i.e., employment, job performance, wages, entrepreneurship) (Alcid & Martin, 2017; Chioda & Gertler, 2020a; Educate!, 2014; James et al., 2018). Goal setting, social skills, work ethic, and time organization can give youth confidence to enter the labor market and enhance their job performance (Genesis Analytics, 2019). Likewise, communication, teamwork, and conflict management skills improve job performance and increase wages (Alcid, 2015; Allemano & Dieng, 2016). Lastly, personal initiative (PI) training is an effective approach to develop successful entrepreneurship skills linked to increased earnings and business success for adults. It fosters initiative, innovation, and persistence within a resource-restrained context, which makes it especially promising for youth in SSA (Alibhai et al., 2016; Campos et al., 2017; Glaub et al., 2014).

Specific skills linked to workforce outcomes may differ between women and men and across contexts. Furthermore, research shows that women sometimes benefit more from such training (Acevedo et al., 2017; Asante Africa Foundation Inc., 2019; Ibarraran et al., 2014; Salam et al., 2016). For women, leadership, conflict resolution, negotiation, and management skills have long-term positive effects on self-employment, while decision making is linked to increased savings (Noble et al., 2020). Additionally, soft skills training helps women feel increased control over their lives, improved confidence, and stronger peer

and familial relationships (Adoho et al., 2014; Noble et al., 2020). These outcomes, coupled with improved opportunities for employment, earnings, savings, and entrepreneurship, are particularly important for their economic and social empowerment. Positive soft skills development and workforce outcomes hold the potential for positive spillover effects on women's families and communities (Chakravarty et al., 2017; Chioda & Gertler, 2020a). As such, soft skills and workforce development programming can help to close the gap in workforce outcomes between men and women.

Soft skills training helps conflict-affected youth in SSA increase their confidence, self-efficacy, and resilience in addition to skills such as leadership, decision making, and conflict management. In turn, these skills may deter youth from joining violent groups and lead to better employment outcomes and job performance. Accordingly, soft skills development can be an important tool for promoting the social and economic incorporation of conflict and crisis-affected youth (EDC, 2020b; Giuliano Sarr et al., 2019).

HOW TO TEACH AND NURTURE SOFT SKILLS

Disadvantaged youth in SSA often lack access to opportunities through school and other activities to develop key soft skills for workforce success. As a result, it is especially important that soft skills programming target marginalized groups including out-of-school youth, young women, conflict-affected youth, displaced youth, and youth with disabilities. Diverse mediums should be employed to successfully target and recruit youth from these groups. Some strategies that appear effective include partnering with trusted community leaders to promote trainings, utilizing a range of forums to publicize the training such as radio, SMS, flyers, and alumni from the programs, and addressing barriers that prevent youth, particularly women and youth with disabilities from attending trainings. These socioeconomic and sociocultural barriers may include the high cost and long distances associated with attending training and cultural norms around women interacting with men and pursuing work outside the home.

Evidence from SSA suggests that best practices for teaching soft skills significantly overlap with best practices for teaching core academic skills, like reading and math. As such, effective interventions use participatory activities and interactive teaching methods to support soft skills development such as positive self-concept, communication skills, and social skills (Dupuy et al., 2018; FocusAfrica, 2010d; Hanemann, 2017; MasterCard Foundation, 2017; McIlvaine et al., 2015). Furthermore, experiential learning techniques grounded in real-world scenarios have proven especially effective for strengthening social skills as well as for developing and enhancing entrepreneurship skills (Brady & Aleixo, 2018).

The purposeful cultivation of safe spaces, stipends, strong relationships with facilitators and mentors, and social networks encourage youth to attend soft skills interventions (Kohl & French, 2014; McIlvaine et al., 2015; The World Bank, 2015). Likewise, community-level mobilization and peer support can help youth to overcome the socioeconomic barriers to participate in soft skills training (Buehren et al., 2017; Johnstone et al., 2017; The World Bank, 2015). Innovative methods aimed to increase inclusivity within programs, such as providing transportation support for students with disabilities, are beginning to gain traction among various implementing partners.

SOFT SKILLS IN SECONDARY EDUCATION AND WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT TRAINING IN SUB-SAHARAN AFRICA

In SSA, a number of countries have recently undergone education curriculum reform to better equip youth for the global economy, including shifting from knowledge-based curricula to competency-based

curricula and focusing on cultivating technical and transferable skills (MasterCard Foundation, 2017). In particular, secondary education and technical and vocational education and training (TVET) institutions in many African education systems increasingly recognize the need to include 21st century life skills to prepare youth for the changing labor market (Akyeampong, 2014). From the literature, seven SSA countries' experiences emerged to offer lessons about integrating soft skills training into education systems.

First, curriculum design and implementation present windows of opportunities for governments to integrate soft skills into multiple levels of the formal education system. As governments across SSA shift to competency-based frameworks, or as other curriculum reforms take place, advocates can leverage these opportunities to integrate successful models of work readiness and soft skills programs into formal education systems, as in the cases of Kenya, Rwanda, and Uganda.

Governments have developed policies and curricula for integrating soft skills at different levels of formal and informal education, yet less is known about how effectively they are implemented in practice and what gaps exist to improve effectiveness. One challenge around implementation of soft skills curricula includes teacher and student attitudes. Teachers and students in some countries have been hesitant to cover or enroll in entrepreneurship or soft skills training if it is not assessed. Teachers and students may be more likely to shift their mindsets toward accepting soft skills training if national assessments are used to measure their progress, as in the cases of Rwanda and Uganda.

To scale up existing soft skills training and ensure sustainability, governments must engage with a variety of actors, implementers, donors, researchers, and the private sector. Technical working groups give opportunities for a variety of actors to collaborate, voice their input, and take ownership over initiatives. Likewise, as in the case of the Akazi Kanoze activities in Rwanda, cultivating local champions of soft skills initiatives that are embedded in different sectors, including different levels of government, helps to leverage resources, foster ownership, and facilitate sustainability and scale (Kohl & French, 2014).

KEY RECOMMENDATIONS FOR PROGRAMMING AND RESEARCH IN SSA

Based on the evidence within the literature, the following programmatic and research recommendations are provided for donors, implementers, and governments' consideration:

DEFINING SOFT SKILLS IN SSA

- Explicitly define which soft skills to target during program design and use assessment tools that specifically measure these skills, which enables researchers and policymakers to compare programs and youth outcomes more easily. If resources allow, utilize measures that reduce bias and encourage monitoring observable behaviors over time.

IMPACT OF SOFT SKILLS ON WORKFORCE OUTCOMES

- Combine soft skills training, technical training, and job placement support to improve workforce outcomes in SSA.
- Incorporate PI training into programs for youth to improve both soft skills and entrepreneurship skills.
- For conflict-affected youth, target building confidence, self-efficacy, resilience, leadership, decision making, and conflict management in workforce development training.
- For women in SSA, target skills that lead to improved entrepreneurship and earnings, among other positive workforce and well-being outcomes. Key soft skills include leadership, conflict resolution, and self-confidence
- Analyze causal mechanisms linking soft skills and workforce outcomes for youth in conflict-affected regions, women and youth with disabilities in SSA.

TEACHING AND NURTURING SOFT SKILLS

- Evaluate targeting and recruitment methods to determine causal links between strategies and youth retention, soft skills development, and workforce outcomes.
- Embrace interactive pedagogy that provides youth in SSA with ample opportunities to practice soft skills.
- Create safe spaces, build community relationships, and expand social networks to promote soft skills interventions and convey the role of soft skills in workforce success in SSA.
- Determine potential or existing obstacles that may affect participation and mitigate them.

SOFT SKILLS IN SECONDARY EDUCATION AND WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT TRAINING IN SSA

- Identify successful, contextually-relevant and scalable soft skills and workforce development models to reach both youth in the formal education system and out-of-school youth.
- In sub-Saharan African countries that have policy frameworks, help ensure successful implementation through curriculum reform and training and materials for teachers. In the absence of policy frameworks, advocacy efforts should prioritize the establishment of a comprehensive life skills framework.
- Establish working groups early in implementation to share innovative approaches to incorporate soft skills, cultivate local ownership, and leverage local champions to advocate for future programming and curriculum reform.
- In SSA countries that have adopted and scaled up soft skills training, conduct research on the effectiveness of their instruction and identification of gaps in teacher knowledge and skills.

INTRODUCTION

Youth currently make up roughly one quarter of the world's population. However, by 2030, the proportion of youth will increase to over 40 percent of the population within developing countries and over 30 percent of the workforce. In sub-Saharan Africa (SSA), the youth population is estimated to increase from 195 million in 2015 to 284 million by 2030, with approximately 11 million youth entering the labor market each year over the next decade (The World Bank, 2015). This shift creates a demographic dividend that, if harnessed effectively, can stimulate economic development and reduce intergenerational poverty. However, youth and especially young women often struggle to enter the labor market (Chakravarty et al., 2017). In 2018, the unemployment rate of youth (ages 15-24) in SSA was 13 percent, compared to 6 percent unemployment for the total population of SSA (MasterCard Foundation, 2020). To find and engage in productive employment, youth must acquire the right skills. While employers' value academic and technical skills, soft skills are consistently and increasingly prioritized (Burnett & Jayaram, 2012; Puerta et al., 2018; Valerio et al., 2014).

An array of domestic and international donors, including the United States Agency for International Development (USAID), fund interventions that provide soft skills and workforce training for youth in SSA. These programs aim to strengthen youths' capacities so that they can actively contribute to and benefit from their country's stable, sustainable, and equitable development. For these programs to maximize their effectiveness while achieving scale, they need to be designed and implemented in alignment with evidenced-based approaches. However, evidence on what works has generally focused on high-income countries or low- and middle-income countries (LMICs). As such, local governments, implementers, and other stakeholders lack access to contextually relevant evidence from SSA. To fill this research gap, USAID under the Research for Effective Education Programming-Africa (REEP-A) Task Order, commissioned this literature review to examine the linkages between soft skills training and youth workforce development outcomes. This study aims to unearth evidence and lessons that are unique to SSA countries and the specific contextual factors that exist within and across them to inform current and future programming.

PURPOSE AND RESEARCH QUESTIONS

A growing body of research highlights the importance of soft skills for success in the workforce (Filmer & Fox, 2014; Ignatowski, 2017; Kautz et al., 2014). In developing countries, research shows soft skills are equally or more valued than technical skills, in part due to the higher need for adaptability in these contexts (Rodella et al., 2015). Employers are increasingly looking for youth who can navigate their environment, constructively approach challenges and mistakes, work well with others, communicate effectively, be flexible, disciplined, proactive, and creative. However, employers report that it is difficult to find applicants possessing such skills (Filmer & Fox, 2014; Schaberg, 2019).

Women in SSA face specific challenges when it comes to integrating into the labor market. The compounded impacts of social norms related to family responsibility, agency, and acceptable economic endeavors limit their participation. Likewise, women tend to lack the opportunities and resources available to young men (Filmer & Fox, 2014; The World Bank, 2015). Without opportunities for economic advancement, early family formation can perpetuate the cycle of vulnerability within families and reduce development opportunities for communities (The World Bank, 2015). Soft skills development has helped women obtain employment and increase their earnings (Adoho et al., 2014; Azevedo et al., 2013; McKenzie et al., 2019). However, identifying the specific soft skills and interventions that are most effective

for supporting women's participation and advancement in the workforce is particularly important for their economic empowerment and development outcomes across SSA.

Various countries in SSA are currently or have experienced conflict in recent years. Often, such contexts can leave youth with trauma and stress that make them even more vulnerable socially and economically (Buehren et al., 2017; Ignatowski, 2017). Such conflict is often born from extreme polarization and, in some contexts, young men are at risk of recruitment into violent extremist and/or armed groups. These circumstances all point to the need to develop specific soft skills to improve economic outcomes and reduce violence (Blattman & Ralston, 2015; Education Development Center [EDC], 2020b). Yet, evidence on which soft skills are the most critical for youth in conflict and post-conflict contexts and how to effectively cultivate them is still limited.

Recognizing these challenges, there is a need to take stock of the current evidence by conducting a targeted and inclusive review focused on the region. This literature review will contribute to the field by: (i) synthesizing the most up-to-date empirical evidence on the relationship between soft skills and youth workforce outcomes in LMICs and specifically in SSA; (ii) identifying and documenting examples of soft skills development in youth workforce training in LMICs and in SSA to inform programmatic decision making; (iii) identifying practical applications of soft skills training in youth workforce development in SSA; and (iv) highlighting gaps in the literature and areas for future research. Specifically, the research questions (RQs) this review aims to answer are:

> **RQ1**. How are soft skills defined in the research literature, and what variations of these definitions exist, if any, in and across sub-Saharan Africa?
>
> **RQ2.** What soft skills have the most impact on workforce outcomes for youth in low- and middle-income countries and in sub-Saharan Africa, in particular?
>
> **RQ3.** What are the most effective mechanisms of teaching and nurturing soft skills among youth in low- and middle-income countries and within sub-Saharan African countries, in particular?
>
> **RQ4.** How and to what extent are soft skills included in secondary education and workforce development in sub-Saharan African countries?
>
> **RQ5.** How do individual factors (such as gender and socioeconomic status) and contextual factors (such as culture, urbanicity, the presence of conflict, and job sector) influence the specific soft skills for workforce success?

ORGANIZATION OF THE REPORT

The following section outlines the research methodology used to conduct this literature review. In particular, it details the process used to search, analyze, and synthesize the literature included in this review to comprehensively answer the RQs in addition to outlining several important limitations. Following the limitations section is an overview of the evidence reviewed that explains the types of study, rigor levels, and the regions/countries within the retrieved literature.

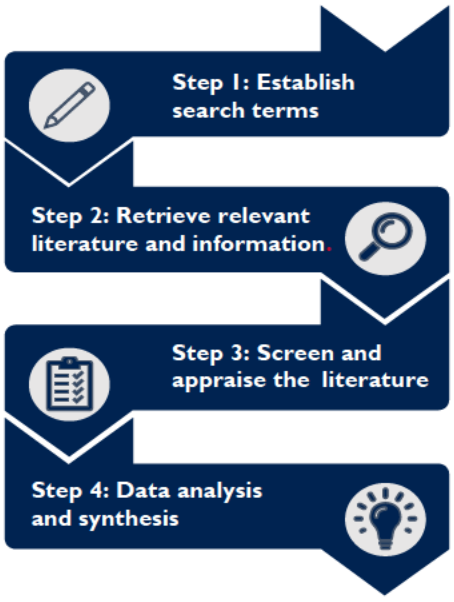
The remainder of this report is organized by research question. The first section, *How Soft Skills are Defined*, provides an overview of how soft skills are defined by USAID, how they are defined across fields,

and how donors and other organizations supporting soft skills development in SSA define them. The second section, *Impact of Soft Skills on Workforce Development Outcomes*, which corresponds to RQ2, examines the evidence on the impact of soft skills development on workforce development outcomes in SSA and across other LMICs. Section three, *How to Teach and Nurture Soft Skills*, discusses effective approaches identified in the literature to develop soft skills in the context of workforce development programs. The final section, *Soft Skills in Secondary Education and Workforce Development Training in Sub-Saharan Africa*, summarizes what steps governments in SSA have taken toward adopting and scaling up soft skills through policy, in formal education systems, and/or in technical and vocational education and training (TVET). The final RQ, which examines contextual and individual differences, does not constitute a sub-section, but is incorporated throughout the findings section and specifically in two cases studies.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This study employed an integrative literature review approach, which allows for a comprehensive exploration of the evidence base (Whittemore & Knafl, 2005). This approach is favorable for the topic of this study because it enables examination of a wide array of literature as opposed to focusing exclusively on primary data sources and experimental studies, which are scarce in the context of SSA. This review includes peer-reviewed literature, non-peer-reviewed literature, and grey literature. The research team also conducted interviews with subject-matter experts involved in the implementation of soft skills training in SSA to uncover additional lessons learned and contextual factors to further triangulate the findings. Figure 1 summarizes the methods used to conduct this integrative literature review, and the sections that follow provide additional information on the implementation of each step.

FIGURE 2. RESEARCH METHODS



STEP 1: ESTABLISH SEARCH TERMS

The research team compiled a list of predefined search terms that was informed by a review of relevant seminal research pieces and policy documents. Many search terms were used to capture the different conceptualizations of soft skills (i.e., social skills, 21st century skills, work readiness skills), youth programs (i.e., positive youth development, technical vocational training, workforce training), workforce outcomes (i.e., employment, income, entrepreneurship), and relevant geographic areas (i.e., sub-Saharan Africa, low-income countries, developing countries). The researchers also expanded the search terms as necessary to capture additional relevant publications. For the complete list of the search terms used, see Annex A.

STEP 2: RETRIEVE RELEVANT LITERATURE AND INFORMATION

The research team searched 21 academic, donor, and implementer-managed databases to reach saturation and identify all relevant research studies for potential inclusion. Specifically, the team searched the following academic databases: Academic Search Complete, Africa-Wide Information, the American Economic Association Randomized Control Trial (RCT) Registry, EconLit, Education Full Text, U.S. Educational Resources Information Center (ERIC), JSTOR, National Bureau of

Economic Research (NBER), ProQuest, PsycINFO, and SpringerLink. The grey literature, including policy documents and program evaluations, was searched for via USAID's Development Experience Clearinghouse (DEC), Education Development Center, Inc. (EDC), International Rescue Committee (IRC), International Youth Foundation (IYF), Abdul Latif Jameel Poverty Action Lab (J-PAL), Mercy Corps, United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), and the World Bank. For a complete list of the databases searched and the resulting number of articles retrieved, see Annex B. The research team also utilized the snowball method to identify additional research and grey literature by reviewing references in highly relevant systematic reviews, literature reviews, and scoping reviews. Finally, literature was also identified through interviews and consultations with subject-matter experts.

EXPERT CONSULTATIONS

The research team conducted 16 key informant interviews (KIIs) to shed light on current issues emerging in the field of soft skills training in SSA. Specifically, interviews provided the research team with a more nuanced understanding of current programming priorities, lessons learned within the different contexts, implementation challenges, and research gaps. Furthermore, interviewees facilitated the discovery of in-progress or recently completed studies that may not have been retrieved during the database or reference searches. Subject-matter experts were identified through reading seminal articles and based on recommendations from other experts. The research team consulted individuals who conduct research on workforce development and soft skills training and individuals designing, overseeing, and/or implementing such programs in SSA. Specifically, experts consulted included staff from USAID missions, USAID's YouthPower, J-PAL, the World Bank, EDC, IYF, and independent researchers. For a complete list of experts consulted, see Annex C.

The research team developed a semi-structured interview protocol to gather information relevant to each RQ, to locate specific research gaps identified in the literature, and to triangulate findings with interviewees. A semi-structured method was appropriate as it enabled the research team to prepare focused and targeted questions while also enabling flexibility to pursue certain topics in greater detail. For more information on the interview protocol, see Annex D. During each interview, the research team took detailed notes, which were subsequently uploaded to ATLAS.ti for coding and analysis.

STEP 3: SCREEN AND APPRAISE THE LITERATURE

To systematically determine which studies were relevant for inclusion and reduce bias, the research team established a list of inclusion criteria. Box 2 outlines the specific criteria used to establish eligibility. The research team first screened each study against the inclusion criteria by reviewing the study title and abstract, as well as its methodology and/or findings, if necessary. For studies that passed this initial check, the full report was reviewed. Studies not meeting the eligibility criteria were excluded from the literature review.

After screening the studies against the inclusion criteria, the research team assessed study quality to determine appropriateness for answering the RQs. Given that the studies meeting the inclusion criteria utilized a range of methodologies, assessing the quality was more complex than for meta-analyses or systematic reviews. As such, the research team utilized adapted versions of the Critical Appraisal Skills Program (CASP) checklists for empirical research and literature reviews to critically appraise them (see Annex E for additional information and copies of the adapted checklists).[1] These checklists are designed to assess the methodological quality, informational value, and generalizability of the literature. The checklists used for this quality appraisal were adapted specifically for developing country contexts. Based on the checklists' criteria, all studies are rated on a 5-point scale, which ranges from high to low rigor. Table 2 below defines each level of rigor. The research team used high and medium-high rigor studies to answer the RQs related to impact and effectiveness, while medium and medium-low studies were only used to answer non-impact focused RQs. Low-rigor studies were used for contextual background purposes.

BOX 2. INCLUSION CRITERIA

Date: 2010 – 2021

Relevance: Must include at least one specific soft skill and at least one specific workforce outcome

Literature Type: Peer-reviewed, grey literature, conceptual, and theoretical. Qualitative, quantitative, and mixed methods.

Geography: SSA and LMICs

Language: Studies written in English

Population: Ages 15-29[1]

TABLE 2. QUALITY APPRAISAL CHECKLIST

SCALE	DEFINITION
High	Empirical studies or employer surveys with large samples, representative sampling, comparison groups and/or longitudinal studies with controls. Program evaluations with scientific sampling and controls. Meets all of the checklist criteria.
Medium-High	Empirical studies with smaller, non-representative samples. Program evaluations with large samples, but no comparison groups. Meta-analyses and literature reviews that are peer-reviewed and include scientific selection of articles as well as criteria for inclusion. Meets all the checklist criteria.
Medium	Employer surveys with smaller, non-representative samples. Meta-analyses and literature reviews that are not peer-reviewed but that include scientific selection of articles and criteria for inclusion. Meets most of the checklist criteria.
Medium-Low	Program final reports. Conceptual frameworks and construct development without results. Meets most of the checklist criteria.
Low	Popular press, newspaper articles, magazine articles, press releases. Meets some of the checklist criteria.

STEP 4: DATA ANALYSIS AND SYNTHESIS

The research team first developed a summary table that listed each study for review along with key information such as the publication date, country/region, methods, key findings, and relevance for each RQ. See Annex H for more information on this literature table. This summary table served as a useful tool to quickly identify and refer back to any piece of literature during the analysis and synthesis of

1 For more information on CASP and a complete list of available checklists, see: https://casp-uk.net/casp-tools-checklists/.

information. The research team also used a qualitative software program, ATLAS.ti, to extract and code the information from the retrieved publications. The researchers uploaded all publications and interview notes to the program along with a pre-defined coding structure that aligned with the RQs. For example, for RQ4, a code group was created to identify how soft skills are included in SSA programs. Sub-codes included soft skills training in secondary education, USAID programs, and other local programs in SSA. This pre-defined hierarchy of codes and sub-codes was adjusted and expanded, as necessary. For a complete list of the codes used, see Annex F. To synthesize the literature, the researchers extracted the information from all codes relevant to each corresponding RQ. For example, for the RQ on soft skills impact on workforce outcomes, data were extracted from codes such as "soft skill impact entrepreneurship," "soft skill impact wages," and "soft skill impact employment." On average, there were roughly ten to fifteen relevant codes per RQ. The researchers then drew connections between the evidence found in the literature and synthesized the findings by RQ.

LIMITATIONS

This review examines literature on soft skills and youth workforce development concentrated in developing countries, with a focus on SSA. Based on the literature that was identified and analyzed, there are several important limitations.

First, **the definition of soft skills varies across contexts.** The research team found this particularly true for the grey literature, such as project evaluations. Different definitions made it challenging to draw reliable conclusions about the effectiveness of soft skills training across studies, which is further complicated by translation across linguistic groups and academic disciplines, where one term can have different meanings within different contexts. For example, self-control is regarded differently in violence prevention, psychology, and sexual and reproductive health (SRH) literature (Gates et al., 2016). This complication poses significant challenges for reliable measurement and for identifying trends in soft skills development. Recognizing this limitation, the research team followed criteria set in *Key 'Soft Skills' that Foster Youth Workforce Success: Toward a Consensus Across Fields* (Lippman et al., 2015), where a soft skill had to refer to something that "(a) can be cultivated among youth, (b) can be expressed in the form of behaviors, skills, or attitudes that are observable and measurable, and (c) can be understood by employers, youth, program implementers, and researchers alike" (p. 15).

Relatedly, **instruments used to measure soft skills are known to suffer biases and might vary in sensitivity across settings**. Most soft skills assessments use self-report scales given their relative ease-of-use. Questionnaires with self-report scales ask youth to rate themselves on a Likert scale or along a continuum (e.g., from "strongly disagree" to "strongly agree"). For example, questions may ask youth about the frequency of a specific behavior (e.g., "How often do you…?"), and youth respond using a scale that ranges from "never" to "always" (Omoeva et al., 2020). Self-rating scales suffer from both social desirability bias and reference bias. For social desirability bias, there is a cross-cultural tendency for individuals to rate themselves highly based on which answer choice they perceive as desirable, rather than on their own abilities. For reference bias, individuals respond according to their own frame of reference based on the norms of their social group (Galloway et al., 2017). For example, a cross-cultural study explored which soft skills youth and employers value most in ideal employees and found differences using the same measurement tool in Honduras, Rwanda, and the Philippines. Filipino youth and employers value emotional stability and extraversion less than youth and employers in Honduras and Rwanda. At baseline,

youth from these countries may rate their own skills differently because they hold different expectations about which skills are valuable (Pagel et al., 2017).

The majority of empirical literature available on soft skills is focused on developed countries, so **less is known about the reliability and validity of tools in developing countries**. If measures are not "anchored" in an objective phenomenon, but rather linked to culture- or country-specific phenomenon, this can be problematic. For example, youth may have different ideas of what "self-motivation" means and as a result could respond differently to test items across contexts (Kautz et al., 2014). A few instruments, such as the Anchored Big Five Inventory (ABFI), have been adapted and piloted in SSA. However, more research is needed to determine how soft skills may vary for youth from country to country and region to region, and to ensure that tools reliably measure soft skills to appropriately inform decision making.

Additionally, as is the case with many small-scale, rigorous studies, **there may be limited external validity of the results.** The workforce development programs examined in this review included a wide range of target youth populations, which made it difficult to draw parallels across contexts within SSA. Some programs only recruited females, while others only recruited males. Some focused on preparing youth for the formal sector, while others focused on entrepreneurship. Some programs included outcomes related to SRH, gender equality, and violence prevention in addition to targeting workforce outcomes. To address this limitation, different sources of data (e.g., qualitative literature, KIIs, industry reports, and other grey literature) were triangulated to hypothesize how specific soft skills affect workforce outcomes for different youth populations in different contexts.

There is little empirical evidence on the effectiveness of teaching soft skills, which is especially true for LMICs and even more so for SSA. Studies and evaluations that examine the effectiveness of workforce development and soft skills programming tend to analyze the outcomes of the overall intervention, many of which include several different components, rather than measuring the effect of the soft skills training on its own. With little explanation for how soft skills led to improved workforce outcomes, most studies simply show that an association exists. Furthermore, research and evaluations that have attempted to do this in SSA rarely used experimental designs. This review examined the limited causal literature that was available regarding soft skills training and workforce outcomes in SSA. However, additional research is needed to further understand how different contextual and implementation factors within soft skills training influence outcomes.

Most studies did not isolate the impact of particular soft skills on workforce outcomes. For example, the Youth Empowerment Program was implemented and evaluated in several SSA countries. While programs in Tanzania, Senegal, Nigeria, and Kenya found positive soft skills and workforce outcomes, these findings were not linked to determine causality (IYF, 2011). Instead, studies like these often only discussed the impact of training on soft skills generally and not on workforce development outcomes, specifically. As such, it is difficult to examine which individual soft skills are the most effective at improving workforce outcomes and which skills should be prioritized in soft skills programming.

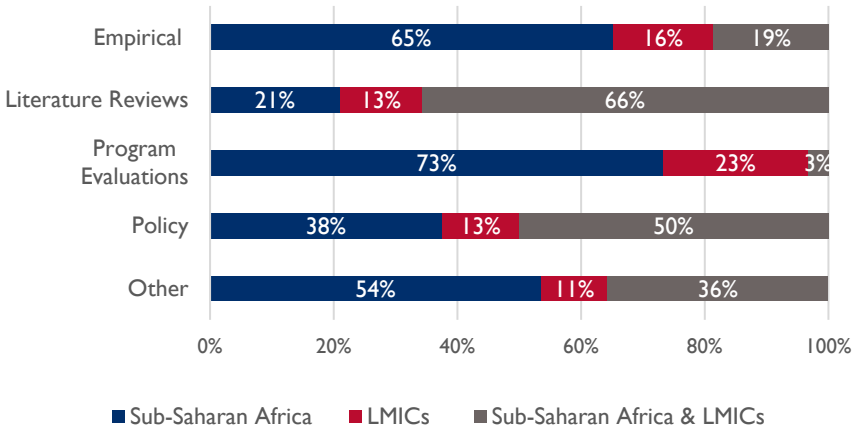
Finally, **there was a scarcity of research from SSA that focused on soft skills training as it relates to specific job sectors, socioeconomic status, and urbanicity**, making it challenging to answer RQ5 in its entirety. For example, findings from SSA and other LMICs indicate soft skills and workforce development outcomes may be different for youth in urban areas compared to youth in rural areas, but the studies do not test the mechanisms driving these differences (Alcid & Martin, 2017; EDC, 2016). It is possible that employers and youth from highly populated cities value different sets of skills than

employers and youth from rural areas. Alternatively, youth from urban areas may have better follow-up services available to them after training, which can affect soft skills and workforce outcomes. More research is needed in this area to determine how soft skills may be learned, applied, and valued in certain contexts, but not others. The individual and contextual factors examined in relation to the benefits of specific soft skills were gender, conflict, and culture.

EVIDENCE REVIEWED

A total of 177 publications retrieved met the inclusion criteria, including 43 empirical studies, 38 literature reviews, 60 program evaluations, 8 policy documents, and 28 documents classified as other. The "other" category includes resource guides, dissertations, program reports, industry reports, scoping reviews, and theoretical frameworks. Figure 3 below shows the proportion of literature retrieved by region and disaggregated by study type.

FIGURE 3. STUDY TYPE BY REGION



Out of the 177 articles included in this review, 98 articles were from SSA, 30 articles were from LMICs, and 49 articles covered SSA countries and LMICs. While a few seminal literature reviews and meta-analyses also covered high-income countries, the research team focused on findings applicable to SSA. Figure 4 below maps the individual countries that are represented in the literature included in this review. Fifty-nine LMICs are represented, including 28 countries in SSA. The concentration on recent empirical literature and program evaluations from developing countries, particularly those in SSA, sets this review apart from previous studies where developed countries are overrepresented.

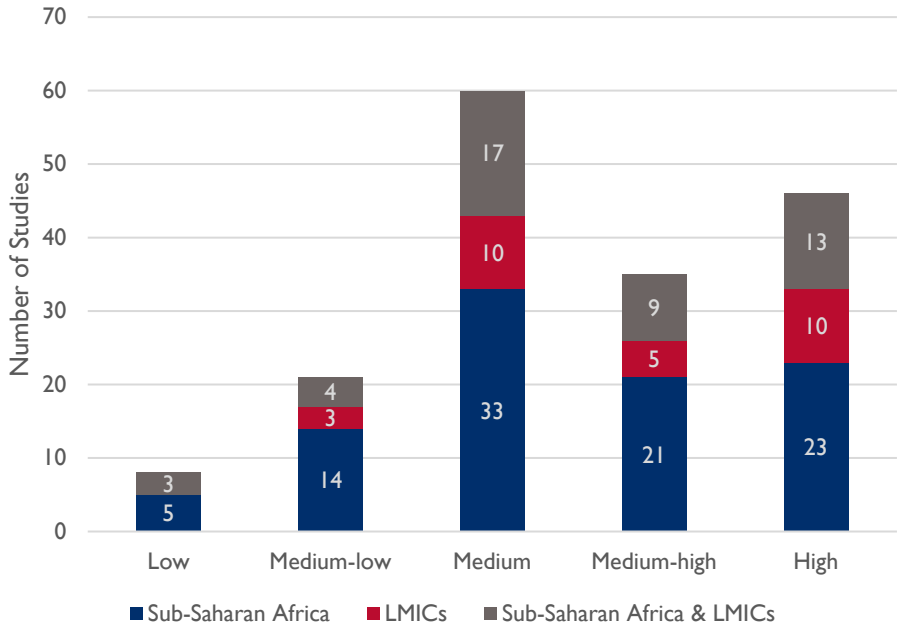
FIGURE 4. GEOGRAPHIC COVERAGE OF LITERATURE FROM SSA AND LMICS

In this review, studies that met the inclusion criteria utilized several different methodologies. Literature of low rigor was used for contextual background when thematically relevant to a specific RQ, but they

were not coded in the data analysis process. The studies that were medium-low and medium rigor were coded and mainly used to answer the RQs that were not causal or effectiveness questions. Only studies of high and medium-high rigor literature were used to answer RQ2, while RQ4 and RQ5 were answered using medium, medium-high, and high rigor literature.

Among the studies included in the review, there were 46 high rigor, 35 medium-high, 60 medium, 21 medium-low, and 8 low rigor studies. Seven policy documents were also included in the review given the important contextual background they provided, but they could not be assessed for their rigor. Figure 5 provides a breakdown of these studies by region. Most of the literature from SSA met the criteria for medium rigor; however, there does seem to be a recent and promising trend of more rigorous research emerging from the region that examines soft skills and workforce outcomes.

FIGURE 5. METHODOLOGICAL AND THEORETICAL RIGOR BY REGION



HOW SOFT SKILLS ARE DEFINED

This section examines how soft skills are defined in the research literature and by organizations working across SSA. It aims to highlight common trends and key differences that influence how programs and research are designed. This examination is followed by a discussion of how soft skills are measured across different organizations and contexts. The section concludes with a synthesis of key takeaways for researchers and practitioners.

USAID RESEARCH & PROGRAMMING

BOX 3. USAID DEFINITION OF SOFT SKILLS

Cognitive, social, and emotional skills, behaviors, and personal qualities that help people to navigate their environment, relate well with others, perform well, and achieve their goals.

Source: USAID, 2018, p. 48

The myriad constructs used to describe similar behaviors, attitudes, and abilities remains a significant challenge in soft skills research. No single definition of soft skills serves all countries, cultures, policymakers, and funders (Galloway et al., 2017; Ignatowski, 2017). USAID generally uses the term "soft skills" in workforce development and other youth programming. Soft skills are often seen as complementary to "hard skills" that can be job-specific, easily defined, and easily measured such as writing, math, reading, computer literacy, and machine operations (Schaberg, 2019). Unlike personality traits, which are often fixed, soft skills are teachable and malleable throughout the life cycle (Soares et al., 2017).

Soft skills differ from "social and emotional skills," which USAID defines as, "knowledge, attitudes, and skills necessary to understand and manage emotions, set and achieve positive goals, feel and show empathy for others, establish and maintain positive relationships, and make responsible decisions" (2018, p. 48). Unlike "soft skills," the terms "social and emotional skills" and "social and emotional learning" tend to be used in the context of formal or nonformal education programming, across all levels of the education system.

As youth development programming increased around the world, USAID funded a series of studies that aimed to identify which soft skills are most important for key youth outcomes (Alvarado et al., 2017; Catalano et al., 2019; Gates et al., 2016; Lippman et al., 2015). These studies categorized soft skills under organized frameworks and outlined which skills youth need to succeed in school, at work, and in their communities. For example, Lippman et al. (2015), conducted an extensive and systematic literature review of soft skills related to workforce outcomes. Notably, high-income countries were overrepresented in the empirical studies reviewed, with findings concentrated in formal employment contexts. Five key soft skills were identified: higher-order thinking, self-control, social skills, communication skills, and a positive self-concept. For more information on each of these skills including their definitions, see Table 3.

TABLE 3. SOFT SKILLS CORRELATED WITH WORKFORCE OUTCOMES

SKILLS	DEFINITIONS
Higher-order thinking skills	Problem solving, critical thinking, decision making. They refer to the ability to "identify an issue and take in information from multiple sources to evaluate options in order to reach a reasonable conclusion."
Self-control	Delaying gratification, controlling impulses, directing and focusing attention. It refers to the intrapersonal ability to "manage emotions and regulate behaviors" despite any distractions.

Social skills	Respecting others, using context-appropriate behavior, resolving conflict. They refer to the ability to "get along well with others."
Communication skills	Oral, written, non-verbal communication, and listening skills. They refer to "effective expression, transmission, understanding, and interpretation of knowledge and ideas."
Positive self-concept	Self-confidence, self-efficacy, self-awareness and beliefs, self-esteem, well-being, and pride. It refers to "a healthy identity and awareness and deployment of one's strengths in the workforce." It is also supported by evidence to be an "important skill for preventing different forms of youth violence" that "enables youth to walk away from a fight or successfully navigate challenging tasks and situations at work."

Source: Adapted from Lippman et al., 2015, p. 33-34; Gates et al., 2016, p. 3

USAID's YouthPower initiative generated greater understanding of how the positive youth development (PYD) approach can cultivate soft skills in youth from developing countries. According to USAID, "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" (Gates et al., 2016, p. 10). This holistic approach to youth development targets soft skills associated with positive youth outcomes in several important domains, including workforce development, education, mental health, and substance abuse (Galloway et al., 2017).

As part of YouthPower Action, Gates et al. (2016) conducted a literature review on youth soft skills development in relation to violence prevention, SRH, and workforce outcomes. Based on evidence from these three sectors, empathy and goal orientation were identified as two key cross-cutting soft skills, in addition to the five skills identified in the Lippman et al. review (2015). Additionally, Alvarado et al. (2017) conducted a systematic review of PYD programs in LMICs, which revealed a lack of consistency in measuring cross-sectoral skills such as self-regulation and self-efficacy. Instead, programs that promote PYD in LMICs focus on measuring sector-specific outcomes, such as job placement rates. Finally, Galloway et al. (2017) led a review of tools used in international youth development programs to measure the impact of soft skills on positive youth outcomes across various domains. The study identified 49 existing tools that measure soft skills outside of the United States; 15 of which have been used or tested in Africa.[2] Evidence of acceptable levels of reliability was found for 63 percent of tools, while evidence of acceptable levels of validity was found for only 44 percent of tools. Despite these contributions, there is a persistent lack of consensus across USAID programs on how to define soft skills, how to measure them, and which skills to include under the umbrella term (Schaberg, 2019).

CONCEPTUALIZING AND IDENTIFYING SKILLS ACROSS FIELDS

Despite efforts to create greater coherence in the field of soft skills research, terms and definitions remain fragmented across different disciplines. International youth development programs include a wide range of similar skills rooted in psychology, education, health, and economics, which poses a challenge for comparisons across contexts (Ignatowski, 2017; Lippman et al., 2015). For example, education often uses the term "social and emotional skills," while the field of

> Stakeholders have described the landscape as the "**Wild West**" or the "**Tower of Babel**," where different disciplines are siloed in their own traditions and language.
>
> Sources: Galloway et al., 2017; Stecher & Hamilton, 2014

[2] Key USAID resources on soft skills include: Alvarado et al., 2017; Bitga et al., 2020; Galloway et al., 2017; Gates et al., 2016; Lippman et al., 2015; Psilos & Galloway, 2018; Soares et al., 2017.

economics favors the terms "transferrable skills" or "noncognitive skills." Public health and gender studies may use "life skills" aimed at health promotion or empowerment (Murphy-Graham & Cohen, forthcoming; USAID, 2019). The field of psychology also has a particularly long history of studying human behavior and linking behavioral skills to personality characteristics (Filmer & Fox, 2014). Table 4 outlines common terms used by these different fields to conceptualize soft skills.

TABLE 4. SOFT SKILLS CONCEPTUALIZATION ACROSS FIELDS

FIELD	CONCEPTUALIZATION
Psychology	Social and emotional skills, character skills/strengths, personality factors, developmental assets, Big Five personality traits (Benson et al., 2011; Ryberg, 2016) and the "Five Cs" of positive youth development: competence, confidence, connection, character, and caring (Pittman et al., 2011)
Education	Social and emotional skills, noncognitive skills, non-academic skills, 21st century skills, character skills (CASEL, 2020; Guerra et al., 2014)
Economics	Transferrable skills, 21st century skills, entrepreneurship skills, employability skills, noncognitive skills (Heckman, 2000; Kautz et al., 2014)
Gender and global health	Life skills, youth assets, risk/protective factors (Gates et al., 2016)
Humanitarian and social services	Psychosocial attributes/predictors/support, holistic well-being (Gates et al., 2016)

Source: Adapted from Gates et al., 2016; Lippman et al., 2015; USAID, 2019

A lack of consistent soft skills terminology and definitions across fields has important implications for drawing comparisons and identifying trends in the literature. Table 5 provides a non-exhaustive selection of terms used to identify specific skills across different fields, with common terms shown in red. It demonstrates that psychologists might refer to "self-control" as "self-regulation" or "emotional stability," while educators may use "self-regulation" in addition to "manages emotions" and "pays attention." Public health workers and social workers also typically adopt a different definition related to SRH (De Fruyt & Rolland, 2020; Gates et al., 2016; Ignatowski, 2017). Despite these differences, developing core soft skills and fostering critical thinking are cross-cutting concepts in the fields of education, economics, public health, and social work (Murphy-Graham & Cohen, forthcoming).

TABLE 5. SOFT SKILLS IDENTIFICATION ACROSS FIELDS

SKILL	ECONOMICS	EDUCATION	PRIVATE SECTOR	PSYCHOLOGY
Social skills	Likability	Social intelligence	Respectful of others	Likability
	Social skills	Conflict management	Willing to help	Social skills
	Positive peer relations	Relationship skills	Fosters relationship	Positive peer relations
Self-control	Self-regulation	Rule-abiding	Self-disciplined	Constraint
		Manages emotions	Self-management	Emotional stability
		Self-regulation		Self-regulation
Positive self-concept	Self-esteem	Positive core self-evaluation	Pride in their work	Self-efficacy
	Self-assessed intelligence	Academic self-concept		Self-confidence
				Self-esteem

Source: Adapted from Lippman et al., 2015 | Common terms across disciplines are highlighted in red for ease of reference

A growing body of research demonstrates how soft skills relate to economic and positive outcomes in education, health, and well-being (Gates et al., 2016; Montague, 2013; Pugatch & Blimpo, 2020). However, even youth development programs targeting the same outcomes do not always emphasize the same soft skills or use the same definitions and measurement tools.

SUB-SAHARAN AFRICAN CONTEXT

In SSA, various governments and policymakers conceptualize soft skills as an investment in human capital. These actors believe several key soft skills lead to better governance and equitable development, including problem solving, social awareness, and creativity (Care et al., 2017). Adaptability and resilience in conflict and crisis contexts are also considered essential competencies for citizens in the region. For youth, acquiring soft skills is critical for overcoming personal, social, and economic barriers (Gates et al., 2016; Reisman & Payan, 2015).

Table 6 summarizes how soft skills have been conceptualized in SSA and among diverse implementers of soft skills training and workforce development programming. It is organized based on the five key soft skills that Lippman et al. (2015) identified as related to workforce development outcomes, which include: higher-order thinking, self-control, social skills, communication skills, and a positive self-concept. Each skill is highlighted using a different color, which visually highlights the similarities and differences across the various actors and frameworks.

As shown within the table, several pan-African networks and frameworks highlight the importance of soft skills in education and training. The Association for the Development of Education in Africa (ADEA), the African Union (AU), and the East African Community (EAC) prioritize skills that encourage civic engagement and entrepreneurship, including personal initiative and innovative thinking (AU, 2006; EAC, 2014; Ndoye, 2017). Other skills recognized by the AU and the Dakar Framework for Action are rooted in sectors outside of workforce development, such as preventative health, education, and gender equality. For example, in life skills education, communication, decision making, and negotiation were emphasized to fight the spread of HIV/AIDs, especially among young people (AU, 2006; UNESCO, 2012).

SOFT SKILLS DEFINED BY OTHER DONORS AND ORGANIZATIONS

Various international organizations provide soft skills training to foster positive youth outcomes across multiple sectors and continents (Alvarado et al., 2017; Gates et al., 2016). Many organizations emphasize that soft skills cut across domains and should be adaptable for different contexts (Kim & Care, 2020; Sanchez Puerta et al., 2016). For example, throughout the literature, most organizations emphasized social skills and higher-order thinking skills, such as critical thinking and problem solving.

Donors are often motivated to promote youth workforce development in tandem with other goals, such as advocating for gender equity, preventative health, education, peace, and human rights (Mitana et al., 2019; UNICEF, 2019; World Bank, 2013). The Population Council, BRAC, the World Bank's Gender Innovation Lab, and other organizations that support gender-sensitive training focus on "life skills," such as negotiation, self-esteem, and communication skills to empower young women (Amin et al., 2016; Burnett & Jayaram, 2012; Jurgens et al., 2013; Kwauk & Braga, 2017).

Organizations often include soft skills that align to the focus of the programming they implement. For example, UNESCO and UNICEF believe that soft skills serve as the "magic glue" to reinforce the

development of foundational academic skills and technical skills (UNICEF, 2019). Therefore, they emphasize key social skills and communication skills that prepare youth to be life-long learners. The IRC and Save the Children focus on resilience and resolving conflict to support youth affected by conflict, displacement, trauma, and stress (Montague, 2013; Smolovic et al., 2011). Finally, several organizations implement programs to train aspiring youth entrepreneurs. Programs led by Youth Business International (YBI), EDC, and IYF include soft skills such as leadership, creativity, innovation, and self-concept (EDC, 2019; Honeyman et al., forthcoming; IYF, 2014; YBI, 2019). The alignment of soft skills with programming suggests that these organizations believe that youth possessing soft skills are better prepared for challenges in both the workplace as well as in the areas that their programming aims to address.

However, among these organizations there is no consensus on how to define and measure soft skills, which limits comparisons across interventions and organizations. For example, there is wide variation in how organizations conceptualize positive self-concept and self-control in their trainings and frameworks. Rather than making broad statements about impact, more nuanced findings assess which skills were defined, targeted, and measured (Gates et al., 2016). To make informed decisions about funding, program design, and implementation, these organizations must determine which skills hold the biggest potential to impact youth beneficiaries.

TABLE 6. DEFINITIONS OF SOFT SKILLS ACROSS ORGANIZATIONS

ORGANIZATION	CONCEPTUALIZATION	HIGH-ORDER THINKING SKILLS	SOCIAL SKILLS	SELF-CONTROL	COMMUNICATION SKILLS	POSITIVE SELF-CONCEPT	OTHER
SUB-SAHARAN AFRICA							
ADEA 2017 Triennale on Education and Training in Africa (2017)	21st century skills	Problem solving, critical thinking	Teamwork, resolving conflict, empathy				Time management, flexibility, adaptability
African Union (2006)	Life skills	Critical thinking	Interpersonal skills		Communication		Self-directed learning, leadership
Dakar Framework for Action (UNESCO, 2012)	Life skills	Decision making	Negotiation		Assertive communication	Self-esteem	
East African Community (2014)	21st century skills	Problem solving, critical thinking	Cultural awareness		Communication	Personal competencies	Innovation, learning to learn, creativity
MULTILATERAL ORGANIZATIONS							
International Labor Organization (2013)	Employability skills	Problem solving	Teamwork		Communication		Learning to learn
The World Bank & Gender Innovation Lab (2012; 2013)	SEL, life skills	Decision making	Community living	Emotional regulation	Communication	Self-efficacy, self-awareness, and self-esteem	Perseverance, motivation
The World Economic Forum (2018)	Workforce skills	Problem solving, critical thinking	Social influence	Emotional intelligence, stress tolerance			Leadership, initiative, flexibility, innovation, creativity, resilience
UNESCO (Kim & Care, 2020)	21st century skills	Problem solving, critical thinking	Collaboration		Communication		
UNICEF (2019)	Transferrable skills, life sills	Problem solving	Negotiation, empathy, cooperation, teamwork	Managing emotions	Communication		Resilience
World Health Organization (2003)	Life skills	Critical thinking, decision making	Cooperation	Managing emotions	Communication	Self-confidence	

TABLE 6. DEFINITIONS OF SOFT SKILLS ACROSS ORGANIZATIONS

ORGANIZATION	CONCEPTUALIZATION	HIGH-ORDER THINKING SKILLS	SOCIAL SKILLS	SELF-CONTROL	COMMUNICATION SKILLS	POSITIVE SELF-CONCEPT	OTHER
IMPLEMENTING ORGANIZATIONS							
BRAC (Burnett & Jayaram, 2012; Jurgens et al., 2013; Kwauk & Braga, 2017)	Life skills	Problem solving, decision making	Social skills		Communication	Self-esteem	Leadership, creativity
Educate! (Mahoney & Bulayev, 2021)	Soft skills, socioemotional skills	Critical thinking	Collaboration		Communication	Grit, self-efficacy	Creativity, character, citizenship
EDC (EDC, 2019; Honeyman et al., forthcoming)	Soft skills	Problem solving, critical thinking	Collaboration		Interpersonal communications	Personal development	Leadership, resilience
International Rescue Committee (Montague, 2013)	Life skills	Problem solving	Resolving conflict			Self-efficacy, self-esteem	
International Youth Foundation (Fogarty et al., 2021)	Life skills	Problem solving, critical thinking, higher order thinking	Interpersonal skills, community mindset, teamwork, conflict management, empathy		Communication	Positive mindset, self-awareness, self-management, self-confidence	Creativity, innovation, resilience, responsibility, cultural understanding
Population Council (Amin et al. 2016)	Life skills	Critical thinking, decision making	Negotiation				
Save the Children (Plaut et al., 2016; Smolovic et al., 2011)	Employability skills, life skills	Problem solving, critical thinking, decision making	Social skills, resolving conflict, empathy	Self-control, managing emotions and stress	Communication	Self-concept	Job search skills, active listening, planning skills
Youth Business International (2018; 2019)	Soft skills	Problem solving, higher order thinking	Interpersonal skills	Intrapersonal skills	Communication	Growth mindset, self-concept	Creativity, innovation, risk management, resilience, flexibility, future orientation

MEASURING SOFT SKILLS

An increasing number of soft skills measurement tools have been developed and adapted for use across youth programs in developing countries (Berg et al., 2017; EDC et al., 2016; Omoeva et al., 2020). In SSA, evidence on soft skills and workforce outcomes entails a wide number of definitions, which have been developed from a variety of measurement tools and methods. In the following section, common features of measuring soft skills are examined to uncover how soft skills are defined and applied in the region. This review builds on previous research that studies how soft skills are measured in international youth development programs.[3]

MITIGATING BIAS FROM SELF-REPORT METHODS

Most soft skills assessments, such as the Big Five Inventory and the Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale, use self-report scales, which are prone to bias. For example, programs may succeed in educating youth; however, self-reported scores of their soft skill development could appear to decrease as youth develop more self-awareness and more accurate self-perceptions about their skills. To reduce biases and facilitate comparisons across participants and programs, new tools have been developed and piloted in SSA, including anchoring vignettes and situational judgement tests. Anchoring vignettes illustrate various skills levels with hypothetical people and situations. While only one response is correct, participants may have to rate the vignettes on the same scale used for self-reporting. Situational judgement tests present a hypothetical situation and ask the participant to indicate what they are most likely to do. The "correct" response may not be the most obvious, which helps reduce bias (EDC et al., 2016).

BOX 4. THE BIG FIVE INVENTORY is a widely used tool that measures an individual's personality characteristics. The self-report instrument consists of 44 items designed to capture conscientiousness, agreeableness, neuroticism or emotional stability, openness, and extraversion. These items are linked to behavioral skills such as discipline, goal setting, and social skills. Individuals complete short phrases that begin with "I see myself as someone who..." by selecting a prototypical Big Five trait marker (e.g., "is curious about many different things").

Sources: Benet-Martinez & John, 1998; Filmer & Fox, 2014

Additionally, reports by others and self-report items about observable behaviors may produce more objective results (Blades et al., 2012; Center for the Economics of Human Development, 2015). Triangulating from multiple sources, such as performance-based measures and gaming measures, tends to be costlier and more sophisticated to execute. However, these measures yield more valid and reliable data (Ignatowski, 2017; YBI, 2019).

Many studies identified for inclusion in this literature review complemented quantitative data with qualitative data gathered from surveys and focus group discussions (FGDs) with employers, program staff, facilitators, and beneficiaries. For example, in Rwanda, youth scores on EDC's Work Ready Now! credential test were compared with measures of their real-life job performance from employer satisfaction surveys and responses from FGDs with youth about key applicable skills in current work scenarios (Alcid, 2015). Measuring observable behaviors in real life and collecting reports from others serve to confirm or clarify self-reported data on youth outcomes (Galloway et al., 2017).

[3] For a comprehensive review and inventory of soft skills and life skills measurement tools in LMICs, see "Measuring Soft Skills & Life Skills in International Youth Development Programs" (Galloway et al., 2017).

RELIABILITY AND VALIDITY OF TOOLS ACROSS CULTURES AND CONTEXTS

In general, there is a lack of evidence of the reliability and validity of soft skills measurement tools, especially in the SSA region. However, recent efforts to pilot and adapt tools for youth have led to assessments of their reliability and validity in SSA and other LMICs. For example, a new assessment tool called the Anchored Big Five Inventory (ABFI) was developed by EDC through Workforce Connections and in partnership with Professional Examination Services (ProExam) and Akilah Institute for Women. The assessment is a combination of anchoring vignettes and situational judgement test items.[4] These methods "anchor" skills to objective phenomena, which reduces bias and increases reliability and validity.

In a study with Rwandan and Filipino youth, the anchoring vignettes on the ABFI produced statistically reliable data when measuring soft skills across cultures. The additions of situational judgment test questions, analyses of youth employment data, and qualitative data from employers further strengthened the tool's validity in different cultural contexts (EDC et al., 2016; Omoeva et al., 2020). As such, the study allowed youth workforce practitioners to more accurately determine how youth transition from soft skills training programs to employment across different contexts. However, the study was administered on electronic tablets in Rwanda, and on paper in the Philippines, which may have presented challenges for participants with low literacy and education levels. Further research should address how tools can be adapted reliably to meet the needs of such youth, as they are a common target population of youth workforce development programs in SSA.

MEASURING CHANGES OVER TIME AND LEVELS OF DEVELOPMENT

Few programs in SSA and other LMICs with similar contexts measure changes in soft skills over time on an individual rather than a group level. In interviews, researchers in the SSA region listed several common obstacles, including a lack of local capacity to monitor and evaluate programs, language and terminology barriers in explaining rigorous research methods to stakeholders, and government pushback to potentially withholding interventions from youth in comparison groups.

Researchers and USAID staff have employed diverse solutions to overcome these challenges. In Liberia, an upcoming USAID youth workforce development program included an RCT impact evaluation in their request for proposals, which will allow evaluators to collect data about youth development at baseline, midline, and endline. In Rwanda, a researcher who evaluated Akazi Kanoze (AK) and Akazi Kanoze 2 (AK2) mentioned that a key strategy for follow-up data collection included recording multiple phone numbers for each beneficiary at the start of the program and requesting government support to track down the most difficult-to-find youth. Additionally, large private sector donors in Rwanda, such as the MasterCard Foundation, were instrumental in pushing the idea of accountability, which requires rigorously monitoring performance for evidence of youth development. Finally, RCTs with treatment and control groups are generally viewed as the best way to determine change over time, but there are ethical considerations for implementing such a design in SSA, especially in conflict settings (Alvares de Azevedo et al., 2018). Alternatively, programs in Liberia, Nepal, and Haiti used a "randomized pipeline" design, where training was delivered in rounds so that all youth eventually received training. Researchers were still able to compare youth in the treatment group with youth in a comparison group at various timepoints to determine how training impacted soft skills and workforce outcomes (Adoho et al., 2014; Chakravarty

[4] For more information including examples of both the anchoring vignettes and the situational judgement test items, see EDC et al., 2016.

et al., 2016; Rodella et al., 2015). Measuring outcomes and behaviors at critical points of an intervention and against a comparison group increases the accuracy of attributing improvements in youth outcomes to the program.

Without collecting long-term beneficiary data, programs may be missing out on key youth outcomes. Youth who complete the intervention might be inspired to pursue further education or training, which delays entry into the workforce, as was the case for youth from Educate! in Uganda (Chioda & Gertler, 2020). However, previous research suggests that when youth join the workforce, additional experience from education and training may lead to higher returns in workforce outcomes (Guison-Dowdy, 2012; Kluve et al., 2016; Tripney et al., 2013). Furthermore, if insufficient time has lapsed between program completion and the measurement of outcomes, it is possible that youth may demonstrate limited improvement in the short-term but better outcomes in the long-term, as was the case for disadvantaged youth from a workforce development program in Colombia (Barrera-Osorio et al., 2020). Measuring youth outcomes over time and linking specific soft skills to workforce outcomes to accurately inform program design and implementation has important research and programmatic implications.

KEY TAKEAWAYS: HOW SOFT SKILLS ARE DEFINED AND MEASURED IN SSA

Based on the literature reviewed, several key trends emerged on how soft skills are defined and measured, including:

- Policymakers, leaders, and donors have invested in soft skills training to advance economic outcomes, gender equity, preventative health, and education for youth. They often view soft skills as complementary to foundational academic skills and technical skills, which all serve youth across different settings. Within SSA, building soft skills is seen as an investment in human capital.
- USAID, international donors, and implementing organizations conceptualize soft skills differently. This lack of consensus limits the ability of researchers to compare the effectiveness of interventions across contexts to appropriately inform policy and programming.
- In SSA, common methods used to measure soft skills, such as self-report scales, are known to suffer from biases. However, tools and methods are being adapted across countries and cultures to improve their reliability and validity.
- Measuring observable behaviors over time at critical points of the intervention, scoring performance tasks, and collecting reports/feedback from others support a more accurate understanding of youth progress in developing soft skills.

IMPACT OF SOFT SKILLS ON WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT OUTCOMES

This section examines the relationship between soft skills and workforce outcomes for youth, with an emphasis on rigorous research demonstrating the causal relationship between them. Five categories of workforce outcomes emerged from the literature: employment and employability, job performance, wages, entrepreneurship, and financial management. Strong causal and supporting evidence from SSA is presented first, followed by causal and supporting evidence from other LMICs. Only statistically significant results at the 90 percent, 95 percent, and 99 percent confidence level are included. For more details on the evidence discussed, including study designs and results, see Table 8 at the end of the section.

EVIDENCE FROM SUB-SAHARAN AFRICA

There is a growing body of research from SSA demonstrating the impact of soft skills on workforce outcomes for youth in the region. This section synthesizes such evidence in relation to the five workforce outcome categories described above. Given the nascent use of rigorous methodologies to study workforce development and soft skills, this section also considers less rigorous evidence, designated under the "supporting evidence" sub-sections in the text. Much of this evidence comes from program evaluations that report the effects of soft skills training on both soft skills and workforce outcomes. Although some of this research utilized rigorous methodologies like RCTs and quasi-experiments, these methodologies were not used to specifically test the causal relationships between soft skills and workforce development outcomes. As such, this body of literature serves as supporting evidence for soft skills that are positively associated with workforce outcomes, without asserting any claims to causality.

The research team identified 72 empirical articles and program evaluations that analyze soft skills training and workforce development programs in the SSA region that met the inclusion criteria. This section draws on the evidence from 10 high rigor studies and 23 medium-high rigor studies. The research team prioritized high rigor studies with statistically significant findings on soft skills and workforce outcomes that included clear causal links between them. Based on the literature reviewed, the research team identified several specific soft skills that are causally linked to each of the five workforce outcomes. Table 7 provides an illustrative overview of these findings, which are further described throughout the sub-sections that follow.

TABLE 7. ILLUSTRATIVE SOFT SKILLS CAUSALLY LINKED TO WORKFORCE OUTCOMES IN SSA

WORKFORCE OUTCOMES	SKILLS
Employment and employability	Self-confidence, self-efficacy
Job performance	Communication, teamwork, responsibility, problem solving, goal setting
Wages	Openness, emotional stability, conscientiousness
Entrepreneurship	Confidence, motivation, creativity, innovation
Financial Management	Leadership, interpersonal communication, personal development

Soft skills help youth in SSA to identify and secure employment. The Kenya Youth Empowerment Program (Ninaweza), coordinated by IYF, provided young women with eight weeks of information and communications technology (ICT) and life skills training, specifically targeting self-awareness, emotional intelligence, problem solving, goal setting, job searching, and health practices. Additionally, the women gained work experience through an eight-week internship followed by six months of job placement support. An RCT of the program measured soft skills and workforce outcomes with two treatment groups and a control group (Azevedo et al., 2013). Treatment 1 received life skills training along with ICT training, job placement support, and work experience through internships. Treatment 2 received the same support minus the life skills training. A life skills knowledge test revealed that the youth in Treatment 1 had a higher increase in knowledge of these skills compared to those in Treatment 2 and the control group (7.3 percentage points and 6.8 percentage points, respectively). This increase was statistically significant, and the largest gains pertained to the young women's knowledge of workplace behavior and job search techniques. The findings also revealed that the youth in Treatment 1 who were unemployed at baseline were 1.9 percent more likely than those in the control group to obtain a job. While the odds were 1.5 percent more likely for Treatment 2 in comparison to the control group, the difference was not statistically significant. Furthermore, Treatment 1 youth were more likely to have internships than those in Treatment 2, suggesting that the life skills training might have provided candidates with certain advantages during the selection process. Additionally, those that received the life skills training were more optimistic about their chances of finding quality employment than those who did not receive the life skills training.

Increasing self-confidence and self-efficacy through soft skills training proved particularly beneficial for youth employability. The Zimbabwe:Works program, implemented by IYF and funded by USAID; United Kingdom's Department for International Development (DFID); and the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (Sida) provided youth with entrepreneurship and work readiness training that focused on workplace interpersonal skills, communication, teamwork, and self-promotion. It also sought to promote economic empowerment, employment access, and self-confidence especially for young women. An impact evaluation of the program had two treatment groups, one that received work readiness training (Treatment 1) and another (Treatment 2) that received additional training on the Passport to Success (PTS) curriculum, including self-development, healthy behaviors, and workplace habits. Both treatment groups showed an increase in self-confidence, with a strong and statistically significant increase for youth in the Harare region (0.29 standard deviations).[5] There was also a positive and statistically significant effect on self-efficacy in both treatment groups (0.33 standard deviations for Treatment 1). The program increased participants' ability to develop and maintain social relationships, with this statistically significant increase being especially high for the PTS participants (0.61 standard deviations). Economic empowerment was also higher for the treatment groups (0.25 standard deviations) compared to those in the control group, with particularly large and statistically significant effects among young people who participated in the PTS (0.38 standard deviations). Proxies used to measure economic empowerment included physical mobility, aspirations for the future, control or capacity to make decisions over household resources or income, and the ability to organize others. Youth in both

[5]Lipsey and Wilson's (1993) review of meta-analyses across psychological, educational, and behavioral outcomes concluded that effect sizes of 0.10 to 0.20 should not be overlooked as significant. The U.S. Department of Education's Institute of Education Sciences also advises that effect sizes of 0.25 standard deviations or larger are important.

treatment groups scored 0.11 standard deviations higher on the employability index compared to youth in the control group.[6] However, for the young people who were exposed to PTS, the employability index had a statistically significant increase of 0.22 standard deviations (James et al., 2018).

Improved confidence is linked to an increased likelihood of employment and better employment positions and/or conditions for youth. In Rwanda, the AK activity, supported by USAID, and AK2, the scaled-up iteration supported by the MasterCard Foundation, provided technical and soft skills training as well as mentorship to support youth to successfully enter the labor force (for a summary of USAID-supported programs included within this review, see Annex G). Participants underwent a 100-hour work readiness core curriculum that included topics such as personal awareness, communication, professional conduct, financial literacy, personal health, and worker's rights and responsibilities. The AK2 youth showed statistically significant advantages over the control group youth in terms of having confidence to find work, improve work positions and/or conditions, start a business, and demonstrate leadership. For instance, at baseline, there was a higher percentage of control group youth who reported confidence in their skills to find work. However, at endline, the control group's confidence in their skills to find work decreased by one percent, while the AK2 youths' confidence increased by 20 percent. AK2 youth who were confident in their abilities to find work at endline were also 12.7 percent more likely to be employed. Similarly, at baseline, the two groups reported almost equivalent levels of confidence in their ability to improve their work position or conditions. However, at endline, AK2 youth had significant gains while the control group's level of confidence in their abilities to improve their work positions decreased. Youth who were confident in their abilities to improve their work positions or conditions at endline were also 17.8 percent more likely to be employed.

Work readiness training helped to close the gender gap in employability. At endline, AK2 females in the treatment group were 15.3 percent less likely to be employed than treatment males, while females in the control group were 23 percent less likely to be employed than males in the control group. This eight-percentage point difference revealed that the intervention helped to narrow the gender gap in employment outcomes for young women (Alcid & Martin, 2017). Young women did not completely close the gap with their male peers, which suggests that there is a need for further interventions to help women overcome gender-specific barriers to secure employment.

BOX 5. AKAZI KANOZE AND GENDER OUTCOMES

An analysis of gender differences in gains in overall workforce readiness skills (business skills and soft skills) revealed that women caught up with men and even exceeded them in attainment of some soft skills. According to interviews with several experts in the field, including an implementer of AK2, one reason women may benefit more from such programs is they have greater responsibilities to provide for their children and help them succeed. Thus, they are more motivated and driven than men to take full advantage of the training provided to them.

SUPPORTING EVIDENCE ON EMPLOYMENT & EMPLOYABILITY

Additional self-report data corroborates that soft skills training increases youth optimism and self-confidence regarding their employability. In addition to the causal evidence discussed above, many USAID-supported programs have shown positive results through program evaluations of soft skills on youth entering the workforce. For example, Ethiopia, Liberia, Senegal, Somalia, and Uganda all

[6] The employability index is based on questions on whether individuals had done an internship, whether they were paid during the internship, the length of the internship, and their current employment status.

implemented youth programs that offered workforce and soft skills training. Evaluations of the programs revealed positive effects of soft skills on employability. For example, in Ethiopia, self-reported qualitative data suggested that Building the Potential of Youth (BPY) was effective in creating a positive change in participants' attitudes toward work, particularly self-employment, their ability to identify market-related opportunities, and their self-confidence and optimism (Statman et al., 2020). Similarly, the final evaluation of the Somalia Youth Livelihoods Program (SYLP) reported that youth felt more optimistic, motivated, and confident about their future employment or business prospects (Cook & Younis, 2012). More than 60 percent of survey respondents said that skills attained as a result of the training improved their prospects for future employment or self-employment. The Youth Empowerment Program (YEP) provided demand-driven training in ICT, life skills, and entrepreneurship at local TVET centers and higher education institutions in SSA. In Kenya's YEP at the African Center for Women, Information and Communications Technology (ACWICT), 96.3 percent of the all-female follow-up cohort believed that life skills training positively affected their employment prospects. Specifically, they believed it fostered better interaction and relations with people, better ways to present themselves during interviews, better life management, and overall, increased confidence and self-esteem (FocusAfrica, 2010a). While these studies did not causally link these attitudinal changes to workforce outcomes, causal evidence from other studies suggests that these skills contribute to more stable employment among youth.

JOB PERFORMANCE

Communication and teamwork skills improved job performance. A follow-up study conducted in 2015 on AK graduates who had completed the Work Ready Now! (WRN!) soft skills training component of AK and taken the WRN! credential test found that youth with higher scores on the WRN! test were less likely to have been fired from their past job. Data from an employer satisfaction survey also revealed that youth who scored better on the WRN! test were more likely to be rated highly for their teamwork skills. Furthermore, interpersonal communication skills were highlighted by youth in FGDs as being particularly important for their current work in scenarios such as customer service, business interactions, and peer relations. AK youth were also more confident in their ability to maintain their current work, which suggests an improvement in their job stability and overall quality of life (Alcid, 2015).

Strengthening youths' responsibility, problem solving, and goal setting skills increases their performance during internships, resulting in more offers for employment. An RCT (Genesis Analytics, 2019) of the PTS program in South Africa was conducted with three different cohorts of youth in learnerships (internships). Cohort 1 began their learnerships between June to July 2016, Cohort 2 began between March to June 2017, and Cohort 3 began in September 2017. The youth in the treatment group received the PTS curriculum with their learnership, while those in the control group did not receive the curriculum with their learnerships. At endline, youth in the Cohort 1 treatment group scored higher than the control group, with statistically significant results on measures of responsibility, personal values, listening, solving problems, time management, setting goals, managing strong emotions, dealing effectively with criticism, and being a good team player. They also scored higher on interviewing, assertiveness, asking questions to clarify a situation, positive first impressions, and positive attitude. Similarly, Cohort 3 treatment youth also scored higher on responsibility, problem solving, goal setting, as well as high-energy level, and desire to lead.[7] Additionally, 33 percent of Cohort 1 youth reported that they were retained by

[7] According to the evaluation team, the results of Cohort 2 were confounded by the fact that youth in this cohort came from different learnership programs with different starting periods, compromising the assumption of parallel groups. As such, results from Cohort 2 are not presented.

their host employers while 44 percent did not yet know. For Cohort 3, 35 percent of the youth were offered employment after their internship, compared with 7 percent of youth in the control group. Overall, Cohort 3 learners were, on average, approximately 20 to 24 percent more likely to be employed post-learnership than comparison group learners. Though direct causal links between specific soft skills and workforce outcomes were not made, the evaluation did show that the PTS life skills curriculum positively affected youths' noncognitive skills and the likelihood of employment post-internship, presumably due to enhanced job performance.

SUPPORTING EVIDENCE ON JOB PERFORMANCE

Youth report that communication, interpersonal relations, and stress management skills help them perform well on the job. Youth from the BPY activity indicated that the most valuable skills they gained from soft skills training were job searching, savings, customer and interpersonal relations, communications, and persistence and patience during business challenges and stress (Statman et al., 2020). According to self-ratings before and after training, youth who had participated in YEPs in Nigeria, Senegal, and Tanzania reported improving their communication, teamwork, and conflict management skills, which were valuable for their performance at work (FocusAfrica, 2010d; FocusAfrica, 2010e; FocusAfrica, 2010f).[8] In the evaluation of the USAID-supported pilot program YouthMap Uganda, youth indicated that the training was helpful to deal with different types of clients, to manage stress during the internship, and to negotiate salaries (Duggleby et al., 2015). Several female participants indicated that training in communication, leadership, and time management improved their confidence, which allowed them to voice their thoughts and feelings more effectively while on the job.

Employers are more willing to offer employment to youth who attend soft skills training and are more satisfied with the job performance of those youth. In Kenya, employers rated YEP graduates high in life skills, particularly in the areas of personal responsibility, communication skills, motivation, ability to learn, ability to take initiative, and teamwork. Furthermore, the majority of Kenyan employers interviewed stated they would be willing to offer internships to other YEP graduates in the future (IYF, 2011). In Senegal, employers also expressed satisfaction with the performance of the YEP graduates who they employed. About 88.23 percent of employers ranked the capabilities of youth with regards to interpersonal skills as satisfactory; 37.50 percent thought that the interns from YEP were better than their other interns; 31.25 percent thought they were the same; while the remaining 31.25 percent indicated that they did not have enough information to compare (FocusAfrica, 2010e). Similarly, employers in Nigeria reported that they perceived YEP graduates to be better equipped than their peers who had not participated in the program, particularly in terms of work habits and interpersonal skills (FocusAfrica, 2010d). Employers' higher rates of satisfaction with youth who had completed soft skills training reinforces the causal finding that soft skills are important for finding and maintaining employment.

[8] In Tanzania, training was carried out by the government-established Vocational Education and Training Authority that provided training in ICT, entrepreneurship, and 40 hours of life skills that focused self-development. In Nigeria, training was carried out by Leadership Effectiveness Accountability and Professionalism (LEAP) Africa, which is a local non-profit. Training included ICT training and 40 hours of employability and life skills training. A nonprofit, Synapse Center, implemented the training in Senegal, which consisted of ICT training and 24 hours of personal development and basic skills training, coaching, and job placement.

WAGES

The causal evidence linking youth workforce development programs and increased soft skills with increased earnings was weak, which may be due, in part, to the limited amount of time between graduating from training and joining the labor market, giving youth little time to see wage increases. Additionally, youth often enroll in tertiary education programs following soft skills training; thus, they are unlikely to have experienced wage increases that would be reflected in (most) follow-up studies. Given these limitations, this section is limited to reports on causal findings from two youth programs as well as outcomes from certain programs working with older participants.

Youth with improved soft skills earn significantly more per month. Research conducted in Uganda on youth who had graduated from a youth workforce and soft skills development program and had recently entered the workforce found soft skills to be a statistically significant predictor of earnings. Youth who had graduated from the program were tested on five soft skills: creativity, trustworthiness, communication, willingness to help others (pro-sociality), and attendance. Findings revealed that workers who earned a passing grade on all five soft skills on average earned US$9 more per month, which was 19 percent more than youth who had one or more failing grades in these skills. This increase in earnings was equivalent to the increase associated with having 2.5 additional years of education (Bassi & Nansamba, 2021). Similarly, in Zimbabwe, the treatment groups from the Zimbabwe:Works program saw a statistically significant increase in wages by 0.13 standard deviations, which equated to an average increase in personal monthly incomes from US$68 per month to US$150. The control group youth saw monthly incomes increase from US$88 to US$144 on average. The effect of the program on women's incomes was particularly promising with a 0.24 standard deviation increase (James et al., 2018). In Rwanda, the AK2 RCT also found significant differences in earnings between the treatment and control groups. Over 81 percent of the treatment group reported that their earnings had increased in the past six months compared with 71 percent of the control group (Alcid & Martin, 2017). While, as previously mentioned, there is not causal evidence regarding specific soft skills, the treatment group's statistically significant increase in soft skills compared to the control group suggests that more developed soft skills likely played a role in the increased earnings.

BOX 6. YOUTHMAP AND GENDER OUTCOMES

Training in entrepreneurship and soft skills in Senegal helped close the gender gap in earnings. For the 32 female participants, the average difference in annual wages was US$639; for the 59 male participants, it was approximately US$561.

Noncognitive skills are shown to lead to higher earnings, but the specific skills that yield improvements vary across contexts. For instance, Gunewardena et al. (2018) conducted a study examining the returns to earnings from schooling, cognitive and noncognitive skills training among people ages 25 to 54 in nine countries, including Kenya and Ghana. The study revealed similar trends across the countries. For example, openness to experience, defined as the degree to which a person seeks intellectual stimulation and variety, was found to be important in more countries than any other noncognitive skill, and its estimated return on earnings was significantly positive. Findings also showed that the distributions of specific skills differed between men and women, and that the returns to those skills differed by country. For Kenya, skills that showed significant increases in earnings were openness and emotional stability for men, and conscientiousness for women. In Ghana, risk-taking skills increased earnings for men but not for women, which suggests interventions targeting soft skills can increase earnings, but the soft skills that are emphasized during training may need to be adapted specifically for the target population and context.

SUPPORTING EVIDENCE ON WAGES

Teamwork, conflict management, and professional ethics improve after soft skills training, and may lead to increases in income. The evaluators of BPY in Ethiopia concluded that there was strong evidence that the soft skills training fostered positive attitudinal changes, and there was suggestive evidence that it led to improvements in employment and income (Statman et al., 2020). Similarly, the final evaluation of the YouthMap pilot program in Senegal (Allemano & Dieng, 2016) found that program participants' self-ratings (pre- and post-test) of their soft skills, such as teamwork, conflict management, and professional ethics increased, with the latter two showing the largest gains. The proportion of youth rating their skills in these areas as either "excellent" or "very good" increased from 34 percent to 52 percent and from 57 percent to 74 percent, respectively. Additionally, there was a statistically significant increase in mean earnings at a 90 percent confidence level. Average annual earnings for participants, who self-reported incomes either pre- or post-program, increased by about US$626 (150 percent).[9] In Kenya, the average monthly salaries of employed graduates of YEP in Kenya were reportedly up to three times more than the monthly minimum wage in Kenya (IYF, 2011). Finally, in Uganda, youth who completed the Educate! program scored higher on pro-social attitudes and engaging in deliberative dialogue.[10] They also earned more than their peers who did not receive training (Chioda & Gertler, 2020a). These significant increases in wages across the SSA region highlight the importance of improving pro-social soft skills to facilitate increased earnings among youth.

Youth who develop self-efficacy, grit, and creativity have the potential to increase their earnings. The midline of an RCT in Uganda found treatment youth in Educate! had higher levels of self-efficacy, grit, and creativity than the control group (Chioda & Gertler, 2020a; Educate!, 2014). The midline report found that treatment students on average earned 100 percent more per month than youth within the control group (Educate!, 2014). The final evaluation found positive outcomes as well, though not quite as substantial as the midline. At endline, Educate! graduates earned an average of 95 percent more than their comparison group peers; business ownership increased by 44 percent; and employment increased by 50 percent as compared to their control group peers (Salam et al., 2016). [11] While the soft skills measured in these studies were not causally linked to workforce outcomes, they have demonstrated improved workforce outcomes for youth in other studies.

Women who completed economic and social empowerment programs felt more in control of their lives and increased their earnings. Women for Women International (WfWI) works with marginalized women in conflict-affected countries to build their self-reliance in different aspects of life, including economic stability, health and well-being, family, community participation, and decision making.

[9] The evaluation was performed roughly a year after the last cohort had completed training thus the self-reports on earnings was before they had entered the labor market with their newly developed skills.

[10] Educate! operates programs in both Uganda and Rwanda. In Uganda, Educate!'s goal is to develop leadership, workforce readiness, and entrepreneurship skills in upper secondary students. Trained youth mentors teach other youth several skills, such as communication, teamwork, self-confidence, critical thinking, creativity, grit, and business planning (Chioda & Gertler, 2020a). In Rwanda, Educate! helps implement the country's national curriculum reform, which aims to teach entrepreneurship to youth in secondary schools. Educate! also trains and supports teachers to use more interactive, student-centered pedagogy that promotes soft skills development (Pugatch & Blimpo, 2020).

[11] The researchers who conducted the four-year follow up deemed it too soon to assess labor market outcomes since, four years after the youth complete secondary school, most youth tend to be on the traditional, academic secondary school track and would not have yet fully realized employment or income gains.

An RCT of its program in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC) showed gains for women in soft skills and well-being measures (Noble et al., 2020). Women reported feeling they had more control of their lives, more involvement in household decision making, and improved self-confidence. Interviews confirmed that women shared an increased sense of self-reliance and confidence in doing new things. They also had had higher rates of participation in community-based social groups. Finally, women in the treatment group had lower rates of mild, moderate, or severe anxiety compared to the control group. Women who completed the WfWI intervention also had weekly gross earnings 1.6 times higher than women in the control group (US$2.75 vs. US$1.70), which suggests that higher levels of soft skills and well-being may contribute to higher earnings. In Liberia, an RCT of young female graduates of the Economic Empowerment of Adolescent Girls and Young Women (EPAG) program reported more positive attitudes and more control of their lives than the control group (Adoho et al., 2014). Like the WfWI women in the DRC, they had greater confidence in their own business abilities as well as in their personal and social lives. They also reported feeling more confident than the control group in their personal relationships with spouses and partners. Statistically significant workforce outcomes for the Adolescent Girls Initiative (AGI) participants over non-participants included a 47 percent increase in employment and an 80 percent average weekly increase in income. This result suggests that economic and social empowerment programs may be particularly important for women to build financial capital, with positive spillover effects in other areas of their life.

ENTREPRENEURSHIP

Low-income countries in SSA present few opportunities for formal wage employment. Thus, increasing self-employment opportunities for youth is key. According to a study by the Global Entrepreneurship Monitor and YBI that surveyed roughly 2,000 youth in eight countries in SSA (Kew et al.,2013), three quarters of youth believed that starting a business is a good career choice. Furthermore, the study found that youth who were confident they had the skills to start a business were four to six times more likely to do so. However, the study also reported that roughly 35 percent of youth in the region lack the basic skills needed to perform a job and were much less likely to be able to start and manage a business. While 29 percent of youth were involved in nascent or new businesses, roughly a third of them were established out of necessity rather than to capitalize on a market opportunity, and most have low growth potential. This fact underscores the importance of entrepreneurship training for youth, especially since research has shown that youth derive higher labor market benefits from entrepreneurship programming comparted to non-youth beneficiaries (Cho & Honorati, 2013).

Personal initiative (PI) training improves entrepreneurs' confidence and motivation, which has positive impacts on business performance. In Ethiopia, 400 entrepreneurs, who ranged in age from their early twenties to mid-fifties, received 120 hours of PI training over a 15-20-day period (Alibhai et al., 2016). [12] An RCT was

BOX 7. PERSONAL INITIATIVE (PI) TRAINING

is a type of entrepreneurship training that focuses on changing the psychological mindset and behavior of the entrepreneur. Personal initiative refers to self-starting, future-oriented, and persistent behavior. As such, PI training aims to foster initiative, proactivity, problem solving, persistence, and innovation.

Source: Alibhai et al., 2019

[12] The age of participants in the PI training discussed in this sub-section ranged between early twenties to mid-fifties, which is older than the youth who participated in the other workforce development programs included in this review. However, the evidence is deemed relevant for shedding light on which soft skills impact workforce outcomes due to the studies' methodological rigor and identification of causal links between soft skills and entrepreneurial success.

conducted and results from data collected one year after the training revealed that entrepreneurs in the treatment group had higher index levels of self-efficacy, PI, and entrepreneurial locus of control relative to those in the control group. Treatment group entrepreneurs were more confident and competent in their abilities to manage their business well and realize their ideas. Finally, the study revealed that the entrepreneurship training had a significant and positive impact on profits, with entrepreneurs who completed the training recording 30 percent higher profits than the control group approximately one year post study. As well, other business practices and knowledge were measured (e.g., bookkeeping and marketing), and no differences were found between the treatment and control groups, which suggests that the improvements in soft skills was the explanatory factor resulting in increased business performance.

The PI mindset benefits small business owners, while a lack of PI mindset may explain business closures. An RCT on PI training in Uganda with small business owners also showed substantial, positive results (Glaub et al., 2014). Directly after the intervention, the treatment group (n=47) reflected a statistically significant increase in PI knowledge. Four to five months after the intervention, soft skill measures remained higher for the treatment group compared to the control group including for initiative behavior, initiative for marketing, overcoming barriers, and overall PI. Business success measures were also higher for the treatment group one year after the intervention, including increases in sales, number of employees, and overall success of the business. Analysis of the underlying mechanism causing these outcomes revealed that the increase in PI mindset supported business success. Additionally, the four entrepreneurs in the control group that closed their businesses also saw a decrease in PI, further suggesting the potential importance of PI for business success.

Creativity and innovation generate higher profits and foster business growth for female entrepreneurs. Another RCT on PI training with female microenterprise owners in Togo compared participants that received PI training (n=500) with those who received standard business training (n=500), and a control group (n=500) (Campos et al., 2017). Follow-up surveys two years later showed that those who received PI training increased firm profits by 30 percent, compared with a statistically insignificant 11 percent for the traditional business training. While proxies for changes in psychological mindset were not measured, PI training led to a 0.31 standard deviation increase in innovation activities, which was significantly larger than the 0.12 standard deviation increase from the traditional business training group. Entrepreneurs that completed PI training introduced more new products, and these new products were more likely to be their own idea and new for the local market, rather than copied from others. Furthermore, it found no statistically significant difference between the benefits of business growth for female-owned businesses versus male-owned businesses, further underscoring the benefit of this training for women.

BOX 8. PI TRAINING AND GENDER OUTCOMES IN ETHIOPIA

Researchers found that PI training can be particularly beneficial for women. Many women lacked the social support to start their own businesses. However, PI training improved their ability to respond to unfamiliar situations and their confidence to become entrepreneurs.

Source: Alibhai et al., 2016

SUPPORTING EVIDENCE ON ENTREPRENEURSHIP

Confident women may be more likely to engage in self-employment. After completing the WfWI program in the DRC, when asked about feelings of control over their lives, women in the treatment

group had locus of control index scores that were 10 percent higher than women in the control group.[13] Additionally, more women in the treatment group held the attitude that women can be community leaders, compared to women in the control group (93 percent vs. 84 percent). These findings may have translated into higher rates of self-employment, where women were more likely to be self-employed by almost 40 percent (18 percent vs. 13 percent) (Noble et al., 2020). Similarly, AGI participants in Rwanda showed increased ability to make their own work-related decisions and statistically significant increases in their optimism about the future and confidence in themselves and their entrepreneurial ability. Participants also showed improvements in life satisfaction and well-being following training (Botea et al., 2015). In Liberia, where self-confidence also improved after training, 65 percent of EPAG graduates were self-employed, and 70 percent had at least one income generating activity (IGA). Additionally, they were more likely to have higher savings levels from these IGAs (Adoho et al., 2014). Similar to other studies, while the workforce outcomes were not causally linked with the acquisition of soft skills, previous research has demonstrated that skills, including confidence, improve workforce outcomes (Filmer & Fox, 2014).

Positive effects of soft skills interventions may persist for female entrepreneurs in SSA. In Uganda, BRAC's Empowerment and Livelihood for Adolescents (ELA) targeted young women and covered soft skills such as leadership, conflict resolution, negotiation, and management skills. Two years after the intervention, women in the treatment communities reported better entrepreneurial skills compared to women in the control communities. These skills included the ability to run a business, identify business opportunities, obtain and manage capital, manage employees, bargain over input and output prices, protect assets, and collect debts. Four years after the intervention, results show advances in economic empowerment and control over their body have continued to benefit women in treated communities relative to women in control communities. Women who completed the program were more likely to engage in IGAs, primarily driven by self-employment. Rates of self-employment remained 50 percent higher compared to young women in control communities. These striking findings measured four years after the intervention suggest women's economic empowerment and entrepreneurial success can be fostered through soft skills programming (Bandiera et al., 2020). For additional long-term positive outcomes for women, see Box 9. *Case Study: Soft Skills Development for Women in Sub-Saharan Africa*.

Increases in leadership and community involvement contribute to entrepreneurship outcomes for youth. An RCT of Educate! In Uganda found that following the training, youth had improved soft skills and entrepreneurship outcomes. In addition to higher levels of self-efficacy, youth had a 120 percent higher probability of running a community project than the control group, which the researchers used as a proxy for leadership skills. The midline report also found that treatment students had a probability of owning a business of almost 100 percent, relative to the control students (Educate!, 2014). Another RCT of Educate! in Uganda measured the impact on participants roughly four years after they had completed the program and found that many soft skills were still higher for the treatment group, demonstrating long-term retention of both knowledge and skills. Skills included creativity, grit, pro-social attitudes, self-efficacy, engaging in deliberative dialogue, identifying win-win strategies, and identifying business opportunities (Chioda & Gertler, 2020a).[14] In an RCT on Educate! in Rwanda, youths' levels of grit and patience also increased after the program. Business ownership increased for participants by 16 percent, and women experienced a 119 percent increase in concurrent business ownership and wage

[13] The locus of control index measures the extent to which individuals believe they can control events and outcomes in their lives.

[14] The RCT conducted by Chioda & Gertler (2020) was completed 3.5 years after the students graduated from secondary school.

employment (Pugatch & Blimpo, 2020). These outcomes shed light on the specific soft skills that are important for youth entrepreneurs and support the causal findings from the PI literature.

BOX 9. CASE STUDY: SOFT SKILLS DEVELOPMENT FOR WOMEN IN SUB-SAHARAN AFRICA

While several studies specifically targeted women, findings from the Educate! and the Youth Leadership and Entrepreneurship Incubator (LEI) programs stand out because women outperformed men who underwent the same training. Positive outcomes for women related to soft skills, workforce development, education, and gender equity highlight the potential for similar interventions in SSA to close gender gaps.

Women were more likely to benefit from soft skills training, be employed, and own a business relative to males. An impact evaluation of Educate! in Uganda found that females in the treatment group had statistically significant higher average scores for public speaking, leadership, and creativity than males in the treatment group (Salam et al., 2016). The evaluation also found that young women tended to benefit more than young men on workforce outcomes. Young women's income increased 244 percent, and business ownership and employment rates almost doubled (increasing 91 percent and 113 percent, respectively). In a follow-up study five years after LEI, respondents in both Tanzania and Kenya said the program helped them avoid losses, budget for their business ideas, and start their entrepreneurial ventures (Asante Africa Foundation Inc., 2019). Data across both countries showed youth were funding their IGAs more through their own savings than through their parents' capital. This rate tended to be higher for women in Tanzania. Nearly all alumni youth reported that they realized profits from their IGAs; however, there was not a significant difference in profits based on gender, indicating that females were keeping up with males in terms of entrepreneurship, profits, and business success.

Soft skills training improved education-related outcomes for women. The four-year RCT follow-up of Educate! showed Ugandan women in the treatment group were 7.9 percent more likely to complete secondary school than women in the control group, while for men and women combined, this was 4 percent (Chioda & Gertler, 2020a). The increase in the likelihood of women completing secondary school was enough to close the gender gap in school completion rates. Women were 25 percent more likely to enroll in a university and 22 percent more likely to select a business or science, technology, engineering, and math (STEM) degree than their female counterparts in the control group. Finally, women's tertiary grade point average was 0.21 standard deviations higher than women in the control group, while the increase was only 0.12 standard deviations for men and women combined. These improved education outcomes have important implications for workforce outcomes since increases in education are correlated with increases in income in SSA (Filmer & Fox, 2014; Guison-Dowdy, 2012).

Studies revealed that soft skills training had positive gender-related spillover effects. The RCT of Educate! in Uganda found that for women, there was a decrease in the likelihood of past pregnancy; a decrease in the number of children; a decrease in the likelihood of being threatened or a victim of inter-partner violence; and a decrease in social acceptability of violence among women and men (Chioda & Gertler, 2020a). Additionally, there were several statistically significant positive changes in attitudes toward gender equality. Corroborated in an interview with Educate! staff, the delay in family formation and shift in attitudes toward gender equality may support women to overcome constraints to achieve employment and higher incomes in the future (Chakravarty et al., 2017).

FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT

Leadership, interpersonal communication, and personal development skills are linked to positive saving practices. AK2 youth showed statistically significant increases in certain soft skills compared to the control group youth one year after training, including leadership, interpersonal communication, and personal development. AK2 youth also scored higher on skills such as understanding business plan development and confidence in knowing how to start and run a business (Alcid & Martin, 2017). An RCT conducted on the AK activity found that AK youth had a statistically significant positive difference in reporting that they had a mentor, which better positions them to achieve their goals. One of the most significant differences between the AK youth and the control group was the increase in the

frequency of saving money. Furthermore, the RCT found that youth who save were also 14 percent more likely to be employed than youth who did not save. Previous research has found associations between good financial habits, such as having savings, and long-term thinking and planning (Alcid, 2014).

SUPPORTING EVIDENCE ON FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT

Women who increased their decision making and self-control also increased their savings. Women in the DRC who completed the WfWI program increased household decision making participation, measuring 0.15 standard deviations higher on the decision-making index one year after the program compared to the control group. This boost in participation may have contributed to increased personal and household savings, assets, and access to credit. The proportion of households with savings in the treatment group was double that of the control group (79 percent vs. 42 percent). and the mean household savings were almost twice as high in the treatment arm (US$22.61 vs. US$12.19). The program participants also had significantly higher valuations of household livestock at endline (US$70.36 vs. US$53.64). Furthermore, women's average personal savings increased significantly due to program participation and was sustained one year after the program, with mean personal savings in the treatment group that were roughly three times as high as the average savings in the control group. The program also improved women's financial inclusion, as twice as many women in the treatment group participated in savings and loans associations. Finally, the program yielded higher rates of women's formal land ownership (15 percent vs. 11 percent) (Noble et al., 2020). Youth in Liberia and Uganda displayed similar improved savings behaviors in comparison to the control group after participating in the Advancing Youth activity and the Educate! program, respectively (EDC, 2012; Educate!, 2014).

BOX 10. CASE STUDY: SOFT SKILLS AND WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT IN CRISIS- AND CONFLICT-AFFECTED SETTINGS

USAID EMPOWERING MAURITANIA YOUTH THROUGH EDUCATION, LEADERSHIP, AND SELF-IMPROVEMENT (EMELI) ACTIVITY

EMELI provided workforce development, soft skills, and leadership training that aimed to foster young people's confidence as community leaders to help prevent extremism. Specifically, it aimed to foster prosocial decision-making skills for effective communication and to help youth understand multiple perspectives.

Youth successfully acquired targeted soft skills in support of the project's objective of social and economic incorporation. Results from the EMELI final evaluation found increases in youths' ability to use their voice, self-confidence, work readiness skills, leadership, and decision-making skills (Giuliano Sarr et al., 2019). Nearly 100 percent of youth surveyed reported changing positively as a result of the training. Half of female participants and 43 percent of male participants stated that they were better organized. The majority of companies that employed EMELI students as interns commented on their strong work ethic, preparation to work, and respect for rules and safety standards. Personnel from one company reported that EMELI youth perform better at work than other employees. Furthermore, approximately six months after training, 29 of 216 students (13 percent) had found employment (albeit pre-employment internships). These findings suggest that the project supported soft skills development for social and economic incorporation.

USAID INTEGRATED YOUTH DEVELOPMENT ACTIVITY (IYDA)

IYDA integrated life, work readiness, and leadership skills to support positive youth development in conflict-affected areas of the DRC. This activity aimed to foster resilience in youth by bolstering their self-efficacy, optimism, and conflict management skills to prevent youth from engaging in gangs and armed group violence.

Integrating resilience into life skills training holds promise for youth in conflict-affected regions. Results from the midline evaluation (EDC, 2020b) show that IYDA youth rated themselves significantly higher at midline than baseline on measures of resilience.[1] Overall, from baseline to midline, youth improved by at least one level on their: 1) perception of self-efficacy (69.1 percent); 2) perception that they are of value to society (54.4 percent); 3) perception of optimism and positive identity (56.1 percent); and 4) overall work readiness (60.3 percent). On a scale measuring propensities for gang engagement and armed group violence, 57.4 percent of participants demonstrated positive changes in resilience to violence and conflict. Furthermore, 37.3 percent of youth showed improved attitudes of tolerance and non-violence to manage conflicts. These results suggest that the IYDA intervention strengthened youths' soft skills, which may be effective at reducing violence and conflict.

EVIDENCE FROM LOW- AND MIDDLE-INCOME COUNTRIES

The following section aims to complement the evidence presented on SSA by synthesizing rigorous research on the relationship between soft skills and youth workforce outcomes in LMICs (for a complete list and accompanying information on the studies included in this section, see Table 8). The LMICs discussed in this section share characteristics with the SSA region, such as having high populations of unemployed and underemployed youth, labor markets concentrated in the informal sector and small-scale agriculture, and fewer opportunities for wage labor compared to self-employment (Arias et al., 2019; Fox & Kaul, 2018; Pina et al., 2012). As such, the findings included in this section aim to fill gaps in the literature presented on SSA and speak to trends that may be of regional relevance.

This section analyzes a subset of the included literature, including 21 empirical articles and program evaluations, of which 5 are high rigor studies and 16 are medium-high rigor studies. The research team prioritized high rigor studies with clear causal links between soft skills and workforce outcomes as well as statistically significant findings. This section synthesizes findings from relevant studies across four groups of workforce outcomes, including employment and employability, job performance, wages, and financial

management. Given the lack of evidence from LMICs on entrepreneurship, this workforce outcome is not discussed. As in the section focused on SSA, causal evidence is outlined first, followed by supporting empirical evidence.

EMPLOYMENT & EMPLOYABILITY

Causal evidence from LMICs on the positive effects of soft skills training on formal employment outcomes corroborates findings from SSA. In Colombia, youth who attended the Inclusive Employment Program's (IEP) vocational training that emphasized soft skills improved their communication and organizational skills. For this treatment group, the probability of employment increased by 10 percentage points. Results also indicated a shift toward more formal employment, with youth in the treatment group seeing an increase in jobs with contracts compared to individuals in the control group (Barrera-Osorio et al., 2020). The transition to better employment as a result of soft skills training was replicated in Nepal. The Employment Fund intervention improved soft skills, such as self-regulation, and increased non-farm employment by approximately 50 percent from baseline. The number of hours worked in IGAs on average increased by 19 to 21 hours per month, demonstrating an increase of 28 to 30 percent from baseline (Chakravarty et al., 2016). In the Philippines, out-of-school youth in conflict-affected areas completed skills training through the Mindanao Youth for Development (MYDev) program. Statistically significant gains in life skills also led to employment opportunities. After improving skills such as goal setting, communication, and leadership, 32.2 percent of youth in the intervention group reported new or better employment four to six months after program completion, compared to only 17.9 percent of youth in the comparison group (EDC, 2016). The potential for soft skills interventions to improve formal employment opportunities for youth in LMICs provides important insight to supplement the sparser evidence from SSA.

SUPPORTING EVIDENCE ON EMPLOYMENT & EMPLOYABILITY

Self-control may improve employment outcomes. Fewer studies from SSA report links between self-control and employment outcomes, but programs from LMICs may fill this research gap. In El Salvador, the Puentes para el Empleo (Bridges to Employment, in English) provided technical training, life skills training, job placement services, psychosocial support, and mentoring services. Youth reported that participating in life skills training helped them in the job search process by improving their patience when learning something new, in addition to other soft skills outcomes. Out of the total youth who completed life skills and technical training, 40 percent were able to find new or better employment (Padilla et al., 2020). Workforce development programs that incorporate life skills for disadvantaged youth in Jordan and Nepal similarly resulted in higher levels of employment and skills related to self-control, including managing conflict, emotions, and stress (Karki et al., 2013; Moubayed et al., 2014).

Women who participated in soft skills training demonstrated greater positive impacts on soft skills attainment and employment than men in both the short- and long-term. In a randomized field experiment in the Dominican Republic, training increased expectations for improved employment and livelihoods for both men and women in the short-run, but expectations diverged in the long-run. Women who completed soft skills and vocational training had higher levels of soft skills (i.e., perseverance, ambition, leadership, conflict resolution, social skills, organization, and communication), which were associated with higher employment rates, higher paying jobs, and higher job satisfaction 12 months after the program. Three years after program completion, women still had higher levels of self-esteem and job satisfaction compared to the control group. However, based on a battery of skills tests,

men did not acquire soft skills and reported lower self-esteem, lower salaries required to meet their basic needs, and higher rates of active job search than the control group. Researchers speculate that because men did not acquire skills, their wage offers may not have risen to match their increased expectations for employment and livelihood. As a result, they may have turned down employment that they otherwise might have accepted, leading to lower employment rates (Acevedo et al., 2017; Ibarrarán et al., 2014). For men, gains from training are often not sustained if high expectations for the future are created, but not met. For women, significant positive outcomes reinforce the need for targeted soft skills training, which may help explain why many programs in LMICs, and especially SSA, see significant gains for women, but not for men.

JOB PERFORMANCE

Decision making, organizational, and communication skills are valuable for improving long-term job security. For Colombian youth who received training with an emphasis on soft skills, positive impacts on employment and earnings persisted up to 12 to 17 months after graduating from IEP. Given the treatment group's statistically significant gains in organizational and communication skills, individuals may be better at retaining their jobs and negotiating higher salaries (Barrera-Osorio et al., 2020). Another explanation could be that youth learn to seek out information and resources that lead to complementary improvements in technical skills and higher wages. In an RCT in India evaluating the Personal Advancement and Career Enhancement (P.A.C.E.) program for young women, increases in communication skills, decision making skills, and problem solving accompanied statistically significant gains in risk aversion and extraversion. Soft skills and personality development led to large and persistent effects eight months after the intervention, including increases in productivity and greater self-assessment of workplace performance relative to peers, both significant at the 10 percent level. Notably, they were also more likely to request and complete further skills development trainings and save for their own education (Adhvaryu et al., 2018). Soft skills development encourages youth to seek additional training and resources, which may explain why youth who complete trainings in LMICs and SSA continue to perform better on the job than their peers who did not complete training.

SUPPORTING EVIDENCE ON JOB PERFORMANCE

Youth with communication skills, social skills, and organizational skills make positive impressions on employers. In Honduras, youth reported that these three skills were important for interactions with superiors and potential employers. The USAID-supported Mejorando la Educación para Trabajar, Aprender y Superarse Project (Proyecto METAS) provided work readiness training for at-risk youth. In a quasi-experimental study of the program, facilitators and private sector respondents corroborated findings from self-report data that reveal that youth had better communication skills in particular. Notably, youth who completed training experienced a small increase in employment (0.6 percent) nearly one year after the program, while youth in the comparison group experienced a small decrease (-3.3 percent). These long-term workforce outcomes suggest soft skills are not only important for finding jobs, but also for retaining them. In El Salvador, employers reported higher satisfaction with trained youth who gained soft skills such as interpersonal skills, professional behavior, responsibility, discipline, and punctuality, among others (Padilla et al., 2020). Employers may be more satisfied because youth with soft skills are harder to find than youth with technical skills. Communication, social, and organizational skills are essential at all stages during the transition into work, from navigating the job search process to maintaining employment.

WAGES

Soft skills training is correlated with increased wages, particularly for youth living in rural areas. Youth in IEP who completed 100 hours of soft skills training and 60 hours of technical training increased their monthly wages by an average of US$20, a substantial increase given that their average wages prior to training were approximately US$1.82 per hour (Barrera-Osorio et al., 2020). The average wage increase was initially lower than the average for youth who completed 60 hours of soft skills training and 100 hours of technical training. However, by 6 to 12 months after training, administrative data suggest that youth who attended training with an emphasis on soft skills were able to "catch up" to those who received more technical training with regard to employment, earnings, and hours worked (Barrera-Osorio et al., 2020, p. 17). Average monthly earnings also increased for Nepalese youth in the Employment Fund intervention with an overall gain of about 72 percent (Chakravarty et al., 2016). Rural youth from LMICs may derive greater benefits from skills training, as MYDev youth from rural conflict-affected areas in the Philippines were more likely to report being employed and meeting their needs from their earnings than youth from urban areas, including a statistically significant increase in the number of meals they ate per day. Furthermore, the majority of youth from both rural and urban areas in new employment were more likely to be paid monetarily rather than through in-kind payment (EDC, 2016). Relative return(s) on soft skills appear to benefit youth in numerous ways and contexts. Such evidence, particularly as focal to soft skills training for rural youth, is exceedingly relevant for SSA, where the majority of the population lives in rural areas.

SUPPORTING EVIDENCE ON WAGES

Access to life skills training for rural, Nepalese youth supported increases in income. In Nepal, the USAID-supported Education for Income Generation (EIG) project was designed for disadvantaged youth who often have few options for education, training, and employment. The program combined literacy and life skills education to increase employment and raise incomes for rural youth. Before completing training, only about 5 percent of the Nepalese youth were aware that skills like creative thinking, empathy, and self-esteem could be taught, according to self-reported survey responses. After the program, almost all youth who received life skills training mentioned they had learned these skills in training (94 percent, 88 percent, and 92 percent, respectively). Additionally, after the program, EIG beneficiaries experienced an increase in average annual household income of 69 percent. When asked to explain these effects, youth pointed to increases in the motivation to work, the chance of being employed, and the ability to take part in other trainings, among other changes (Karki et al., 2013). These results suggest that soft skills training may increase awareness among disadvantaged youth of critical skills that are important for employment and earnings.

FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT

Soft skills development helps youth become better savers and meet their financial goals, which may have inter-generational spillover effects. In Nepal, increases in self-regulation, self-confidence and entrepreneurial activities positively impact youth economic empowerment (i.e., control over household spending, having more money, and access to mentors for advice on work matters). The self-reported ability to delay gratification, control impulsive behaviors, and stick to difficult tasks all predict success in the labor market (Chakravarty et al., 2016). In the Philippines, where youth participated in life skills training that improved goal setting, a majority of newly employed youth reported they were able to save and meet their goals, with more young females responding positively about their savings compared

to young males (EDC, 2016). Results signal that these skills may have inter-generational spillover effects because women in India who completed soft skills training were more likely to save for their children's education compared to the women in the control group (Adhvaryu et al., 2018).

SUPPORTING EVIDENCE ON FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT

Women acquire soft skills to improve family relationships and ultimately, increase their savings. Similar to studies from LMICs, including countries in SSA, women's empowerment programs might teach a combination of skills. Marginalized young women enrolled in Egypt's Neqdar Nesharek (We Can Participate, in English) program, supported by USAID, received training in vocational skills, life skills, financial literacy, civic engagement, and reproductive health. By engaging the community and institutionalizing safe spaces, the program supported social and economic empowerment through employment. Unlike other studies, the program specifically supported young women whose parents, husbands, or other family members opposed their involvement in the public sphere. Self-reported data show women who completed the program had higher self-confidence and better social, time management, negotiation, and goal setting skills. The study suggests these skills contributed to the way that young women navigated family relationships and persuaded family members who opposed their participation in the workforce. These developments eventually enabled them to open a savings account, start a business, and pursue employment opportunities (Elsayed & Roushdy, 2017; Ramadan et al., 2014). These findings shed insight into why soft skills training programs targeting women in LMICs, and in SSA in particular, are effective for generating income and savings (Noble et al., 2020; Rodella et al., 2015).

KEY TAKEAWAYS: IMPACT OF SOFT SKILLS TRAINING ON WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT OUTCOMES IN SSA AND OTHER LMICS

Based on the causal and supporting literature drawn from both SSA and other relevant LMICs, several key trends emerged on the impact of soft skills training on workforce development outcomes, which include:

- Increased self-confidence and self-efficacy are linked to multiple improved workforce outcomes in SSA and other relevant LMICs (i.e., employment, job performance, wages, entrepreneurship). Goal setting, social skills, work ethic, and time organization can give youth confidence to enter the labor market and enhance their job performance. Communication, teamwork, and conflict management skills improve job performance and increase wages.
- Specific skills linked to workforce outcomes may differ between women and men and across contexts. For women in SSA, leadership, conflict resolution, negotiation, and management skills have long-term positive effects on self-employment, while decision making is linked to increased savings.
- Soft skills training helps women feel increased control over their lives, improved confidence, and improvement in their relationships, which is coupled with improved opportunities for employment, earnings, savings, and entrepreneurship, which are particularly important to close the gap in workforce outcomes between men and women in SSA.
- Soft skills training helps conflict-affected youth in SSA increase their confidence, self-efficacy, and resilience in addition to skills such as leadership, decision making, and conflict management. In turn, these skills may deter youth from joining violent groups and lead to better employment outcomes and job performance.
- PI training is an effective approach to develop successful entrepreneurship skills linked to increased earnings and business success. It fosters initiative, innovation, and persistence within a resource-restrained context, which makes it especially promising for youth in SSA.

TABLE 8. EMPIRICAL EVIDENCE WITH CAUSAL LINKS BETWEEN SOFT SKILLS AND WORKFORCE OUTCOMES

COUNTRY	PROGRAM IMPLEMENTER	TIME PERIOD	PROGRAM COMPONENTS	METHODOLOGY	MEASUREMENT	SOFT SKILL OUTCOMES	WORKFORCE OUTCOMES
SUB SAHARAN AFRICA							
Ethiopia	**PI Training** Implemented by Digital Opportunity Trust	**2015-2016**	120 hours of PI training over a 15-to-20-day period **Target group:** female entrepreneurs, average age 33	RCT: treatment and control groups (n=400 for each) Baseline data collected before training and midline one year after (Alibhai et al., 2016)	Business mindset is measured by creating indices from a set of psychology statements to be used as a proxy for confidence and motivation	Higher index levels of self-efficacy Personal initiative** Entrepreneurial locus of control*	30% higher profits than the control group** $
Kenya	**YEP (Ninaweza)** Implemented by IYF; ACWICT	**2011-2013**	Treatment 1: training in information and communication technology (ICT) and life skills, along with on-job experience through internships and job placement support Treatment 2: training in ICT along with on-job experience through internships and job placement support (no life skills training) **Target group:** females ages 18-35	RCT: two treatment groups (n=350 for each) and control group (n=810) who did not receive any interventions (Azevedo et al., 2013)	Life skills test (45-item assessment) FGDs with employers	Confidence Psychosocial attributes (e.g., making decisions based on what is necessary to succeed in the workplace) Workplace behavior Skills for searching for a job	Those in Treatment 1 were 14% more likely to obtain jobs than those in the control** Those in Treatment 2 were 9% more likely to obtain a job than the control group*
Rwanda	**AK** Implemented by EDC	**2014-2017**	100 hours of the Work Readiness Curriculum: time management, communication, planning, work-appropriate behavior and attitudes, team and independent work, financial literacy, entrepreneurship, workplace health and safety, workplace rights and responsibilities, and customer orientation and satisfaction. School to Work Transition programming: Mentorship and work-based learning **Target group:** youth ages 14-35	RCT: treatment (n=300) and control groups (n=300) were assessed longitudinally at baseline (before training started) and endline (12 months after work readiness training). (Alcid, 2014; Alcid & Martin, 2017)	Employability assessment: a 35-item test based on the Work Readiness Curriculum content. Big Five Inventory: A 44 question diagnostic on the big five personality traits that measures noncognitive skills.	Leadership*** Entrepreneurship** Interpersonal communication**** Personal development****	Work readiness knowledge increased**** Employment**, specifically youth in Southern Province were 8.5% more likely to be employed at endline compared to the control group** Youth in Kigali were 24.2% more likely to be employed at endline*** At endline, confidence in one's ability to find work was linked with a 12.7% more likelihood to be employed***
South Africa	**PTS** Implemented by IYF	**2016-2019**	PTS curriculum, which teaches social skills, communication skills, higher-order thinking, self-control, and positive self-concept. Youth are also	Quasi-experimental: the treatment group (n=415) received the PTS curriculum with their learnership (internship)	Likert scale questions that assess attitudes and skills associated with the PTS lessons.	The treatment group scored higher than the control group on responsibility, personal values, listening, solving problems, time management, goal setting, managing strong emotions,	35% of youth in the treatment group were given an employment offer (29%

TABLE 8. EMPIRICAL EVIDENCE WITH CAUSAL LINKS BETWEEN SOFT SKILLS AND WORKFORCE OUTCOMES

COUNTRY	PROGRAM IMPLEMENTER	TIME PERIOD	PROGRAM COMPONENTS	METHODOLOGY	MEASUREMENT	SOFT SKILL OUTCOMES	WORKFORCE OUTCOMES	
			provided with internships ("learnerships") for work-based learning experience. **Target group:** youth ages 15-34	while those in the control group (n=412) did not receive the curriculum with their learnerships Analysis of baseline and endline data on soft skill and workforce outcome data. (Genesis Analytics, 2019)	Multiple choice questions that assess the learners' attitudes to their studies and job search behaviors.	dealing effectively with criticism, and being a good team player****. They also scored higher on interviewing, assertiveness, asking questions to clarify a situation, positive first impressions, and positive attitude***	accepting it) compared with 7% of youth in the control group Treatment group youth were, on average, approximately 20-24% more likely to be employed post-learnership than comparison group learners****	
Togo	**PI training** Implemented by Projet d'Appui au Développement du Secteur Privé	**2014**	Half-day sessions over 4 weeks in April 2014, for a total of 36 hours of classroom instruction, which was followed by a trainer visiting each business for 3 hours, once per month for four months. **Target group:** entrepreneurs; average age 41	RCT: assigned microenterprise owners to a control group (n=500), a leading business training program (n=500), or a PI training program (n=500). Four follow-up surveys tracked outcomes for firms over 2 years. (Campos et al., 2017)	Likert scale to measure personal initiative.	PI training led to a 0.31standard deviation increase in innovation activities, which was significantly larger than the 0.12 standard deviation increase from a traditional business training.	Firm profits increased by 30%, compared with a statistically insignificant 11% for traditional business training. No increase reported for the control group.	$
Uganda	**PI training** Implemented by Markerere University Business School	**2015**	Full PI training through modules to develop behaviors of being self-starting, proactive, and overcoming barriers **Target group:** entrepreneurs aged 23-59; average age 39	RCT: treatment group (n=47) and control group (n=53). Data collected before the intervention, 4-5 months after, and 12 months after. (Glaub et al., 2014)	Generalized self-efficacy utilized a 10-item Likert scale by Schwarzer and colleagues (1997). Proactive personality was measured by the 10-item proactive personality scale of Seibert, Crant, and Kraimer (1999).	Directly after the intervention, the treatment group reflected a statistically significant increase in personal initiative knowledge.*** Four to five months after the intervention, all measures were higher for the Initiative behavior (effect size 1.19), initiative for marketing (effect size 1.26), overcoming barriers (effect size 1.15), and overall personal initiative (1.53)***	12 months after the intervention, sales levels*** (effect size .30) Number of employees** (effect size .56) Overall success*** (effect size .53). Mediation analysis showed that the increase in PI affected business success**	$
Uganda	**Vocational Training Institute workforce and soft skills training program** Implemented by BRAC Uganda	**2014-2019**	787 trainees from the workforce and soft skill development program **Target group:** youth average age 20	RCT: treatment group (n=616) received a soft skills signaling component after training and control group (n=616) did not. Data collected two years after graduates entered the workforce. (Bassi & Nansamba, 2021)	Teacher surveys to measure attendance, communication, pro-sociality, and pro-activity. Trustworthiness was measured by trainees playing incentivized trust games and creativity through a battery of questions.	Trainees who got passing grades on creativity, trustworthiness, communication, willingness to help others (pro-sociality), and attendance	Monthly earnings of $9.00 (or 19%) more than those who failed to get a passing grade on at least one of the five skills.	$

TABLE 8. EMPIRICAL EVIDENCE WITH CAUSAL LINKS BETWEEN SOFT SKILLS AND WORKFORCE OUTCOMES

COUNTRY	PROGRAM IMPLEMENTER	TIME PERIOD	PROGRAM COMPONENTS	METHODOLOGY	MEASUREMENT	SOFT SKILL OUTCOMES	WORKFORCE OUTCOMES
Zimbabwe	**Zimbabwe: Works** Implemented by IYF	**2012-2017**	Treatment 1: Standard training of 3-5 days of work readiness training with a focus on workplace interpersonal skills, communication, teamwork, and self-promotion. Treatment 2: 3-6 weeks of the PTS curriculum including self-development, healthy behaviors, interpersonal skills, and workplace habits **Target group:** unemployed youth with tertiary qualifications or new job entrants	RCT: Baseline and endline data collected 12 months apart Treatment group 1 (n=728) Treatment group 2 (n=141) Control group (n=695) (James et al., 2018)	Self-report on a 5-point scale ranging from "strongly disagree" to "strongly agree"	**Treatment 1** Self-efficacy** Resilience* **Treatment 2** Self-confidence** Self-efficacy*** Resilience***	Program increased the income index for Treatment 2 by 0.13 standard deviations* $ Employability index increased 0.2 standard deviations for Treatment 2** 💼 Economic empowerment by 0.38 standard deviations (especially for women) in Treatment 2*** 🚺
LOW AND MIDDLE INCOME COUNTRIES							
Colombia	**IEP** Implemented by Carvajal Foundation	**Not known** **(data from 2018)**	Treatment 1: Vocational plus soft skills training (100 hours) and technical training (60 hours) Treatment 2: Vocational plus soft skills training (60 hours) and technical training (100 hours) **Target group:** young people from the lowest economic strata	RCT: pre-treatment survey, follow-up survey between 3-6 months after treatment participants (n=483) completed the program, Social Security records between 11-17 months after the program to assess labor market outcomes for treatment and control group (n=227) (Barrera-Osorio et al., 2020)	Self-report using a 7-point Likert scale	**Treatment 1** Communication skills** Organizational skills** **Treatment 2** Organizational skills**	Shift from informal to formal employment*** 💼 Increase in the probability of employment of 10 percent **percentage points*** Increase in monthly wages of US$20*** $
Dominican Republic	**Juventud y Empleo** Implemented by Dominican Republic's Ministry of Labor	**2003-ongoing**	Basic/life skills training, vocational/technical training, internship in a private sector firm, job counseling Treatment 1: Vocational training combined with soft skills training and an internship Treatment 2: Soft skills training only with an internship **Target group:** youth between 16-29 who did not complete high school	RCT; random assignment to Treatment 1 (n=1,638), Treatment 2 (n=1,613), and Control (n=1,449) baseline survey, three telephone surveys (at 0 months, 6 months, and 12 months), and a household survey (3.5-4 years after program completion) (Acevedo et al., 2017)	Self-ratings using a test adapted from the Duckworth Grit Scale and the Social and Personal Competencies Scales (CPS, is its Spanish acronym)	Women in Treatment 1 had higher levels of soft skills three years after the program than the control group (no lasting effects for men in the treatment group), including higher levels of perseverance***, ambition***, leadership*, conflict resolution*, social skill*, organization**, communication** Women in Treatment 1 also had higher levels of self-esteem three years after the program than the control group after three years*. For the women in Treatment 2, the levels of self-esteem were also significant**	Women and men in Treatment 1 had higher expectations of improved future employment conditions** 💼 Women in Treatment 1 are 7.0 percentage points more likely to be employed 12 months after the program, an increase of 32%** 🚺 Women in Treatment 2 are 5.2 percentage points more likely to be employed 12 months after the program, an increase of 23.6%* Women also had higher-quality employment: higher salaries* and job satisfaction*** (16.3 percentage points

TABLE 8. EMPIRICAL EVIDENCE WITH CAUSAL LINKS BETWEEN SOFT SKILLS AND WORKFORCE OUTCOMES

COUNTRY	PROGRAM IMPLEMENTER	TIME PERIOD	PROGRAM COMPONENTS	METHODOLOGY	MEASUREMENT	SOFT SKILL OUTCOMES	WORKFORCE OUTCOMES
							more likely to be satisfied with their job, which is a 39% increase).
India	**P.A.C.E.** Implemented by Gap, Inc.	**2013-2015**	On-the-job life skills training covering communication, problem solving and decision making, time and stress management, execution excellence, financial literacy, and legal literacy and social entitlements for women **Target group**: young female garment workers in low-income contexts	RCT: randomization at the production line level and a second level of randomization at the individual level (n=1,087 for treatment group; n=779 for control group); endline survey results for treated and control workers and pre/post-assessment of treated workers (Adhvaryu et al., 2018)	Self-report and reports from employers	Communication skills, problem solving/decision making, legal literacy, execution excellence (85-110 percent increases between pre- and post-assessments, but control workers were not given this assessment, so unable to compare across treatment and control groups) Extraversion** (16.4 percentage point increase) More likely to request and complete technical skills development trainings*** (generating complementary improvements in "hard" skills) (16 percentage point increase) Increase in risk aversion*	Large and persistent productivity impacts* Greater self-assessment of workplace quality (consistent with an increase in self-regard) and workplace performance relative to peers* Positive impact on saving for own and children's education**
Nepal	**Employment Fund and Adolescent Girls Employment Initiative (AGEI)** Implemented by Helvetas in partnership with the Government of Nepal	**2010-2013**	Technical skills training, life skills training, job placement services **Target group**: youth ages 16-35	Quasi-experimental: three cohorts with two rounds of data collection per cohort (one baseline survey and a follow-up survey approximately one year after program completion) Cohort 1: Treatment (n=1,184), Control (n=372) Cohort 2: Treatment (n=1,237), Control (n=349) Cohort 3: Treatment (n=1,044), Control (n=491) (Chakravarty et al., 2016)	Self-report using Likert scale items	Increase in self-confidence in life and entrepreneurial activities*** Self-regulation (including control impulses, delay gratification, stick to difficult or detail-oriented tasks, exert control over what happens in their life)*	Increased access to mentors who can advise them on work matters***, more money of their own***, more control over household spending** Increase in individual total savings**, monthly earnings***, increased hours worked in IGAs by 19-21 hours per months (28-30 percent increase)***, increase in the rate of non-farm IGAs***, increased non-farm employments by 50 to 54 percent***, more likely to find employment related to the vocational skill they learned***
Philippines	**MYDev Program** Implemented by EDC	**2013-2019**	Experiential training and post-training support to improve life skills, increase civic engagement, and increase employability **Target group**: out-of-school youth in conflict-affected areas	Quasi-experimental: pre-test and post-test for intervention (n=1,264) and comparison groups (n=416) (EDC, 2016)	Youth Employment Survey, the Youth Perceptions Survey, and the Development Assets Profile	Life skills (e.g., goal setting, communicating with a variety of people, and speaking clearly), MYDev youth improved about .10 points along an index ranging from 0 to 4, with 46.7% of MYDev youth improving life skills between baseline and endline (p = .002). Females improved less than males with	More youth in new employment who are more likely to receive monetary rather than in-kind payments (97% but did not report p-value). Youth with more jobs were more likely to report earnings increase**, but this did not transfer to an increase in savings

TABLE 8. EMPIRICAL EVIDENCE WITH CAUSAL LINKS BETWEEN SOFT SKILLS AND WORKFORCE OUTCOMES

COUNTRY	PROGRAM IMPLEMENTER	TIME PERIOD	PROGRAM COMPONENTS	METHODOLOGY	MEASUREMENT	SOFT SKILL OUTCOMES	WORKFORCE OUTCOMES
						an average gain of 0.05 points along the index***[15] Leadership skills at work and in the community improved for newly employed youth compared to youth who had maintained employment since baseline**, About 43% of MYDev youth improved in leadership skills, with an average gain of about .20 points along the index. Employed youth improved their work readiness skills (e.g., solving conflicts at work, looking for a job, and working toward a pay upgrade) compared to non-employed youth** Higher internal (e.g., commitment to learning, positive values, positive identity, social competencies)**** and external assets (e.g., empowerment, support, boundaries and expectations, constructive use of time)****	More youth in new or better employment at endline**** More likely to obtain new employment compared to comparison group, 10 percentage point gain for the intervention group relative to the comparison group**** Majority of newly employed youth are satisfied with their jobs, able to save, and meet their needs or goals (no *p*-values reported). Almost half of previously employed youth experienced improvement in the quality of their employment (no *p*-values reported). Youth from partially urban and rural areas obtained new employment at lower rates than youth from highly urban areas***. (Youth from rural areas obtained new employment about 15% less than youth from highly urban environments.) Rural youth more likely to meet their needs from their earnings than youth from urban areas (no *p*-values reported). Female and rural youth were more likely to see an increase in the number of meals they ate per day than male youth and youth from highly urban areas** Female youth worked almost ten more hours than male youth (48 hours vs. 39 hours)**, but obtained new employment less often than males**** Female youth reported feeling safer performing their jobs than male youth***

$ = wages = employment = women

Significance Levels: **** p < .001; *** p< .01; ** p < .05; * p < .1

[15] The average-based index for the life skills component consisted of four questions measuring skills such as goal setting, communicating with a variety of people, and speaking clearly. Each question was measured using a response scale from one to four, with four representing the strongest or best response.

HOW TO TEACH AND NURTURE SOFT SKILLS

Adolescence (ages 12-17) and young adulthood (ages 17-29) are critical windows of opportunity for developing soft skills (Chakravarty et al., 2017; Cunningham & Villaseñor, 2016). Developmental science suggests youth are neurologically and psychologically ready to acquire skills such as higher-order thinking, self-control, positive self-concept, and long-term planning. Their social environments and expanding peer groups are conducive to improving communication and social skills (Gates et al., 2016; Ignatowski, 2017; Lippman et al., 2015). Engaging youth in workforce development programs, while soft skills are still malleable, is especially important for the most disadvantaged youth in SSA because they may have limited opportunities to develop such skills through early childhood development programs, high-quality schools, and after-school activities. Lessons for how to teach and nurture soft skills effectively in developmentally-appropriate ways are emerging in LMICs and within SSA in particular.

This section organizes those lessons learned around three themes: 1) targeting and recruiting youth to participate in soft skills and workforce development programs, 2) designing and implementing such programs, and 3) overcoming obstacles to teaching and nurturing soft skills. Evidence should support donors, implementation partners, and researchers to determine promising and effective practices for supporting soft skills and workforce development programming.

LESSONS FOR TARGETING & RECRUITING YOUTH

This section includes literature primarily from sub-Saharan African countries as well as a few LMICs in South America and South Asia. Empirical studies, program evaluations, literature reviews, case studies, and KIIs identified best practices and informed lessons learned. Because studies did not randomize targeting and recruitment strategies, the following section cannot establish causal links between specific strategies and youth outcomes. Nevertheless, patterns emerged on diverse methods to encourage and enable specific groups of disadvantaged youth to participate in workforce development and soft skills training.

Soft skills interventions should target out-of-school and unemployed youth with low academic attainment. Youth without a secondary or university education often lack foundational literacy and numeracy skills, which puts them at risk of falling behind in their soft skills development, as well (Cunningham & Villaseñor, 2016). When they try to find employment, employers are more likely to be skeptical of their qualifications and hire entry-level staff through personal connections instead (EDC, 2021). However, participating in soft skills training can significantly increase the likelihood of employment for out-of-school youth. In Rwanda, AK youth who did not graduate primary school or secondary school were more likely to be employed compared to youth in the control group who did not participate in training (Alcid, 2014). In Kenya, the Community and Progress-Youth Empowerment Initiative (CAP-YEI) targeted out-of-school and unemployed youth for soft skills and work readiness training. Approximately four years after training, 73 percent of youth were employed, and 8 percent of youth were engaged in entrepreneurial activities (Johnstone et al., 2017). These findings suggest that out-of-school youth can successfully find employment if given the opportunity to learn key skills.

Recruitment through multiple pathways can reach more vulnerable youth. Some programs from LMICs employ innovative strategies to reach and enroll youth from the poorest communities. For example, the Carvajal Foundation in Colombia recruited participants through flyers, radio, social media,

and cars with loud-speakers that drove through poor neighborhoods. They also registered participants through public employment offices and other offices providing services to the poor. According to the Census of the Poor in Colombia, most youth participants in the program were from the lowest socioeconomic strata, which signifies that efforts to reach them were effective (Barrera-Osorio et al., 2020). In Liberia, USAID Advancing Youth Project (AYP) staff found the best strategies for recruiting out-of-school youth included publicizing training through flyers, radio, text messages, and megaphone announcements. Additionally, AYP staff made sure to emphasize that the USAID-supported program was free for youth (Auten et al., 2016). Programs reported these efforts to be the most effective strategies to promote services for hard-to-reach youth in low-income contexts.

Local leaders and context-specific materials play central roles in publicizing training for youth with low levels of education. USAID-supported programs in SSA, such as SYLP and Liberia's AYP, differentiated their outreach approach and extended programming to specifically target youth with low literacy and numeracy skills. SYLP produced instructional audio programs that connected with the rich Somali oral tradition of storytelling. The educational programs focused on entrepreneurship to encourage participation of low literacy youth and to reach youth in less accessible areas of Somalia. Learners who enrolled gave positive feedback and stated that such programs' stimulating content prompted their participation (Cook & Younis, 2012). In Liberia, AYP organized public announcements by community leaders and village chiefs to reach youth. Additionally, local committees of community elders, school administrators, and youth proactively went door to door telling youth about the opportunity. In subsequent years of the program, one of the most effective strategies was having existing learners and their families act as spokespersons for the project (Auten et al., 2016). Several program staff also mentioned that working with local leaders to identify and recruit the most vulnerable youth in the community was effective. These examples demonstrate how programs should employ diverse modalities to effectively encourage participation of the most vulnerable and at-risk youth.

Effective strategies to recruit young women must address sociocultural barriers to participation. Young women face a number of obstacles in accessing opportunities to develop soft skills. For instance, cultural expectations may make women and their families uncomfortable leaving duties at home. Similarly, social norms may make women hesitant to attend training where men are present. These challenges underscore the importance of targeting young women for soft skills interventions. In a desk review of 42 evaluations of youth soft skills programs, over 83 percent of programs employed inclusive strategies to promote women's recruitment and retention. The most common strategies were outreach to vulnerable groups through targeted marketing or incentives (72 percent) and ensuring accessibility for women by localizing the training in the target community (56 percent) (Martin et al., 2020). In Ethiopia, BYP specifically arranged for training to occur at times and locations convenient for young women (Statman et al., 2020). In Ethiopia, Rwanda, and Liberia, special accommodations for childcare and household responsibilities addressed concerns from single mothers and young women's husbands and families who feared their participation would impede domestic work (Jurgens et al., 2013; Monschein et al., 2019; The World Bank, 2015). For the Kenya Youth Employment and Skills Program (K-YES), a dedicated gender specialist at the national level focused on addressing young women's barriers to accessing the labor market. All K-YES trainers received gender training covering gender-sensitive programming, gender analysis, and gender-based discrimination and violence. Designated gender equity facilitators advocated for gender policies and strategies in Vocational Training Centers (VTCs) to help young women overcome barriers to participation. Gender-awareness forums also gave youth opportunities to reflect on how gender influences interests and career choices. Interviews with beneficiaries determined that these

targeting and recruitment efforts were effective (MSI, 2017). Furthermore, studies from LMICs outside of SSA found targeted advocacy in the community to be successful in shifting the attitudes of women's family members. Community acceptance of women's engagement in training programs and the workforce increased through home visits, events, and promotional materials supporting women's employment opportunities in India, Egypt, and Bangladesh (Amin et al., 2016; McKelway, 2018; Ramadan et al., 2014). These strategies challenge deep-rooted beliefs about women's roles and ultimately enable women to access training.

Targeted recruitment efforts change youth expectations regarding traditionally male and female vocations. Cultural traditions or norms about what jobs are appropriate, suitable, or safe for women may prevent women from participating in certain types of employment (Fox & Kaul, 2018; MSI, 2017). To overcome this barrier, in Nepal, the Employment Fund partnered with women's and community-based organizations to reach women and marginalized groups. They also sponsored radio and newspaper advertisements encouraging young women to sign up for more traditionally male-dominated trades, such as electronics and construction (Chakravarty et al., 2016). In Kenya, many youth reported that training was empowering and motivating because they learned to follow their own interests rather than what society or their parents directed them to do. More young women considered and eventually chose to go into traditionally male vocations, such as plumbing and motor vehicle mechanics (MSI, 2017). These findings demonstrate how soft skills training and recruitment efforts can be leveraged to challenge gender norms to increase the vocations both male and female youth pursue.

Efforts to target conflict-affected and displaced youth should consider the specific challenges they face with social and economic incorporation. These youth face unique obstacles in coping with trauma and developing soft skills, which can be overcome by prioritizing specific skills. Responses to trauma and stress include anxiety, depression, and attention difficulties among a multitude of other responses. These lasting symptoms can interfere with one's sense of autonomy and acquisition of soft skills (Honeyman, forthcoming; Soares et al., 2017). Additionally, ex-combatants facing difficulties finding employment and unemployed youth in conflict countries are more vulnerable to recruitment to violent groups and criminal activity. Effective recruitment strategies can target the highest risk youth by gathering extensive data on war experiences, current economic activity, and participation in previous programs, as the Action on Armed Violence (AoAV) program in Liberia did. This activity helped to ensure that the enrolled youth were the most in need of the intervention, rather than those who were already employed or well-integrated socially and economically (Blattman & Annan, 2016). Alternatively, the EMELI activity in Mauritania lacked sufficient data on youth, making it difficult to target the youth with the highest needs. While the activity sought out youth in the neighborhoods identified as being the most vulnerable, evaluation findings revealed that participants were not more economically disadvantaged than other non-participating youth and that only 8 percent of participants had attended the religious schools most inclined to be targets of recruitment for extremist groups (Giuliano et al., 2019). These results highlight the importance of developing and implementing recruitment strategies informed by the local context and field-tested to assess their effectiveness.

Efforts to target and recruit youth with disabilities are gaining traction. Previously, the specific needs of youth with disabilities were rarely addressed in soft skills training, which may have stemmed from a general dearth of literature about the lived experiences of youth with disabilities in LMICs and SSA. In a review of 136 social and emotional competency frameworks, fewer than 20 percent account for the experiences of youth with disabilities (Berg et al., 2017). Furthermore, fewer than one third of USAID-

funded evaluations of education interventions mention disability in reports (Alvares de Azevedo et al., 2018). Service providers, particularly education and training institutions, struggle to accommodate youth with different disabilities. While programs may wish to promote inclusivity, staff may not have the expertise or the resources (Blum et al., 2020). For instance, local implementing partners supporting Huguka Dukore Akazi Kanoze (HDAK) in Rwanda indicated a lack of accessible facilities and training materials for youth with visual impairments. A lack of accessible transportation also limited youth with physical disabilities. To overcome these obstacles, the implementing partner began working with an organization that specializes in supporting youth with disabilities. Other recent efforts to accommodate those with disabilities include developing Braille language course materials and recruiting interpreters to support deaf participants (Monschein et al., 2019).

Reaching more youth with disabilities requires greater community involvement. In Kenya, K-YES launched county youth employment compacts to reach marginalized youth with disabilities and to advocate for more training options, including special training for blind youth (Wafula, 2020; MSI, 2017). Key stakeholders, policymakers, and entities representing people with disabilities convened to discuss workforce inequities and generate effective solutions. Youth with disabilities and their caregivers across nine counties attended outreach sessions and special disability forums that provided information about the program, the labor market, and the services available to them through government initiatives. In addition to community events, K-YES used other channels of communication including SMS, radio, TV, Facebook, WhatsApp, posters, and local media outlets. These collective efforts reached a total of 152 youth with disabilities and their caregivers, and as a result two youth with physical disabilities who completed the training joined a leather-producing company in Nairobi. Expanding access to information and resources gives youth with disabilities more equitable access to soft skills training and the labor market.

In conclusion, soft skills programs target and recruit disadvantaged youth using a variety of strategies. More programs strive to include out-of-school youth with low levels of literacy and numeracy skills, young women, youth from conflict-affected regions, and youth with disabilities. Even though program evaluations and reports have documented a diverse range of approaches, research gaps remain, as little is known about the causal mechanisms that make targeting and recruiting strategies effective.

LESSONS FOR PROGRAM DESIGN & IMPLEMENTATION

A substantial amount of literature covers best practices for teaching and learning core academic subjects, and research suggests that these practices also support the effective teaching of soft skills. This section presents lessons learned from teaching soft skills in workforce development programs in SSA countries as well as a few LMICs in Latin America and the Middle East. Based on the analysis of the literature, findings emerged that relate to effective pedagogy, enabling environments, accompaniment services, and additional components of program design and implementation; Table 9 summarizes the trends identified within literature focused on LMICs and SSA.

TABLE 9. PROGRAM COMPONENTS ENABLING SOFT SKILLS DEVELOPMENT

COMPONENT	DESCRIPTION
Pedagogy	Participatory, interactive, student-centered, and experiential
Safe spaces	Distinct spaces for youth, especially young women, to ensure privacy when discussing sensitive topics and sharing personal issues
Facilitator/teacher training	Capacity building with facilitators/teachers on soft skills and student-centered pedagogy
Mentoring and counseling	Youth-led, peer-to-peer, or one-on-one psychosocial support; non-career mentoring; career guidance
Social networks and accompaniment	Job matching, on-the-job training, apprenticeships, internships
Community mobilization	Engaging with households and community leaders to levy support, buy-in, and/or gender awareness for youth participation

Adapted from Martin et al., 2020, p. 17

PEDAGOGY

Effective soft skills interventions emphasize participatory activities and interactive teaching methods. In interviews and FGDs, some teachers in the formal education system recognized that traditional teacher-centered methods of teaching are not ideal for cultivating soft skills such as communication and social skills (Kohl & French, 2014; Care et al., 2017). In contrast, workforce development programs increasingly place youth at the center of the learning process (Hanemann, 2017; MasterCard Foundation, 2017; McIlvaine et al., 2015). Educators may use questions, guided practice, group activities, and discussions to engage students to solve problems, test their ideas, and express themselves (Cunningham & Villaseñor, 2016). A review of 43 life skills programs in Ethiopia supports the importance of student-centered approaches to teaching soft skills (Dupuy et al., 2018). Program administrators were likely to report using participatory/interactive teaching and group work as the main teaching methods, compared to traditional lecturing methods. Teaching staff ranked the most important activities during training as role play/drama (from 53 percent of programs) and group discussions (from 40 percent of programs). Group presentations and group work, where students are actively engaged with their peers, also contribute to the development of key soft skills, such as positive self-concept, communication skills, and social skills (FocusAfrica, 2010d; Honeyman, 2019). In Programa Para o Futuro (PPF) in Mozambique, teaching methods included active learning and project-based learning. Youth engaged in "team-work, debates, interviews, and talking in public" (Barkess, 2016, p. 34). Beneficiaries completed a "ladder activity" post-training to prioritize the components they considered most effective and most essential to the success of the program. Employment-related knowledge, such as how to find a job, ranked first followed by soft skills and the student-centered methodology used in the

BOX 11. PROJECT-BASED LEARNING

Using the project-based learning approach, students investigate real-world challenges and collaborate to find solutions. The process involves planning, organizing, researching, and executing a project as a team. Along the way, students exercise key soft skills like problem solving, teamwork, communication, negotiation, and higher-order thinking. The practice is recommended for in-school and out-of-school programming.

Sources: Blum et al., 2020b; Soares et al., 2017

program. Youth ranked these as the top three essential components of PPF, higher than components such as financial literacy, ICT, and health. As such, PPF graduates valued student-centered approaches and viewed them as effective at teaching core skills such as addressing differing opinions, giving and receiving feedback, problem solving, critical thinking, decision making, and self-esteem.

Experiential learning builds confidence among youth in low-resource contexts to become entrepreneurs. Experiential teaching techniques may incorporate games and simulation exercises designed to reflect real-world problems and shed light on resources youth can already access. For example, youth in PPF worked in groups to identify a real-world issue in their community. They investigated the problem and designed a field study to gather more information. Then, they analyzed the data, discussed the results, considered multiple solutions, and presented their findings. After presentations, students reflected on their progress and received feedback from other participants. Following training, PPF youth highlighted the importance of collaborative environments and real-world projects for building confidence and self-esteem (Brady & Aleixo, 2018). From recent research in SSA, these two skills, confidence and self-esteem, are linked to better employment and entrepreneurship outcomes (Adoho et al., 2014; Alibhai et al., 2016; FocusAfrica, 2010c). Furthermore, secondary school students in South Africa who received an additional component of experiential entrepreneurship education reported higher levels of soft skills, hard skills, and intentions to start a new business, compared to students who did not receive the experiential teaching methods and materials. Through team-based problem solving, students who completed the experiential learning component reported having improved communication skills, teamwork, and self-esteem. In addition, 90 percent of graduates reported that starting a business was a good career choice after training and that experiential education had equipped them with key entrepreneurial skills to lead and manage their own businesses. One year after program completion, more youth in the experiential entrepreneurship education condition had started businesses compared to youth who did not participate in the experiential program. However, the difference was marginal given most students are still studying, and further results may emerge in the long term (Ripley, 2017).

Effectuation theory has proven effective for supporting entrepreneurship in SSA. Effectuation, which overlaps with experiential education, is based on the idea that entrepreneurs develop their business based on what they can create with the set of resources they have, as opposed to causal reasoning in which entrepreneurs determine goals to achieve and seek out the resources to enable them to do so (YBI, 2018). Organizations such as YBI apply effectuation theory in trainings to teach soft skills to aspiring entrepreneurs (YBI, 2019). Additionally, PI training, which is also based on effectuation theory, has proven to be highly effective for helping entrepreneurs be successful (please refer to the section on *Entrepreneurship*). Training that incorporates this approach could be more successful in helping youth to identify their resources and leverage their networks and peer support to develop realistic business ideas.

BOX 12. EFFECTUATION THEORY

According to effectuation theory, personal experience and local context are central for developing skills. One's identity is the source of creating value and agency. As such, self-discovery (i.e., who I am and what I know) leads youth to identify business opportunities and available resources. The process also involves identifying gaps in knowledge and resources. Youth assess how to fill these gaps through training and their social network. Business ideas continue to evolve through interactions with others. Youth practice action principles, such as creating plans and back-up plans, as well as techniques to give and receive critique.

Sources: Bitga 2020; YBI, 2018

ENABLING ENVIRONMENTS

Cultural norms can constrain youth participation in soft skills training. In SSA, more patriarchal, autocratic, and age-stratified communities may perceive youth workforce development programs and soft skills training as challenging the dominant norm of elders as leaders and youth as followers (Ignatowski, 2017; MasterCard Foundation, 2014). As such, youth may not be able to access public spaces or feel comfortable participating in soft skills training in public spaces. Additionally, young women and their families are especially concerned about safety, privacy, and discussing sensitive topics openly. For example, in Nigeria, young women participating in YEP were initially hesitant to "raise their hands and express themselves" (Focus Africa, 2010d, p. 33). Across program evaluations and interviews with program staff, creating distinct spaces for youth to gather during training addresses these barriers to participation.

Safe spaces, particularly gender-sensitive environments, cultivate opportunities for group work, teamwork, and communication. In Nigeria, some women had not been allowed to meet freely with other youth before enrolling in training; thus, through YEP, these women were exposed to working in groups for the first time. In a USAID-supported program in Mauritania, program staff reported that building safe spaces was fundamental for soft skills training to foster debate, discussion, and free thinking. Safe spaces and female-only clubs were also key program components in World Bank's AGI in [redacted] Haiti, Liberia, South Sudan, Jordan, and Rwanda (The World Bank, 2015). These examples of safe spaces for discussion and group work contrast with the more passive and didactic approaches to teaching typically used in formal schooling in SSA. These results highlight the importance of providing safe spaces for training where youth have the opportunity to apply and practice skills openly.

Workforce development and soft skills training can adapt to meet the specific needs of youth in conflict or post-conflict settings. In Liberia, a post-conflict country, AoAV worked with youth who were unemployed ex-combatants by providing life skills training, counseling, agricultural training, and capital inputs (i.e., seeds or farming materials) (Blattman & Annan, 2016).[16] One important feature of the program was that facilitators were former ex-combatants themselves. These facilitators led the life skills sessions and also conducted informal out-of-classroom mentoring. The life skills training and counseling were highly valued by the participants, as reflected in qualitative data and a survey conducted one year after the intervention. In an upcoming activity also located in Liberia, the Positive, Educated, Employed, and Resilient Youth program aims to partner with organizations that support youths' mental health and well-being to be responsive to the post-conflict context. According to USAID/Liberia staff, soft skills training will focus on the development of self-concept, self-control, self-esteem, and communication. If youth can acquire these skills, they will feel more comfortable speaking in public about their needs, desires, and experiences. The emphasis on this set of soft skills meets the unique cognitive, psychological, and socioemotional needs of conflict-affected youth to ultimately succeed in the workforce.

Positive relationships between trainers and beneficiaries foster soft skills development. Typically, facilitators of training are based locally and are close in age to beneficiaries, as was the case of AK in Rwanda (Kohl & French, 2014). Occasionally, facilitators were previous program participants, as was the case of Women for Women's programs in Rwanda and the DRC (McIlvaine et al., 2015). Seeing familiar faces lead instruction can provide youth with a positive role model, encourage youth participation in the program, and support cultural acceptance of youth participation (Martin et al., 2020). Close

[16] The AoAV life skills curriculum included effective communication, understanding conflict, understanding trauma, managing anger, conflict resolution, peace building, and leadership skills.

relationships with facilitators are also important for curbing attrition.[17] In Liberia, facilitators for the AYP went to the houses of youth who had missed classes and encouraged them to return (Auten et al., 2016). It may also be easier to train younger facilitators. Experienced trainers may be more accustomed to didactic teaching methodologies, and as such may be resistant to student-centered or experiential approaches to learning (Brady & Aleixo, 2018).

> "[T]he first essential point should be **accessible facilitators**, because of the importance of relationships, facilitating sessions, availability to clarify doubts, and helping in solving problems."
>
> – PPF graduate, Mozambique
>
> Source: Barkess, 2016, p. 34

Trainers with personal entrepreneurial experience are more influential with youth. Research suggests that trainers with practical experience increase measures of student empowerment. In Ethiopia, female entrepreneurs attended PI training; however, only 41 percent of trainers had a history of entrepreneurship themselves (Alibhai et al., 2019). Locus of control, self-efficacy, and personal initiative measured 1.5 years after training were all higher for students who had a trainer with previous experience owning a business. These associations were statistically significant, and the researchers suggested that participants benefit from sharing an identity with their trainer. Furthermore, trainers with relevant experience likely have a better understanding of the issues that youth face, a repository of more practical examples applicable to youth, and thus, a greater influence on shifting student mindsets. Qualitative analyses of facilitators with entrepreneurship experience also reveal that they are more likely to be perceived as inspiring and influential role models.

ACCOMPANIMENT SERVICES

Access to mentoring and counseling can support soft skills and workforce outcomes. In the USAID-supported BPY activity in Ethiopia, training was more beneficial for youth who participated in additional mentorship and coaching. The purpose of mentoring was to be able to support youth to overcome challenges and develop strategic plans for reaching goals. Regression analyses revealed a positive correlation between mentorship and gaining more skills, having higher levels of attitudinal changes, accessing loans, and finding employment (Lemma, 2020). Programs like BPY, Educate! and ELA in Uganda, commonly recruit mentors who are close in age to beneficiaries and share similar backgrounds (Bandiera et al., 2020; Kwauk & Perlman Robinson, 2016). Qualitative data and interviews with experts in the field suggest mentors have often successfully confronted barriers to economic and social empowerment, so they are able to provide relevant feedback and advice to mentees. Some mentors go beyond career-related support to provide guidance on personal matters and psychosocial encouragement. The YEP in Kenya offered one-on-one counseling sessions to participants to discuss progress inside and outside of training. Youth who participated in counseling were more likely to be employed compared to participants who did not take part in counseling sessions (FocusAfrica, 2010b). Women in particular cited mentoring and encouragement as important program components in a report summarizing the USAID-supported Hewlett-Packard Learning Initiative for Entrepreneurs (HP LIFE) program in China, India, Kenya, Nigeria, and South Africa. There was a positive correlation between reported increased incomes and the benefit of mentoring experienced in the program (Vinogradova & Taggart, 2012). Combining soft skills training

[17] Attrition refers to the loss of participants over the course of an intervention. Participants may drop out for any number of reasons. This introduces selection bias where youth who continue to participate may have important differences compared to youth who do not. Differences, such as higher levels of motivation to continue training, could affect the measurement of outcomes.

with mentorship and counseling can help youth develop social capital and effectively navigate the labor market (Glick et al., 2015; Martin et al., 2020)

Soft skills interventions often build valuable social networks that reinforce youth soft skills development. In Kenya, CAP-YEI targets out-of-school and out-of-work youth. The program engages multiple voices (e.g., outside experts, facilitators, youth-as-teachers) and organizes a variety of activities for participants (e.g., site visits, motivational talks, and networking activities). Youth report that forging connections with a range of mentors and peers developed a sense of togetherness, or "uhusiano," which led to a sense of empowerment and possibility in the pursuit of their educational and vocational goals (Johnstone et al., 2017). In South Sudan, an RCT on the impact of AGI revealed that young women had improved social networks as well as more control over their own money. Compared to young women in control communities, young women in the treatment group were significantly more likely to report being able to find help outside of the household if they needed to, including having someone outside of the family to borrow money from (Buehren et al., 2017). In Liberia, an RCT on the impact of EPAG found that beneficiaries had improved self-efficacy, social networks, more confidence in their own business abilities, and more confidence in their personal and social lives (Adoho et al., 2014). These findings were further corroborated in Kenya, as an evaluation of NairoBits training concluded that nearly 96 percent of youth reported that life skills training helped them create a network of support and increase their self-esteem, optimism, communication skills, ability to work in groups, and tendency to set goals (FocusAfrica, 2010c).

Expanding group participation, especially in peer-led social networks, is associated with improved workforce outcomes. Peer-to-peer support is a crucial post-training program component, in addition to more traditional accompaniment services, such as job matching, internships, and apprenticeships (Monschein et al., 2019; Perez-Pineda, 2019). For instance, Catholic Relief Services established youth-friendly savings and internal lending communities (SILC) groups in Rwanda to improve the financial security of HDAK youth after training. Youth and their peers pooled their limited financial resources to form SILC groups, which helped youth to start micro-enterprises and build resilience. In fact, youth were able to draw from these savings to meet their basic needs during the COVID-19 pandemic (Alcid, 2014; EDC, 2021). In an interview, experts in the field proposed that strong peer groups provided accountability for youth when setting and pursuing their goals. Thus, peer support can play a crucial role in ensuring that gains from soft skills training are sustained.

COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT

Community mobilization lays important groundwork for youth to fully benefit from soft skills interventions. AGI built a network of community support for young women before, during, and after training. For example, "social mobilizers" [redacted] worked extensively in the community to promote opportunities for young women to seek training and employment. Gender norms and fears about safety typically constrain their participation in training programs, so the program arranged for a van service to transport participants to and from training sessions (The World Bank, 2015). AGI in South Sudan took similar community sensitization measures by establishing various committees, such as a Club Management Committee, Advisory Committee, and Parent Committee. These committees informed the community about AGI, promoted buy-in among families, played an important role in bringing issues to the community, and offered a platform for debate, discussion, and celebration of youths' achievements (Jurgens et al., 2013). Additionally, strong local champions, especially district and regional government representatives, have proven to be key in establishing environments that enable interventions to succeed. As visible and

vocal leaders, they can advocate for particular approaches, make connections, remove institutional barriers, and provide resources for youth and their communities (Laterite Ltd, 2017; MasterCard Foundation, 2017).

In conclusion, successful soft skills interventions employ diverse components to ensure youth have the skills, tools, and confidence necessary to enter the workforce. In these contexts, workforce development programs go beyond traditional interventions for improving foundational skills or vocational skills. Importantly, effective ways to teach and nurture soft skills consider prevailing sociocultural norms, offer youth hands-on opportunities to improve their soft skills, and cultivate support networks among peers and community members.

OVERCOMING OBSTACLES TO TEACHING & NURTURING SOFT SKILLS

Each program featured in this report faced challenges. Common challenges centered on the sociocultural contexts of the country, the target population, program design, and program implementation. This section presents shared obstacles across many of the programs as well as the steps taken to mitigate them.

Targeted communication strategies reduce the social stigma around vocational training and increase youth demand for skills training. VTCs typically specialize in specific trades, but negative social stigmas persist for trade jobs. To mitigate this, the Kericho county government in Kenya rebranded VTCs as "centers of excellence," refurbished them, and delivered soft skills training through K-YES. As a result, county government representatives as well as youth reported an increase in the value and relevance of VTCs. Additional "image-building activities," such as holding graduation ceremonies for youth and featuring prominent government officials at events, contributed to the visibility and positive perception of VTCs and soft skills training (MSI, 2017; Plaut et al., 2016). Issuing certificates to youth who complete soft skills training also builds a more positive image of VTCs. In Rwanda and Uganda, youth with soft skills training certificates had higher labor market expectations for earnings, compared to youth who completed the same training but did not receive certificates. This finding suggests that youth recognized the value of their training and used certificates to market their new skills to potential employers. Furthermore, youth with certificates were more likely to attract employers and attain higher earnings (Bassi & Nansamba, 2021; Perez-Pineda, 2019). These strategies demonstrate that youth are incentivized to enroll in soft skills interventions if they view training as desirable and training centers as appealing.

BOX 13. SOFT SKILLS TRAINING CERTIFICATION

Providing youth with certificates of completion for soft skills training is a cost-effective strategy to improve youth workforce outcomes post-training. In Rwanda and Uganda, youth who underwent soft skills training and received certificates had higher expectations for earning than youth who did not receive certificates. They also were more likely to attract employers and attain higher earnings.

Source: Bassi & Nansamba, 2021; Perez-Pineda 2019

Providing stipends and establishing community-based centers reduce attrition and support workforce outcomes among participants. In Mauritania, students and staff reported that the long distance between trainings at VTCs and additional program activities at youth centers prevented beneficiaries from taking full advantage of all EMELI programming (USAID, 2019). Additionally, women in Ethiopia's BPY program were hesitant to attend meetings far from home because cultural norms considered it inappropriate (Statman et al., 2020). Over time, attrition may increase, which affects soft skills and workforce outcomes in addition to research and evaluation efforts. Implementers can overcome this barrier by providing a stipend to youth together with training. In Colombia, researchers randomized

whether youth from the lowest socioeconomic strata were provided a stipend or not. The stipend was intended to cover transportation and meals in addition to training. When stipends and skills training were provided, youth had higher levels of employment after graduation. They also worked more days and hours. For youth who did not receive a stipend, training had no impact on workforce outcomes. Researchers suggest the stipend removed resource constraints and made training more effective (Barrera-Osorio et al., 2020). These findings show that youth workforce programming should include financial and operational resources in their design to ensure youth are able to attend. If transportation costs cannot be offset through stipends, partnering with existing community youth centers and creating local hubs may reduce transportation and other obstacles to access. For example, Ethiopia's BPY partnered with existing government youth centers to coordinate youth access to training and ongoing support after training (Lemma 2020). As a result, these measures facilitate youth participation in and completion of soft skills training.

The impact of soft skills training may fade over time without follow-up support or accompaniment services. Entrepreneurs need to continuously use PI and adaptive behaviors to navigate the challenges presented by running a business. Mensmann & Frese (2018) suggest that the effects of PI training decrease over time, especially if skills are not explicitly reinforced after training. Further evidence from youth workforce development programs in Liberia, Rwanda, and other LMICs confirm that training alone is insufficient to prepare youth for work (EDC, 2012). Follow-up support or accompaniment services help youth transition between training and the labor market. The EPAG program for young women in Liberia provided classroom-based training followed by six months of job placement support to help young women enter wage employment or start a business. Youth reported a 47 percent increase in employment, 80 percent growth in earnings, and improvements in self-confidence (Adoho et al., 2014). Accompaniment services for HDAK in Rwanda included community-based youth leadership programs and advanced youth entrepreneurship training called GROW Your Own Business. Given that implementing partners are still in the early stages of delivering these follow-up services, the impact on workforce outcomes is unclear (Perez-Pineda, 2019). However, these additional components may provide crucial opportunities for youth to build financial and social capital and ensure that results are sustained.

To overcome resource constraints, programs should leverage local champions and other community engagement initiatives. In Rwanda and Kenya, political champions were especially instrumental in providing both financial and in-kind resources for youth workforce development programs. In-kind support may include access to facilities or connections to additional government staff (MasterCard Foundation, 2017). Uganda's ELA program organized a variety of low-cost events at community centers that facilitated high rates of youth participation. Youth highlighted their skills through regional arts, sports, music, and talent competitions. A diverse selection of low-cost and easy to facilitate activities showcased the unique skillsets of youth (Banks, 2015).

In the face of the COVID-19 pandemic, service providers quickly pivoted, which led to innovations in teaching and youth-led initiatives. Some activities were immediately suspended due to restrictions on gatherings and movement (Wafula, 2020). However, other programs like Educate! and PTS utilized digital content to continue to reach youth. In interviews with program staff, reworking the curricula entailed expanding access through multiple digital platforms such as WhatsApp, radio, video tutorials, audio podcasts, short online lessons, and virtual talking circles for psychosocial support. Low-tech solutions, such as radio learning and SMS platforms, enabled programs to reach youth in remote regions who otherwise might not have enrolled. To keep lessons interactive, activities were sometimes

facilitated by peer leaders and involved engaging parents and relatives (EDC, 2021; Solutions for Youth Employment, 2020). Additionally, implementation partners supported youth-led ventures related to local pandemic responses. For example, K-YES trained "COVID-19 youth ambassadors," who served their communities by distributing facemasks, handwashing soap, and handwashing tanks (Wafula, 2020). Youth were driven to find small community-level solutions, demonstrating important soft skills such as resilience, flexibility, perseverance, and personal initiative. Innovations that emerged from the pandemic can be leveraged in the future to inspire more youth.

Table 10 summarizes the common constraints across soft skills programming in SSA as well as effective mitigation strategies employed by implementers to overcome them. As programs shift toward sustainably transitioning programming to local governments and nongovernmental organizations (NGOs), these lessons learned can be leveraged to find effective low-cost solutions to continue to support youth as they transition into the workforce.

TABLE 10. OBSTACLES IN SOFT SKILL DEVELOPMENT AND STEPS TO MITIGATE THEM

OBSTACLE	MITIGATION STRATEGIES
Low levels of literacy and numeracy	Provide differentiated training materials, adapt content to alternative mediums (e.g., radio, voice, SMS), extend the duration of training to cover basic literacy skills
Cultural norms of highly patriarchal and age-stratified societies	Engage families and households through community mobilization, train local community members to deliver instruction that will instill trust in the program, host public dialogues and workshops, complement events with positive media coverage
Gender and disability status	Establish special committees and working groups, create safe spaces, adjust the time and location of trainings to improve accessibility, provide childcare, transportation, and stipends where possible
Lack of trained teachers and facilitators	Engage alumni and graduates where possible to train and mentor youth, seek out youth-led groups for peer-to-peer support, use interactive activities to train staff and encourage buy-in
Stigma against students who choose TVET or entrepreneurial pursuits	Rebrand vocational training centers into "centers of excellence," offer certificates of completion, refurbish centers into safe spaces for youth to gather
Distance from training center	Create community-based training centers and/or hubs that are known to be accessible to all youth participants, provide stipends for transportation and meals
Insufficient accompaniment and/or lack of follow up	Ensure the duration of the training and/or follow up is sufficient to help youth transition to the workforce, seek sustainable ways for youth to find support after the intervention ends (e.g., peer mentoring, savings and lending community groups)
Resource constraints	Partner with local champions as visible and vocal advocates for interventions, focus on the resources available to encourage an effectuation-based mindset and youth participation
COVID-19	Provide psychosocial support to staff and youth who may feel anxiety and stress, expand access using digital technology and platforms (e.g., WhatsApp, radio, video tutorials, audio podcasts, short online lessons, and virtual talking circles), encourage youth-led micro-ventures and initiatives in response to the pandemic

KEY TAKEAWAYS: TEACHING AND NURTURING SOFT SKILLS IN SSA

Based on the literature drawn from both SSA and other relevant LMICs, several key trends emerged on how best to teach and nurture soft skills:

- Disadvantaged youth in SSA often lack access to opportunities to develop key soft skills for workforce success. As a result, it is especially important that soft skills programming target marginalized groups including out-of-school youth, young women, conflict-affected youth, displaced youth, and youth with disabilities. Diverse mediums should be employed to successfully target and recruit youth from these groups.
- Effective interventions use participatory activities and interactive teaching methods to support soft skills development such as positive self-concept, communication skills, and social skills.
- Experiential learning techniques are grounded in real-world scenarios and are especially effective for developing and enhancing entrepreneurship among youth in SSA.
- Youth, and particularly women in SSA, often face obstacles to participate in and complete training. Safe spaces, strong relationships with facilitators and mentors, and social networks encourage youth to attend soft skills interventions.
- Community-level mobilization, including leveraging local champions, can support youth in SSA in overcoming socioeconomic barriers to participate in soft skills training.
- Community and peer-led solutions address common soft skills training obstacles related to the sociocultural contexts of the country, the target population, program design, and program implementation.

SOFT SKILLS IN SECONDARY EDUCATION AND WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT TRAINING IN SUB-SAHARAN AFRICA

In SSA, a number of countries are reforming their education systems to better equip youth for a global economy, which includes shifting from knowledge-based curricula to competency-based curricula and focusing on cultivating technical and transferable skills (MasterCard Foundation, 2017). In particular, secondary education and TVET institutions in many African education systems increasingly recognize the need to include 21st century skills to prepare youth for the changing labor market (Akyeampong, 2014). In the past, soft skills training across SSA was largely implemented by actors outside of the public education system, including community-based organizations, NGOs, and bilateral donors. However, national governments across SSA have recently started to integrate soft skills into their curricula. Some governments have fully embraced the integration of these skills at multiple levels of their education systems, while others have limited the integration of soft skills to the upper secondary and technical and vocational education levels.

This section offers an overview of how seven countries in SSA are working to integrate soft skills into the education system. This section does not aim to be comprehensive of all country experiences in the region; however, it presents a range of successes, challenges, and lessons learned for incorporating soft skills at the national level. The seven countries – Ethiopia, Kenya, Nigeria, Rwanda, South Africa, Tanzania, and Uganda – were selected because sufficient information was available within the existing retrieved literature to enable the research team to adhere to the research methodology. Table 11 provides a summary of these countries and their inclusion of soft skills in different areas. Evidence from these seven countries reflects different models of soft skills integration that can offer insights to inform future opportunities for program scale-up and policy reform within and beyond the SSA region.

TABLE 11. INCLUSION OF SOFT SKILLS IN EDUCATION IN SUB SAHARAN AFRICA

COUNTRY	MISSION STATEMENTS IN EDUCATION POLICIES/ FRAMEWORKS	TVET CURRICULUM	SECONDARY SCHOOL CURRICULUM	PRIMARY SCHOOL CURRICULUM	NATIONAL ASSESSMENT OF SOFT SKILLS (FORMAL EDUCATION OR TVET)
Ethiopia	✓				
Kenya	✓	✓	✓	✓	
Nigeria	✓		✓		✓
Rwanda	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
South Africa	✓	✓	✓	✓	
Tanzania	✓	✓	✓	✓	
Uganda	✓		✓		✓

ETHIOPIA

In Ethiopia, life skills training first originated through NGOs and government institutions as a way to combat the spread of HIV/AIDS (Kibret, 2016) and has broadened over the years to include additional dimensions. In 2008, the Ministry of Youth and Sports, in collaboration with UNICEF, produced a National Framework for Life Skills Training (LST). This framework aims to build consensus about life skills training, to enable more uniform implementation more across those regions of the country and the various NGOs and public sector partners that employ these training methods. The main stated purpose of LST is to address societal challenges to youths' psychosocial well-being. The framework targets children and youth ages 10 to 24 and prioritizes the most vulnerable groups including girls, orphans, those residing in government childcare institutions, street youth, rural youth, out-of-school youth, and youth with disabilities (Dupuy et al., 2018). LST programs appear to focus mainly on SRH and other prevention programs for vulnerable youth. From the literature retrieved, there does not appear to be a comprehensive strategy to implement soft skills training within TVET institutions nor in any level of the formal education system in Ethiopia.

BOX 14. KEY FACTS ETHIOPIA

Inclusion: National Framework for Life Skills Training

Target: children and youth ages 10-24, especially vulnerable groups

Soft Skills: critical thinking, problem solving, socio-emotional, personal management, communication, interdependence, and cooperation

Programs: USAID BPY, Concern for Development, Population Council, Support Street for Children and Mothers and several government ministries

Four broad categories of life skills are addressed in the LST framework: 1) personal skills, including cognitive skills like critical thinking and problem solving, socioemotional skills, and personal management skills; 2) interpersonal skills, such as communication and interdependence skills; 3) group skills, including the ability to cooperate with others; and 4) "ecosystem" skills, which are societal and situational management skills. The national framework document also suggests additional topics to address in LST programs, including harmful social and traditional practices that predispose young people to risk and useful protective behaviors, such as how to thrive under deprivation, violence prevention, substance abuse prevention, interpersonal relationships, and SRH. In 2010, the Ministry of Youth and Sports produced a training manual to guide public sector institutions and NGOs in the implementation of the LST framework (Dupuy et al., 2018).

There are a number of organizations within Ethiopia that provide LST to youth, the majority of which are NGOs, such as Concern for Development, Population Council, and Support Street Children and Mothers. NGOs tend to operate on a project basis in a particular geographic location and with one group of trainees at a time (Dupuy et al., 2018).[18] It is unclear from the literature whether NGOs follow the national framework for LST. Roughly a quarter of the training programs are administered by the public sector (e.g., Ministry of Health, Women's Health Association of Ethiopia), which tend to have a wider reach and are implemented across a variety of geographic regions. Critiques of LST implementation in Ethiopia include a lack of consensus in conceptualizing life skills, a narrow definition of which skills are included in the national framework, and a lack of collaboration among stakeholders. Further critique points to each

[18] While it was reported that 4.65% of the programs were established through "private sector/donor initiative" efforts (Dupuy et al., 2018), no specific examples were provided.

organization using its own guidelines and manuals, which are often imported from other countries and not contextualized to meet the needs of Ethiopian youth (Kibret, 2016).

Life skills programming has had limited implementation in TVET institutions, with the USAID-supported BPY activity providing LST from 2015 to 2020. The final performance evaluation (Statman et al., 2020) concluded that the project prioritized conducting the training directly with participants and provided limited capacity building to TVET institutions to support sustainability and scale-up. BPY also aimed to form public-private alliances; however, such alliances were largely formed or strengthened only to support BPY's implementation, and mechanisms to ensure the sustainability of such partnerships were not put in place (Statman et al., 2020). Private sector involvement in the activity was limited to job shadowing opportunities and apprenticeships for participants.

In sum, the Government of Ethiopia has made some steps toward formalizing LST for youth at a national level. These life skills overlap with many of the soft skills crucial for workforce success, such as communication, cooperation, and problem solving. However, from the evidence reviewed, it appears that Ethiopia has not integrated life skills or soft skills into TVET institutes or the formal primary or secondary school curriculum. Rather, it remains largely within the scope of SRH programs and other programs aimed at vulnerable youth.

KENYA

In response to the high level of youth unemployment (35 percent) and high number of unemployed youth with no vocational or professional training (92 percent), the Government of Kenya has taken several steps toward incorporating soft skills through policy and curricular reform. In 2013, the government initiated a shift from a knowledge-based curriculum to a competencies-based curriculum, which included incorporating work readiness or transferable skills into TVET curricula (MasterCard Foundation, 2017). Also in 2013, the Kenyan Government signed a new TVET Act into law that launched the Competency Based Education and Training framework across TVETs and created the independent TVET Authority to regulate the provision of quality, relevant TVET education. At the same time, the Kenya Institute for Curriculum Development reinforced the importance of transferable skills by recommending the emphasis on specific skills during TVET training, such as creativity, organization, interpersonal relationships, planning, coordination, and decision making.

BOX 15. KEY FACTS KENYA

Inclusion: Competency Based Education and Training Framework and Curricula at all levels

Target: primary, secondary, and TVET

Soft Skills: communication, critical thinking, decision making, problem solving, teamwork, leadership, self-efficacy, innovation, persistence, among others

Programs: CAP-YEI, USAID K-YES, and Educate!

To implement these policies and mandates, the TVET Curriculum Development Assessment and Certification Council (CDACC) mandated soft skills in curricula at all levels of vocational education and for all TVET programs. To ensure consistency, CDACC included seven basic competencies: 1) numeracy, literacy, and communication; 2) employability skills, such as critical thinking, decision making, problem solving, and teamwork; 3) environmental literacy; 4) health and safety; 5) ICT; 6) entrepreneurial skills; and 7) leadership skills (Ondieki et al., 2019).

These policy reforms created a window of opportunity for the government to adopt and scale up an existing work readiness model developed for out-of-school youth: CAP-YEI (Ignatowski, 2017). Founded

in 2011, CAP-YEI is an NGO based in Kenya that serves out-of-school youth in need of employment. The NGO developed a concept commonly used in TVET education across Kenya called "Uhusiano Design." Uhusiano design is a pedagogy that focuses on social and togetherness aspects of learning (characterized by the Kiswahili word, "uhusiano"). This curricular approach intentionally creates space for experimentation and creation (such as "design thinking") and uses a hands-on and community-based approach that aims to foster youths' self-confidence and sense of agency (Johnstone et al., 2017).

The government has also benefited from other youth training programs operating in Kenya. The USAID-supported K-YES helped build TVET institutional capacity to conduct trainings on life skills, career counseling, work readiness, and business skills. The program trained TVET instructors and gave them responsibility for delivering select elements of these youth trainings, mainly the unit focused on life skills and career counseling. K-YES then gradually shifted implementation responsibility to the TVET schools to support local ownership and sustainability (MSI, 2017).

Research has shown that TVETs in Kenya teach soft skills, yet there is substantial room for improvement. A mixed-methods study involving 182 TVETs, 347 TVET instructors, and 3,452 TVET students found that only 41 percent of students reported that their TVET institutions provide them with opportunities to debate, present their ideas, or complete projects with other students. These activities encourage critical thinking and nurture communication skills (Ngware et al., 2019). Over half (57.3 percent) of the students interviewed indicated that their training courses have special topics on ethics and behavior. Yet only about one third (35.5 percent) indicated that their training courses included non-technical skills to prepare them for the job market. Overall, students perceived that instructors could benefit from additional training to improve the use of participatory activities that nurture soft skills and higher-order thinking skills, such as creative thinking and problem solving. Additionally, the study measured six soft skills in students before and after completion of their TVET studies: intrapersonal, interpersonal, decision making, leadership, resourcefulness, and professionalism. Student performance did not vary much, which indicates that the training provided by the TVET institutions may not be effective at improving soft skills. Finally, qualitative data revealed that some TVET directors and instructors were unaware of the new TVET curricula, and those that were aware had limited knowledge of its contents.

The Government of Kenya has recently begun an effort to integrate soft skills, or "21st century skills" into the curricula at the basic education level (primary and secondary school) to prepare students for employability and economic productivity (Care et al., 2017). These skills include teamwork, critical thinking, and innovation as well as displaying character qualities such as leadership, initiative, persistence, and ethical conduct. Even at the primary school level, students will be exposed to ethical preparation and develop communication skills. The overall basic education curriculum includes skills such as problem solving, communication and collaboration, imagination and creativity, self-efficacy, citizenship, and service learning (Care et al., 2017). Educate!, supported by the MasterCard Foundation, has taken advantage of this reform effort to help strengthen soft skills instruction in secondary schools. They have partnered with the Kenya Institute of Curriculum Development to train teachers and to adapt the upper secondary school community service-learning curriculum to incorporate soft skills training.

In sum, Kenya has made progress toward integrating soft skills training at all levels of education, including TVETs. There are new curricula and policies to support these efforts, although at the basic educational level, these remain nascent. Translating policy and new curriculum into effective practice remains a challenge as many teachers still lack access to adequate training and instructional materials.

NIGERIA

The Nigerian Government acknowledged the critical role of education for national development in its long-term development agenda, *Vision 2020*. This agenda laid the groundwork for investments in TVET and curriculum reform. In 2011, the government launched a new Senior Secondary Education Curriculum, which aimed to meet the demands of the global economy, support youth employment, and promote peace building efforts. In a review of the new Senior Secondary curriculum and materials to guide implementation for states and teachers, soft skills are a cross-cutting theme. Policy documents and curricular materials refer to practical skills, employability, life skills, and 21st century skills. Notably, the government did not reference or incorporate existing program models from outside the formal school system in revising its curriculum, which contrasts with other reforms in SSA that piloted skills training in the nonprofit sector and then scaled up the programs when they were developing new curricula, such as the CAP-YEI model in Kenya and the AK model in Rwanda (Anosike, 2019; MasterCard Foundation, 2017).

BOX 16. KEY FACTS NIGERIA

Inclusion: curricula, national assessments

Target: Senior Secondary

Soft Skills: communication, organizational planning, teamwork, conscientiousness, ability to ask for help and adaptability

Programs: Microsoft and IYF's YEP

The new Senior Secondary curriculum emphasized technical, vocational, and entrepreneurial training. Moreover, trade and entrepreneurship became compulsory subjects for all students. Senior secondary students choose 1 of 34 trade subjects as part of their studies. Some descriptions of trade subject tracks, such as carpentry, printing, and decoration, mention soft skills. The most common soft skills are communication, organization and planning, teamwork, conscientiousness, ability to ask for help, and adaptability. However, not all trade subjects explicitly mention soft skills (Brown et al., 2015). To incorporate soft skills development into education, curriculum experts from the Nigerian National Education Research and Development Council authored a series of implementation guides that called for more active teaching approaches to engage students in critical thinking and problem solving. According to the Council, pedagogy and assessments should encourage students to respect a variety of cultures and views as well as instill a positive work ethic, which are important soft skills for workforce success (MasterCard Foundation, 2017).

States in Nigeria are responsible for the provision of education. Implementation of the new Senior Secondary curriculum varied depending on the resources available at the state level. For example, principals and department heads could choose which trades to offer based on the teachers and materials in place, as opposed to basing the decision on local market-demand. This approach contrasts with reform efforts in Kenya, where regular market scans provide continual feedback to inform programming (MasterCard Foundation, 2017). While the system in Nigeria allows states the flexibility to tailor training for youth, states with more committed leadership and access to greater financial and human capital resources, such as Kano State, are better positioned to offer more options as well as higher-quality training. In contrast, states, such as Pleateau State, can provide only limited technical assistance and teacher materials to teach soft skills through certain trades, which leaves their graduates at a disadvantage on national examinations and in the labor market (MasterCard Foundation, 2020).

Initiated in part to address these challenges, Nigeria Education Innovation Summits bring together government officials, researchers, civil society stakeholders, private sector groups, and donors. The annual

summit is intended to spark collaboration, innovation, and scaling of ideas between the public and private sector to improve education quality and accessibility, especially for marginalized groups. The goal of the summit is to scale successful innovations and embed them in government policies. Partnerships can be leveraged to increase funding and capacity for innovative approaches in the medium- and long-term (MasterCard Foundation, 2020). These innovation hubs may help increase the capacity and aptitude for innovative approaches to teaching soft skills, especially where resource gaps may exist.

Foreign investors, such as Microsoft, have also partnered with the public sector and invested in training disadvantaged Nigerian youth to improve their employability and civic engagement (FocusAfrica, 2010d). From 2007 to 2010, Microsoft's Community Affairs program in Africa and IYF joined forces to create YEP in Nigeria, Kenya, Tanzania, and Senegal. In Nigeria, YEP was managed by IYF, financed by Microsoft, and implemented by a local nonprofit organization, Leadership Effectiveness Accountability and Professionalism (LEAP) Africa. ICT training and the life skills curriculum for the program were informed by input from all three agencies. Microsoft contributed information on demand-driven training in ICT. IYF had experience in developing comprehensive approaches to supporting youth employability through a previous program in Latin America, *entra21*, and LEAP had a successful reputation for promoting youth leadership in Africa. In an evaluation of the program, 55 percent of youth in the follow-up cohort were employed, self-employed, had participated in an internship and/or community service, or had continued their studies after completing training (FocusAfrica, 2010d; IYF, 2011). Building strong public-private partnerships has the potential to spur more collaboration in curriculum design, program co-management, internships, and co-financing of workforce development programs that can be leveraged across SSA (Arias et al., 2019).

Guided by a strong vision to reduce youths' vulnerability to unemployment and conflict, the Federal Government of Nigeria prioritized technical, vocational, and entrepreneurial training, and incorporated soft skills into curriculum reform. However, not all trade subject tracks incorporate soft skills, and implementation by state governments has been uneven. Innovation summits introduce opportunities for public-private partnerships to pool resources and ideas to improve soft skills training and to reach more beneficiaries.

RWANDA

Set forth in Rwanda's *Vision 2020*, the Government of Rwanda aims to transform the country to middle-income status and a knowledge-based economy. To achieve this goal, education must be high-quality, relevant, effectively match skills training to labor market needs, and cultivate entrepreneurship among youth (MasterCard Foundation, 2017). In 2015, the Rwandan Government reformed general and technical secondary school curricula to integrate soft skills as part of its transition from a knowledge-based to a competency-based approach across all subject areas and levels of education. As part of this broad curriculum reform, schools received detailed instructional guidance about teaching both basic competencies including literacy, numeracy, entrepreneurship, and citizenship as well as cross-cutting competencies embedded within each subject, such as critical thinking, creativity and innovation, communication, research and problem solving, cooperation, and interpersonal relations (MasterCard

BOX 17. KEY FACTS RWANDA

Inclusion: competency-based curricula, national assessments, entrepreneurship & WRN! curriculum

Target: primary, secondary and TVET

Soft Skills: critical thinking, creativity, innovation, communication, problem solving, cooperation and interpersonal relations

Programs: Educate!, USAID HDAK, MasterCard and EDC's AK2 and AKA

Foundation, 2020). National exams assess students' mastery of all—including cross-cutting—competencies (MasterCard Foundation, 2017).

In 2015, two well-structured partnerships between NGOs and the government were essential to leveraging the government's curriculum reform efforts to embed soft skills into the new senior secondary entrepreneurship curriculum. First, the NGO Educate! partnered with the Rwanda Education Board (REB) to integrate Skills Labs and Business Clubs into the entrepreneurship curriculum (MasterCard Foundation, 2020). At the same time, the AK2 project, implemented by EDC, worked in close collaboration with Akazi Kanoze Access (AKA) and REB staff to also adapt and integrate its learner-centered WRN! curriculum into the same entrepreneurship curriculum. EDC had previously collaborated with the Workforce Development Authority to successfully embed the WRN! curriculum across TVET schools in Rwanda (Laterite Ltd., 2017). As a result, the WRN! curriculum now is taught across all general secondary schools and TVET institutions in Rwanda.

Educate!'s Skills Labs support interactive, student-centered, and experiential education pedagogy, such as incorporating debates and roleplay into instruction. Business Clubs allow students to practice generating business ideas and applying soft skills. In addition to providing technical support, Educate! tested a teacher training program called Educate! Exchange. This program aimed to scale Educate!'s skills-based, hands-on approach to learning by training and supporting teachers. In an RCT to test their model, Educate! found that teachers improved their adoption of and adherence to the Skills Labs lesson structure and the use of active instruction techniques. The study also found significant short-term improvements in soft skills and education outcomes for youth who participated in the Skills Labs. While it was too early to measure workforce outcomes, other research indicates that higher levels of soft skills and education may support youth economic success in the long term (Kautz et al., 2014; Pugatch & Blimpo, 2020). These results suggest that building teachers' capacity is critical for ensuring policy reform translates into effective practices within the classroom.

EDC previously developed the standards-based work readiness curriculum, WRN!, specifically for youth workforce development programming in Rwanda. This curriculum is associated with higher levels of employment and teamwork, among other workforce and soft skills outcomes (Alcid, 2015). The WRN! curriculum focuses on setting goals, communication skills, work habits, leadership, financial literacy, and entrepreneurship among youth. AKA, a local NGO created as the sustainability mechanism of the original AK project, continues to train master trainers and teachers and certify participants in the WRN! curriculum in support of the nationwide curriculum roll out. The successful adoption of EDC's WRN! at a national scale demonstrates shifting attitudes among government officials, donors, teachers, and youth about the importance of soft skills training and highlights the importance of leveraging opportune moments to advocate for curriculum integration and scale up.

The adoption of the WRN! curriculum is also noteworthy in that the concepts of soft skills and work-based learning (WBL) have only started gaining traction in Rwanda in the last decade (EDC, 2021). One component of all AK projects is WBL, in which students job shadow or visit various workplaces and participate in internships. As a result, students may pursue employment opportunities through their WBL experiences or engage in entrepreneurial endeavors. However, youth demand for WBL opportunities outweigh the supply, and the limited private sector engagement reportedly in programming components, such as curriculum development, internships, and apprenticeships, has been a challenge. Likewise, there are limited employment opportunities in the formal private sector in Rwanda, and opportunities for

disadvantaged youth are even more limited. An estimated 99.5 percent of private enterprises in the country are small (Monschein et al., 2019), which translates to few opportunities for youth to apply soft skills training, seek internships and apprenticeships, and ultimately gain employment. Youth from rural areas are at a particular disadvantage because private sector presence tends to be concentrated in urban areas. During FGDs, HDAK youth revealed that the absence of post-HDAK internship or apprenticeship opportunities was a major obstacle to finding employment. They also recommended that all youth-serving implementation partners should offer WBL. In interviews, USAID staff and other donors recognized these challenges and were working to strengthen relationships with the private sector to ensure workforce development programs are more demand-driven (EDC, 2021; Monschein et al., 2019).

In sum, the Rwandan Government has worked diligently to scale up effective youth workforce development programs, such as Educate! and AK. Entrepreneurship curriculum development, implementation, and evaluation relied on collaboration across government ministries, NGOs, donors, and researchers. While scaling efforts have been successful in reaching youth in secondary schools and TVET institutions, obstacles remain in securing opportunities for youth to apply their soft skills in the private sector.

SOUTH AFRICA

While the Government of South Africa has integrated soft skills into their TVET programs, it has also undergone comprehensive curricular reform over the past decade to integrate these skills into all levels of basic education (grades R-12).[19] Thus, this case study of South Africa will focus on the curricular reform rather than the integration of soft skills in TVET programs discussed in most other case studies presented in this section.

BOX 18. KEY FACTS SOUTH AFRICA

Inclusion: Curriculum Assessment Policy Statements, Life Skills (grades 1-6), Life Orientation (grades 7-12) and TVET curricula

Target: primary, secondary, and TVET

Soft Skills: problem solving, critical and creative thinking, cooperation, critically evaluate information, communication and responsibility, among others

Programs: government-run, formal education

Since the early 2000s, the South African basic education curriculum has explicitly included soft skills, termed "non-traditional" skills, such as life orientation, problem solving, critical and creative thinking, and teamwork. From 2002 to 2012, teachers could develop their own content to teach these skills as long as they achieved the broad outcomes outlined in the curricular policy. However, starting in 2012, Curriculum Assessment Policy Statements (CAPS) were rolled out in stages across all grade levels and replaced the previous curriculum. The CAPS provide comprehensive guidance for learning and teaching across subjects and further development of soft skills. In particular, the CAPS aim to produce learners that can identify and solve problems, make decisions using critical and creative thinking, work effectively with others, critically evaluate information, communicate effectively, and show responsibility toward the environment and others. They also provide a more standardized and specific way of teaching and assessing students based on their acquired knowledge (Care et al., 2017).

Teaching soft skills is explicitly embedded in the primary and secondary level curriculum. In primary school (grades 1-6) Life Skills, which is required for all students, covers four main areas—beginning knowledge

[19] Grade R is "reception," which is for students ages five and six and similar to pre-primary and kindergarten in other education systems.

(e.g., relationships, interdependence, communication), personal and social well-being, creative arts, and physical education—through which students develop knowledge, skills, and values, including communication, creativity, social and interpersonal skills, moral responsibility, self-confidence, self-discipline, and cultural values (Care et al., 2017). Six hours per week is dedicated to teaching Life Skills in grades 1 and 2 and seven hours in grade 3, which is the equivalent amount of time dedicated to math. In grades 4-6, Life Skills receives four hours per week of instructional time (math receives six). Guidelines for assessment of Life Skills are provided but are broad, such as keeping notes in an observation book. Additionally, results of ongoing skills assessments are to be reported to parents (Republic of South Africa, Department of Basic Education, 2011a). Life Orientation, (Grades 7-12), which builds on Life Skills, is also required and aims to prepare students for life and work in modern society through four main learning goals: 1) personal well-being, 2) citizenship education, 3) recreation and physical well-being, and 4) career and career choices. Across Grades 7-12, Life Orientation receives two hours of instructional time (and math, four and a half hours) per week. Guidelines for informal and formal assessment of Life Orientation are also provided, including projects and case studies along with other sample activities/tasks (Republic of South Africa, Department of Basic Education, 2011b).

Qualitative research showed that while teachers, administrators, and parents recognize that soft skills—or 21st century skills—are embedded in the curriculum, implementation challenges include a lack of resources and funding, curriculum driven by assessments with an over emphasis on content, and a lack of teacher capacity to teach soft skills as intended (Care et al., 2017). Nonetheless, South Africa presents a model of how a sub-Saharan country can achieve comprehensive curriculum reform that integrates life skills into all levels of basic education.

TANZANIA

Over the past ten years, the Government of Tanzania has developed policy and capacity for teaching soft skills across all levels of the formal education system. Notably, pre-service teacher education also fosters these skills. In 2010, the Government of Tanzania adopted a *National Life Skills Education Framework* (Dupuy et al., 2018). This document defines life skills based on UNICEF's definition, "a large group of psycho-social and interpersonal skills which can help people make informed decisions, communicate effectively, and develop coping and self-management skills that may help them lead a healthy and productive life" (Republic of Tanzania, Ministry of Education and Vocational Training [MoEVT], 2010, p. 6). The two main areas of skills development outlined in the framework are self-awareness and social skills, with cognitive skills supporting the latter. Self-awareness encompasses self-efficacy, self-control, self-assessment, managing emotions and stress, recognizing and managing values, goal setting, resilience, and time management. Social skills include communication, friendship formation, assertiveness, negotiation/refusal, cooperation, empathy, peer support and resistance, conflict management, and team and community building. Cognitive skills include critical and creative thinking, informed decision making, problem solving, and analytical skills (Republic of Tanzania, MoEVT, 2010).

BOX 19. KEY FACTS TANZANIA

Inclusion: National Life Skills Education Framework

Target: primary, secondary, and TVET

Soft Skills: 1) self-awareness such as self-efficacy, self-control, goal setting, resilience, and time management; 2) social, such as communication, assertiveness, negotiation, cooperation, empathy among others; and 3) cognitive, such as critical thinking, decision making, and problem solving

Programs: 27 government, NGO, and community-run programs

Guidelines provided by the MoEVT in the *National Life Skills Education Framework* dictate that life skills, along with HIV/AIDS, education should be taught within specific subjects. The guidelines indicate that life skills should be taught in the following levels and subjects: primary school, in science and social studies; in lower secondary, in biology and civics; in upper secondary, in general studies and biology; in teacher certificate programs, in civics and science; and in diploma programs, in general studies and biology (Republic of Tanzania, MoEVT, 2010). The *National Life Skills Education Framework* also acknowledge that life skills are not explicitly included in the curriculum, and as such, teachers currently lack specific guidance on how to develop and implement life skills activities in the classroom. Furthermore, it states that "participatory and experiential methodologies are key to successful implementation of life skills education" (p. 7.) Additionally, the framework asserts that life skills should be taught to children and adolescents who are not in school through programs led by the Ministry of Labour, Employment and Youth Development (MLEYD). The MLEYD programs have been developing their own life skills framework that, according to the MoEVT Framework, must be harmonized with the *National Life Skills Education Framework* (Republic of Tanzania, MoEVT, 2010). Finally, the *National Life Skills Education Framework* lays out goals and strategies for achieving effective implementation, including teacher training, materials development, harmonization with existing curricula, and coordination across government entities, NGOs, and civil society.

According to a study of nonformal life skills programs in Tanzania (Dupuy et al., 2018), there is no standardized curriculum across all programming for out-of-school children and youth. The researchers identified 27 organizations implementing life skills programs in Tanzania, the majority of which were established by NGOs (41 percent) and the public sector (12 percent), while a quarter of them had multiple partners, and the rest were established by youth (8 percent) or community groups (12 percent). The study also found that 55 percent of the 27 programs sampled had trained personnel teaching program content, and 18 percent used professional teachers.[20] Program instructors included regularly employed teachers, NGO-trained instructors, facilitators, mentors, and counselors; students and junior leaders who had received peer training; and government officials. Most programs (95 percent) reported that their teaching staff used a combination of pedagogical methods, including participatory and interactive methods, mentoring and counseling, lectures, group work and discussion, and practical field training. For the roughly 260 youth surveyed, overall satisfaction with trainings was high. In terms of relevance to their current needs, 79 percent rated training as "very good," and 19 percent as "good." Respondents reported specific skills they learned and benefited from the most included negotiation, self-awareness, self-confidence, self-discipline, leadership, decision making, and maintaining good social relationships (Dupuy et al., 2018).

Despite the positive findings, qualitative data from the study found that most participants seemed to equate vocational skills with life skills. It also found that programs are not necessarily teaching the skills that women want and value for their future. These skills include health-related skills, for which the authors recommended a more participatory, bottom-up approach to program design processes to ensure alignment of program content with the needs of participants. However, it is promising that soft skill development in Tanzania is backed by a national policy framework with specific guidelines for its implementation.

[20] In the study, 26 percent did not provide this information.

UGANDA

Uganda has incorporated soft skills training at the upper secondary level within their entrepreneurship training. As in the case of other countries presented in this section, the government identified and scaled up an existing successful model in the country. Like Rwanda, the Ugandan Government adopted Educate!'s curriculum, which had been operating in some Ugandan secondary schools since 2009 and was gradually expanding. Also similar to the case of Rwanda, Educate! was able to take advantage of a moment when Uganda was undergoing curricular reform to advocate for the inclusion of soft skills, which was facilitated by their strong relationships with the government and the International Labor Organization. Their collective efforts resulted in the Ministry of Education's adoption of the Educate! curriculum within the new, national upper secondary entrepreneurship subject, which was rolled out in 2012 (Kwauk & Perlman Robinson, 2016).

BOX 20. KEY FACTS UGANDA

Inclusion: entrepreneurship curriculum and national assessments

Target: upper secondary

Soft Skills: self-confidence, communication, and leadership

Programs: Educate!

The Educate! program targets students in their last two years of secondary schools (around 16 to 17 years old) and incorporates mentorship, experiential learning, and continued support following graduation from secondary school. Mentors are recent graduates from local universities who receive training before assignment to work with four partner schools. Each mentor works directly with students to help cultivate noncognitive skills such as self-confidence, communication, and leadership. They also deliver a two-year formal entrepreneurship and leadership course for developing practical business skills and bring in experts from different industries to provide additional hands-on, specialized training for students (Results for Development Institute, 2013). The program requires students to start their own businesses to tackle issues in their community. Student-run Business Clubs provide students with guidance how to effectively run their businesses.

In 2012, the Government of Uganda adopted a new curriculum that institutionalized Business Clubs and social entrepreneurship into the national system. Additionally, the government followed Educate!'s advice and revised the national exam in entrepreneurship to evaluate what students do in their Business Clubs and how they assess markets. This shift has incentivized students to start businesses while in school. Moreover, the program's reach continues to grow. In 2015, it was present in 252 schools reaching 90,000 youth. The goal is to scale up to all 1,000 schools offering entrepreneurship in the country and to provide training for 100,000 youth (Kwauk & Perlman Robinson, 2016).

In sum, Uganda currently has a national curriculum for entrepreneurship for secondary students that will soon be available for all upper secondary students. However, it is unclear if students not in the entrepreneurship track also have the opportunity to develop soft skills to the degree which out-of-school youth can access such training. Additionally, unlike other countries, it appears that Uganda has not yet integrated soft skills at the primary level. Nonetheless, Uganda offers a successful model to scale up and institutionalize an entrepreneurship program that includes soft skills training within its formal secondary educations system.

SUPPORTING GOVERNMENTS IN ADOPTING AND SCALING UP SOFT SKILLS TRAINING

Formalizing soft skills development in SSA has recently gained traction. More governments are developing policy frameworks and curricula that acknowledge the importance of soft skills, often with the support of donors (e.g., USAID, UNICEF, DFID), multilateral organizations (e.g., World Bank), NGOs (e.g., Educate!), and private sector foundations (e.g., Microsoft, MasterCard Foundation). Adopting and scaling up effective models of soft skills training can be facilitated by a range of factors, several of which are discussed in the previous sections. This section presents common themes across government initiatives to facilitate scale and sustainability of soft skills training for youth in SSA.

Competency-based curricular reforms present opportunities for governments to integrate soft skills into the formal education system. In some sub-Saharan countries, needs analyses spearheaded by the government kickstarted curricular reform. In Kenya, the TVET Authority used two sources to inform changes in the education system: 1) a training needs analysis completed by the Kenya Institute for Curriculum Development, and 2) the Kenya Youth Assessment report of 2014, completed by USAID and FHI 360. They concluded that soft or transferable skills training could address youth unemployment. Similarly, in Rwanda, the REB's Skills Survey of 2012 identified a gap in training on technical and soft skills, such as leadership, business communication, and innovation (MasterCard Foundation, 2017). A lack of soft skills instruction may relate to the type of curricula formerly used in these countries. Typically, content-based curricula use traditional, didactic teaching methods, which can limit the cultivation of soft skills (Care et al., 2017). By contrast, competency-based curricula emphasize the mastery of skills and abilities and has recently replaced content-based curricula in several SSA countries. As governments shift to competency-based curricula, advocates can leverage these key opportunities to integrate successful models of soft skills programs into formal education systems, as in the cases of Kenya, Rwanda, and Uganda.

National assessments that measure soft skills development may incentivize teaching and learning soft skills. In a case study of middle school curriculum reform designed for Senegalese students to develop critical thinking skills, goal setting, and community connections, teachers reported spending more time planning their lessons, researching new materials, and introducing interactive teaching methods in their classrooms (Burnett & Jayaram, 2012). In Rwanda, teachers in secondary schools implementing the new entrepreneurship curriculum reported scheduling longer class sessions to incorporate active instruction techniques (Pugatch & Blimpo, 2020). Given the extra time and work required to prepare, teachers may be reluctant to adopt interactive pedagogy that encourage soft skills development. Teachers can be incentivized to teach soft skills if it is part of how students are assessed. For example, an interview with Educate! staff revealed that teachers in Rwanda experience pressure related to high stakes testing and are hesitant to teach any content that will not be tested.[21] As such, developing national assessments for soft skills may encourage teacher buy-in and lead to greater fidelity in implementation. (Care et al., 2017). Governments can leverage technical assistance from NGOs, researchers and experts in addition to existing assessments such as Educate!'s Secondary Skills Assessment Tool to develop soft skills assessments that can ensure scale-up efforts are data-driven.

Including a wide range of actors in technical working groups fosters contextualization and ownership of soft skills initiatives. Involving diverse stakeholders of workforce and soft skill training programs creates opportunities for mutual learning and fosters ownership. Furthermore, it ensures that

[21] Interview with Educate! staff members Mahoney, M., & Bulayev, B. (2021, Mar. 16).

curriculum and programs are locally contextualized and harmonized with other subjects and materials. Institutional knowledge from local leaders is instrumental in successfully incorporating innovative approaches to teaching soft skills. Successful models of this include the adoption of the WRN! Curriculum in Rwanda and the Educate! curriculum in Uganda. Similar efforts are also currently taking place in Liberia. USAID/Liberia staff explained that one of the most important strategies used for fostering government adoption and scale up of soft skills training was to create a technical working group with leaders in government as well as local and international NGOs implementing programs.[22] The working group collaboratively drafted curriculum incorporating soft skills for the Ministry of Education and ensured all parties had the opportunity to provide feedback. Steps to integrate soft skills training built on previous activities with soft skills components in Liberia, including the USAID-supported Accelerated Learning Program for Positive Living and United Service (2006-2009) and the AYP (2011-2016). As a result, the Ministry of Education and local vocational organizations responsible for nonformal training developed ownership over the curriculum. HDAK in Rwanda also developed a strong working relationship with the Ministry of Public Service and Labor and the Ministry of Education, which facilitated the integration of the WRN! curriculum into the national technical education curriculum (Monschein et al., 2019). The success of this initiative has relied on the presence of multiple stakeholders at the table, especially those with knowledge of the country context and those familiar with successful models of soft skills training.

Securing multiple local champions across a range of stakeholders helps to establish lasting, sustainable change. IYF staff stressed the importance of working through local staff and local champions to cultivate support from a wide range of stakeholders, including government officials. For this to happen, it is essential for the program to be locally led and to embed staff within government systems—some as part of the vocational training system, some in higher education institutions, and some in the Ministry of Education working on curriculum development. These staff navigate systems, manage relationships, and work on incorporating life skills into the national curriculum. IYF explained that local staff are more likely to know if and where similar interventions are being instituted, to avoid duplicating similar efforts. For example, IYF staff are currently working with the Ministry of Education in Mozambique where a national curriculum that includes life skills is in development. If identified early, local champions from all levels and backgrounds play key roles in supporting education reform, advocating for soft skills training, and scaling up effective teaching practices. In Rwanda, AK leveraged champions in the Ministries of Labor, Education, and Youth, the Rwanda Development Board, and other local NGOs. Scale-up efforts required coordination across multiple government agencies because issues addressed in the program cut across various mandates. Additionally, relying on only one local champion can be risky due to turnover in ministry and agency positions (Kohl & French, 2014). Securing multiple champions from the private sector and civil society can help maintain support for soft skills programs and policies despite leadership changes.

In conclusion, a number of governments in SSA have made significant investments in developing soft skills curricula and scaling up effective soft skills programs. Adopting and integrating soft skills training into education systems requires collaboration across stakeholder groups. The countries and approaches profiled in this section reveal important lessons for the growing number of SSA countries interested in soft skills development programs and models to achieve sustainability and scale.

[22] Interview with USAID/Liberia staff member Nyumah, M. (2021, Feb. 18).

KEY TAKEAWAYS: SOFT SKILLS IN SECONDARY EDUCATION AND WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT TRAINING IN SSA

Based on the literature retrieved, several key trends emerged on how soft skills are being incorporated into secondary education and workforce training across SSA:

- Several sub-Saharan countries have recently undergone education curriculum reform. Curriculum design and implementation, particularly for competency-based curricula, present opportunities for governments to integrate soft skills into multiple levels of the formal education system.
- Governments across SSA have developed policies and curricula for integrating soft skills training for children and youth at different levels of formal and informal education. Yet less is known about the degree to which these policies and curricula are implemented, and what improvements can be made to ensure implementation is effective.
- Teachers and students are more likely to shift their mindsets toward accepting soft skills training if national assessments are used to measure soft skills development.
- Scale up and sustainability efforts require engaging governments, implementers, donors, researchers, and the private sector. Collaboration through technical working groups is an example of an effective way to foster ownership over initiatives.
- Multiple local champions embedded in different sectors, including different levels of government, help foster ownership and facilitate sustainability and scale of soft skills and workforce development training in SSA.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Evidence from this literature review points to the following recommendations for programming and research in SSA. Governments, donors, implementers, and researchers seeking to support youth workforce development can draw from these recommendations for defining soft skills, understanding the impact of soft skills on workforce outcomes, teaching and nurturing soft skills, and considering how soft skills are included in programs and schools in SSA.

DEFINING SOFT SKILLS IN SUB-SAHARAN AFRICA

PROGRAMMING

1. Select and explicitly define which soft skills to target during the program design phase and utilize assessment tools that specifically measure those skills. This, which enables researchers and policymakers across SSA to compare programs and youth outcomes more easily.
2. Consider how soft skills might produce outcomes across different sectors and for different groups of youth. For example, soft skills training might be adapted for conflict-affected areas in SSA where youth need an emphasis on resilience for workforce success and well-being.
3. Determine early in the program design phase how to measure and evaluate soft skills will be measured and evaluated early in the program design phase.

RESEARCH

1. Assess biases that may be interfere with accurate measurements of youth soft skills development. Design ways to mitigate bias by adopting alternative measures to triangulate data.
2. Measure soft skills along different critical points of the intervention, including baseline, midline, and endline, to determine how youth in SSA have progressed over time. Short-term outcomes may differ from long-term outcomes, so both should be assessed.
3. Utilize tools that have been assessed for reliability and validity across countries and contexts, particularly for research in SSA and LMICs.

IMPACT OF SOFT SKILLS ON WORKFORCE OUTCOMES

PROGRAMMING

1. Combine soft skills training, technical training, and job placement support for better youth workforce outcomes in SSA.
2. Incorporate PI training into workforce development programs targeting youth in SSA to improve soft skills and entrepreneurship skills.
3. For conflict-affected youth in SSA, target skills such as building confidence, self-efficacy, resilience, leadership, decision making, and conflict management in workforce development training.
4. For women, target skills that lead to improved entrepreneurship and earnings, among other positive workforce outcomes. Key soft skills include leadership, conflict resolution, self-confidence, negotiation, and decision making.

RESEARCH

1. Build rigorous evaluation designs into the program prior to implementation for a better understanding of specific soft skills driving workforce outcomes in SSA.
2. Direct research to understand why soft skills training may benefit women, youth with disabilities, and youth in conflict-affected regions differently.
3. Analyze causal mechanisms linking soft skills and workforce outcomes for youth in conflict-affected regions in SSA and on the specific mechanisms that may cause women to benefit more than men in soft skills training programs.

TEACHING AND NURTURING SOFT SKILLS

PROGRAMMING

1. Invest in targeted recruitment and outreach efforts that will benefit marginalized youth in SSA by using and/or gathering relevant information to identify the target population.
2. Embrace participatory and interactive pedagogy that gives youth opportunities to practice key soft skills.
3. Create safe spaces, build community relationships, and expand social networks to promote soft skills interventions and convey the important role of soft skills in workforce success in SSA.
4. Embed soft skills across all levels of education and ensure continuity in curriculum and programming between primary, secondary, and tertiary education to ensure all children and youth across SSA have ample opportunities to develop these critical skills prior to entering the labor market.

RESEARCH

1. Research targeting and recruitment methods to determine causal links between teaching strategies and youth retention, soft skills development, and workforce outcomes.
2. Track the impact of strong facilitators, mentors, social networks, and additional follow-up support services on youth soft skills and workforce outcomes in the long-term to understand the benefit of investing in follow up.
3. Examine how barriers to teaching and nurturing soft skills impact participation in training, soft skills development, and workforce outcomes. Evaluate which strategies are most effective in mitigating challenges for youth in SSA.

SOFT SKILLS IN SECONDARY EDUCATION AND WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT TRAINING IN SUB-SAHARAN AFRICA

PROGRAMMING

1. Identify successful and sustainable (e.g., cost, technical capacity) soft skills and workforce development models to gradually scale up and expand reach to youth across SSA that are within the formal education system and out-of-school youth.
2. In sub-Saharan African countries that have policy frameworks, support successful implementation through curriculum reform and training and materials for teachers. In the absence of policy frameworks, advocacy efforts should prioritize the establishment of a comprehensive life skills framework.
3. Embed soft skills training within pre-service teacher education to strengthen teachers own skills and also to equip them to effectively apply these them skills in the classroom with students.
4. Establish working groups and engage local champions from different sectors and levels of government early in implementation to share innovative approaches to incorporating soft skills in future programming and curriculum reform.
5. Prioritize private sector engagement during program design and implementation to a) ensure curriculum and programming aligns to the most up- to- date market needs in SSA, and to b) leverage their private sector networks, expertise, resources, and employment opportunities for youth.

RESEARCH

1. In sub-Saharan African countries that have adopted and scaled up soft skills training, conduct research on the effectiveness of soft skills instruction and identification of knowledge and skills that teachers need to strengthen.
2. Examine primary, secondary, and tertiary level instructional materials such as textbooks and storybooks to identify opportunities to embed soft skills content across subject areas.

REFERENCES

Acevedo, P., Cruces, G., Gertler, P., & Martínez, S. (2017). *Living Up to Expectations: How Job Training Made Women Better Off and Men Worse Off*. National Bureau for Economic Research (NBER) Working Paper No. 23264. https://www.nber.org/papers/w23264.

Adhvaryu, A., Kala, N., & Nyshadham, A. (2018). *The Skills to Pay the Bills: Returns to On-the-job Soft Skills Training*. NBER Working Paper No. 24313. DOI: 10.3386/w24313.

Adoho, F., Chakravarty, S., Korkoyah, D.T., Lundberg, M., & Tasneem, A. (2014). *The Impact of an Adolescent Girls Employment Program: The EPAG Project in Liberia*. Policy Research Working Paper. The World Bank. https://doi.org/10.1596/1813-9450-6832.

African Union. (AU). (2006). *Second Decade of Education for Africa (2006-2015): Plan of Action*. http://www.unesco.org/new/fileadmin/MULTIMEDIA/FIELD/Dakar/pdf/AU%20SECOND%20DECADE%20ON%20EDUCTAION%202006-2015.pdf.

Akyeampong, K. (2014). Reconceptualised life skills in secondary education in the African context: Lessons learnt from reforms in Ghana. *International Review of Education 60*(2), 217-234. http://www.jstor.org/stable/24636724.

Alcid, A. (2014). *A Randomized Controlled Trial of Akazi Kanoze Youth in Rural Rwanda.* Education Development Center, Inc. https://www.edc.org/randomized-controlled-trial-akazi-kanoze-youth-rural-rwanda.

Alcid, A. (2015). *A Study of the WRN! Credential Test's Relationship to Youth Jobs and Employer Satisfaction.* Education Development Center, Inc. https://www.edc.org/study-wrn-credential%E2%80%99s-relationship-youth-jobs-and-employer-satisfaction.

Alcid, A. & Martin, G. (2017). *Akazi Kanoze 2: Workforce Readiness and Employment Outcomes.* Education Development Center, Inc. https://www.edc.org/sites/default/files/uploads/AK2_RCT_Year1.pdf.

Alibhai, S., Buehren, N., & Papineni, S. (2016). *From Learning to Earning: An Impact Evaluation of the Digital Opportunity Trust (DOT) Entrepreneurship Training.* Policy Brief Issue 17. World Bank Group Gender Innovation Lab. https://openknowledge.worldbank.org/handle/10986/25450.

Alibhai, S., Buehren, N., Frese, M., Goldstein, M., Papineni, S., & Wolf, K. (2019). *Full Esteem Ahead? Mindset-Oriented Business Training In Ethiopia*. Policy Research Working Paper No. 8892. The World Bank. https://openknowledge.worldbank.org/handle/10986/31905.

Allemano, E. & Dieng, A. (2016). *YouthMap Senegal: Jeunes Agriculteurs Pilot Project Performance Evaluation*. USAID. https://pdf.usaid.gov/pdf_docs/PA00KZQG.pdf.

Alvarado, G., Skinner, M., Plaut, D., Moss, C., Kapungu, C., & Reavley, N. (2017). *A Systematic Review of Positive Youth Development Programs in Low-and Middle-income Countries*. YouthPower Learning, Making Cents International. https://pdf.usaid.gov/pdf_docs/PA00MR58.pdf.

Alvares de Azevedo, T., Davis, J., Ignatowski, C., & Tolani, N. (2018). *Synthesis of Findings and Lessons Learned from USAID-funded Evaluations, Education Sector 2013-2016*. USAID. https://pdf.usaid.gov/pdf_docs/PA00T1HD.pdf.

Amin, S., Ahmed, J., Saha., J., Hossain, M.I., & Haque, E.F. (2016). *Delaying Child Marriage through Community-based Skills-development Programs for Girls: Results from a Randomized Controlled Study in Rural Bangladesh.* Population Council. https://www.popcouncil.org/uploads/pdfs/2016PGY_BALIKA_EndlineReport.pdf.

Anosike, P. (2019). Entrepreneurship education as human capital: Implications for youth self-employment and conflict mitigation in Sub-Saharan Africa. *Industry & Higher Education 33*(1), 42-54. https://doi.org/10.1177/0950422218812631.

Arias, O., Evans, D.K., & Santos, I. (2019). *The Skills Balancing Act in sub-Saharan Africa. Investing in Skills for Productivity, Inclusivity, and Adaptability.* Agence française de développement & the World Bank. https://openknowledge.worldbank.org/handle/10986/31723.

Asante Africa Foundation, Inc. (2019). *Transforming Vulnerable Girls to Entrepreneurial Women Through Leadership, Livelihood and Entrepreneurship Skills*. USAID YouthPower Learning. https://asanteafrica.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/01/FINAL-YLP-Summary-Report-2019-.pdf.

Auten, S., Dabla, A., & Bassie, M. (2016). *Advancing Youth Project Performance Evaluation*. USAID.

Azevedo, T. A. D., Davis, J., & Charles, M. (2013). *Testing What Works in Youth Employment: Evaluating Kenya's Ninaweza Program*. Global Partnership for Youth Employment. https://iyfglobal.org/library/testing-what-works-youth-employment-evaluating-kenyas-ninaweza-program.

Bandiera, O., Buehren, N., Burgess, R., Goldstein, M., Gulesci, S., Rasul, I., & Sulaiman, M. (2020). Women's empowerment in action: Evidence from a randomized control trial in Africa. *American Economic Journal: Applied Economics 12*(1), 210-259. https://doi.org/10.1257/app.20170416.

Banks, N. (2015). *What Works for Young People's Development? A Case Study of BRAC's Empowerment and Livelihoods for Adolescent Girls Programme in Uganda and Tanzania.* http://dx.doi.org/10.2139/ssrn.2561234.

Barkess, P. (2016). *Programa para o Futuro (PPF) MZ Review Exercise*.

Barrerra-Osorio, F., Kugler, A.D., & Silliman, M.I. (2020). *Hard and Soft Skills in Vocational Training: Experimental Evidence from Colombia*. NBER Working Paper No. 27548. DOI: 10.3386/w27548.

Bassi, V. & Nansamba, A. (2021). *Screening and Signaling Non-cognitive Skills: Experimental Evidence from Uganda*. USC-INET Research Paper No. 19-08. http://dx.doi.org/10.2139/ssrn.3268523.

Benet-Martínez, V., & John, O. P. (1998). Los Cinco Grandes across cultures and ethnic groups: Multitrait-multimethod analyses of the Big Five in Spanish and English. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology 75*(3), 729-750. DOI: 10.1037//0022-3514.75.3.729.

Benson, P. L., Scales, P. C., & Syvertsen, A. K. (2011). The contribution of the developmental assets framework to positive youth development theory and practice. *Advances in Child Development and Behavior 41*, 197-230. https://doi.org/10.1016/B978-0-12-386492-5.00008-7.

Berg, J., Osher, D., Same, M. R., Nolan, E., Benson, D., & Jacobs, N. (2017). *Identifying, Defining, and Measuring Social and Emotional Competencies*. American Institutes for Research. https://www.air.org/sites/default/files/downloads/report/Identifying-Defining-and-Measuring-Social-and-Emotional-Competencies-December-2017-rev.pdf.

Bitga, A., Feige, D., & Pallatino, C. (2020). *Study on the Use of Effectuation Theory in Youth Entrepreneurship Education and Training Programs*. USAID's YouthPower Learning. https://www.youthpower.org/resources/study-use-effectuation-theory-youth-entrepreneurship-education-and-training-programs.

Blades, R., Fauth, B., & Gibb, J. (2012). *Measuring Employability Skills: A Rapid Review to Inform Development of Tools for Project Evaluation.* National Children's Bureau. https://www.partners4value.lt/wp-content/uploads/2015/10/Measuring-Employability-Skills.pdf.

Blattman, C., Green, E., Annan, J., Jamison, J. (2013). *Building Women's Economic and Social Empowerment through Enterprise: An Experimental Assessment of the Women's Income Generating Support Program in Uganda*. Logica study series no. 1. World Bank. https://openknowledge.worldbank.org/handle/10986/17862.

Blattman, C., & Annan, J. (2016). Can employment reduce lawlessness and rebellion? A field experiment with high-risk men in a fragile state. *American Political Science Review 110*(1), 1-17. https://doi.org/10.7910/DVN/11R0LX.

Blattman, C. & Ralston, L. (2015). *Generating Employment in Poor and Fragile States- Evidence from Labor Market and Entrepreneurship Programs*. http://dx.doi.org/10.2139/ssrn.2622220.

Blum, R., More, A.D., Moroz, E., Felix, E., Alldredge, J. M., & Jessee, C. (2020). *Review of YouthPower Activities*. USAID. https://www.edu-links.org/resources/review-youthpower-activities-2015-2020.

Botea, I., Chakravarty, S., & Haddock, S. (2015). *The Adolescent Girls Initiative in Rwanda*. The World Bank Group. http://documents1.worldbank.org/curated/ar/642841468190152265/pdf/100445-WP-PUBLIC-Box393234B-Rwanda-AGI-Evaluation-Final-Report-June.pdf.

Brady, K., & Aleixo, A. (2018). *YouthPower Action/Programa Para O Futuro Expansion - Mozambique*. USAID. https://www.youthpower.org/sites/default/files/YouthPower/files/resources/Final%20Report%20YP%20Mozambique%20-%20FINAL.pdf.

Briones, R. (2011). *Workforce Development Initiatives for Out-of-school Youth - What Works?* USAID. http://idd.edc.org/resources/publications/workforce-development-initiatives-out-school-youth-what-works.

Brown, A., Rankin, K., Picon, M., & Cameron, D. (2015). *The State of Evidence on the Impact of Transferable Skills Programming on Youth in Low- and Middle-income Countries*. International Initiative

for Impact Evaluation (3ie) Scoping paper 4. 3ie. https://www.3ieimpact.org/evidence-hub/publications/scoping-reports/state-evidence-impact-transferable-skills-programming.

Buehren, N., Chakravarty, S., Goldstein, M., Slavchevska, V., & Sulaiman, M. (2017). *Adolescent Girls' Empowerment in Conflict-Affected Settings: Experimental Evidence from South Sudan*. https://bigd.bracu.ac.bd/publications/adolescent-girls-empowerment-in-conflict-affected-settings-experimental-evidence-from-south-sudan/.

Burnett, N. & Jayaram, S. (2012). *Skills for Employability in Africa and Asia*. Results for Development Institute. https://silo.tips/download/skills-for-employability-in-africa-and-asia.

Campos, F., Frese, M., Goldstein, M., Iacovone, L., Johnson, H.C., McKenzie, D., & Mensmann, M. (2017). Teaching personal initiative beats traditional training in boosting small business in West Africa. *Science 357*(6357), 1287-1290. https://science.sciencemag.org/content/357/6357/1287.

Care, E., Kim, H., Anderson, K., & Gustafsson-Wright, E. (2017). *Skills for a Changing World: National Perspectives and the Global Movement*. Center for Universal Education at Brookings. https://www.brookings.edu/wp-content/uploads/2017/03/global-20170324-skills-for-a-changing-world.pdf.

CASEL. (2020). *CASEL's SEL Framework: What are the Core Competence Areas and Why are They Promoted*? https://casel.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/12/CASEL-SEL-Framework-11.2020.pdf.

Catalano, R. F., Skinner, M. L., Alvarado, G., Kapungu, C., Reavley, N., Patton, G. C., Jessee, C., Plaut, D., Moss, C., Bennett, K., Sawyer, S.M., Sebany, M., Sexton, C., Olenik, C., & Petroni, S. (2019). Positive youth development programs in low-and middle-income countries: A conceptual framework and systematic review of efficacy. *Journal of Adolescent Health 65*(1), 15-31. DOI: 10.1016/j.jadohealth.2019.01.024.

Center for the Economics of Human Development. (2015). *Conference on Measuring and Assessing Skills Report*. University of Chicago. https://cehd.uchicago.edu/?page_id=269.

Chakravarty, S., Lundberg, M., Nikolov, P., & Zenker, J. (2016). *The Role of Training Programs for Youth Employment in Nepal. Impact Evaluation Report on the Employment Fund.* Policy Research Working Paper No. 7656. The World Bank. https://openknowledge.worldbank.org/handle/10986/24232.

Chakravarty, S., Das, S., & Vaillant, J. (2017). *Gender and Youth Employment in Sub-Saharan Africa: A Review of Constraints and Effective Ißnterventions*. Policy Research Working Paper No. 8245. The World Bank. https://openknowledge.worldbank.org/handle/10986/28905.

Chioda, L. & Gertler, P. (2020a). *Educate! RCT 4-Year Follow-On (Interpretation Memo)*. U.K. Department for International Development (DFID). https://www.gov.uk/research-for-development-outputs/educate-rct-4-year-follow-on-interpretation-memo.

Chioda, L. & Gertler, P. (2020b). *Soft Skills and Entrepreneurship Training for Secondary School Students in Uganda.* Innovations for Poverty Action. https://www.poverty-action.org/study/soft-skills-and-entrepreneurship-training-secondary-school-students-uganda.

Cho, Y. & Honorati, M. (2013). *Entrepreneurship programs in developing countries: A meta regression analysis.* Policy Research Working Paper No. 6402. The World Bank. https://openknowledge.worldbank.org/handle/10986/13199.

Cook, G. & Younis, A. (2012). *Somalia Youth Livelihoods Program Final Evaluation.* USAID/Somalia. http://www.careevaluations.org/wp-content/uploads/evaluations/somali-youth-livelihoods-program.pdf.

Cunningham, W. V. & Villaseñor, P. (2016). Employer voices, employer demands, and implications for public skills development policy connecting the labor and education sectors. *The World Bank Research Observer 31*(1), 102-134. https://openknowledge.worldbank.org/handle/10986/27700.

De Fruyt, F., & Rolland, J.P. (2020, November). *Emotion Regulation: An Essential Soft Skill to Evaluate.* Pearson TalentLens White Paper. https://www.researchgate.net/publication/346783371_Emotion_regulation_an_essential_soft_skill_to_evaluate.

Duggleby, T., Kapoor, R., Lai, C., Midling, M.J., & Opolot, N. (2015). *YouthMap Uganda Evaluation.* USAID. https://pdf.usaid.gov/pdf_docs/PA00TCT9.pdf.

Dupuy, K., Bezu, S., Knudsen, A., Halvorsen, S., Kwauk, C., Braga, A., & Kim, H. (2018). *Life Skills in Non-Formal Contexts for Adolescent Girls in Developing Countries*. CMI Report Number 5. Center for Universal Education at Brookings. https://www.brookings.edu/research/life-skills-in-non-formal-contexts-for-adolescent-girls-in-developing-countries/.

East African Community (EAC). (2014). *Draft Harmonised Curriculum Structures and Framework for the East African Community Primary Education.* EAC Secretariat.

Educate!. (2014). *Impact Evaluation of Midline Data from Educate! Randomised Control Trial.* Internal Report. https://static1.squarespace.com/static/520111afe4b0748af59ffc18/t/55ee2fa1e4b03487a6056836/1441673121616/Educate%21+Midline+RCT+data.pdf.

Education Development Center, Inc. (EDC). (2012). *Advancing Youth Project: Labor Market Assessment - Liberia*. https://www.edc.org/sites/default/files/uploads/Advancing-Youth-Project-Labor-Market-Assessment-Report.pdf.

EDC. (2014). *Employability Study: An Evaluation of METAS' Basic Labor Competencies Training and Certification Program*. https://edc.org/sites/default/files/uploads/Employability-Study-METAS.pdf.

EDC. (2016). *Mindanao Youth for Development (MYDEV) Program FY15 Impact Evaluation Report: Measuring Youth Employment, Perceptions, and Skills*. https://www.edc.org/mydev-program-fy15-impact-evaluation-report.

EDC. (2019). *APTE-Sénégal Midterm Report*. https://www.edc.org/apte-senegal-midterm-report-august-2019.

EDC. (2020a). *USAID/Djibouti Workforce Development Program Outcome Evaluation Report - Measuring Training Beneficiaries Skills, Employment, Perceptions of Gender Equity and Confidence.* USAID.

EDC. (2020b). *USAID/DRC Integrated Youth Development Activity (IYDA) Cohort I Midline Outcome Evaluation Report.* USAID. https://pdf.usaid.gov/pdf_docs/PA00XF8J.pdf.

EDC. (2021). *Scaling Youth Workforce Development Outcomes by Transforming Local Systems: A Rwanda Case Study*. https://www.edc.org/sites/default/files/uploads/Youth-Rwanda-Report.pdf.

EDC, Professional Examination Services (ProExam), & Akilah Institute for Women. (2016). *Measuring youth's soft skills across cultures: Evidence from the Philippines & Rwanda*. Workforce Connections, April 2016. http://idd.edc.org/sites/idd.edc.org/files/Anchored%20BFI%2010%20page%20report.pdf.

Elsayed, A., & Roushdy, R. (2017). *Empowering Young Women Through Business and Vocational Training: Evidence from a Field Intervention in Rural Egypt*. Impact Report Series, Issue 8, international Labour Organization. https://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/---ed_emp/documents/publication/wcms_575930.pdf.

Filmer, D. & Fox, L. (2014). *Youth Employment in Sub-Saharan Africa*. Africa Development Forum. The World Bank and Agence Française de Développement. https://openknowledge.worldbank.org/handle/10986/16608.

FocusAfrica. (2010a). *Youth Empowerment Program Evaluation Report Kenya African Center for Women, Information, and Communications Technology.* International Youth Foundation. https://iyfglobal.org/sites/default/files/YEP_EvalReport_Kenya_(ACWICT).pdf.

FocusAfrica, (2010b). *Youth Empowerment Program Evaluation Report Kenya The Informal Sector Business Institute.* International Youth Foundation. https://iyfglobal.org/sites/default/files/YEP_EvalReport_Kenya_(ISBI).pdf.

FocusAfrica, (2010c). *Youth Empowerment Program Evaluation Report Kenya NairoBits.* International Youth Foundation. https://iyfglobal.org/sites/default/files/library/YEP_EvalReport_Kenya_NAIROBITS.pdf.

FocusAfrica, (2010d). *Youth Empowerment Program Evaluation Report Nigeria.* International Youth Foundation.

FocusAfrica, (2010e). *Youth Empowerment Program Evaluation Report Senegal.* International Youth Foundation.

FocusAfrica, (2010f). *Youth Empowerment Program Evaluation Report Tanzania.* International Youth Foundation.

Fox, L. & Kaul, U. (2018). *The Evidence is in: How Should Youth Employment Programs in Low-income Countries be Designed?* Policy Research Working Paper No. 8500. Background Paper to the 2018 World Development Report. The World Bank. http://documents1.worldbank.org/curated/en/837861530219586540/pdf/WPS8500.pdf.

Galloway, T., Lippman, L., Burke, H., Diener, O., & Gates, S. (2017). *Measuring Soft Skills and Life Skills in International Youth Development Programs: A Review and Inventory of Tools*. USAID's Youth Power Implementation IDIQ. https://www.fhi360.org/resource/measuring-soft-skills-and-life-skills-international-youth-development-programs-review-and.

Gates, S., Lippman, L., Shadowen, N., Burke, H., Diener, O., & Malkin, M. (2016). *Key Soft Skills for Cross-sectoral Youth Outcomes*. USAID's Youth Power: Implementation, YouthPower Action. https://www.edu-links.org/resources/key-soft-skills-cross-sectoral-youth-outcomes.

Genesis Analytics. (2019, July 5). *Impact Evaluation of the IYF Passport to Success Life Skills Curriculum.*

Giuliano Sarr, K., Dininio, P., Diallo, S., Keita, M., & Mbodji Y. (2019). *Empowering Mauritanian Youth through Education and Self-Improvement Final Performance Evaluation*. USAID. https://pdf.usaid.gov/pdf_docs/PA00WRXV.pdf.

Glaub, M. E., Frese, M., Fischer, S., & Hoppe, M. (2014). Increasing personal initiative in small business managers or owners leads to entrepreneurial success: A theory-based controlled randomized field intervention for evidence-based management. *Academy of Management Learning & Education 13*(3), 354-379. ttps://doi.org/10.5465/amle.2013.0234.

Glick, P., Huang, C., & Mejia, N. (2015). *Private Sector and Youth Skills and Employment Programs in Low- and Middle-income Countries*. The World Bank. https://openknowledge.worldbank.org/handle/10986/23260.

Groh, M., Krishnan, N., McKenzie, D., & Vishwanath, T. (2012). *Soft Skills or Hard Cash? The Impact of Training and Wage Subsidy Programs on Female Youth Employment in Jordan.* Policy Research Working Paper No. 6141. Impact Evaluation Series No. 62. The World Bank. https://documents.worldbank.org/en/publication/documents-reports/documentdetail/654491468271825136/soft-skills-or-hard-cash-the-impact-of-training-and-wage-subsidy-programs-on-female-youth-employment-in-jordan.

Groh, M., Krishnan, N., McKenzie, D., & Vishwanath, T. (2016). The impact of soft skills training on female youth employment: Evidence from a randomized experiment in Jordan. *IZA Journal of Labor & Development 5*(9). DOI 10.1186/s40175-016-0055-9.

Guerra, N., Modecki, K., & Cunningham, W. (2014). *Developing Social-emotional Skills for the Labor Market: The PRACTICE Model*. Policy Research Working Paper No. 7123. The World Bank. https://openknowledge.worldbank.org/handle/10986/20643.

Guison-Dowdy, A. (2012). *Skills for Employability: Economic Returns to Education and Skills.* Results for Development Institute. http://r4d.org/sites/resultsfordevelopment.org/files/resources/Economic%20Returns%20to%20Education%20and%20Skills.pdf.

Gunewardena, D., King, E.M., & Valerio, A. (2018). *More than Schooling. Understanding Gender Differences in the Labor Market When Measures of Skills Are Available.* Policy Research Working Paper No. 8588. The World Bank. https://openknowledge.worldbank.org/handle/10986/30441.

Hanemann, U. (2017). *Integrated Community-Based Adult Education (ICBAE), United Republic of Tanzania*. UNESCO Institute for Lifelong Learning https://uil.unesco.org/case-study/effective-practices-database-litbase-0/integrated-community-based-adult-education-icbae.

Heckman, J. J. (2000). Policies to foster human capital. *Research in Economics 54*(1), 3-56. https://doi.org/10.1006/reec.1999.0225.

Heckman, J.J., Sitxrud, J., & Urzua, S. (2006). The effects of cognitive and noncognitive abilities on labor market outcomes and social behavior. *Journal of Labor Economics 24*(3), 411-482. https://doi.org/10.1086/504455.

Honeyman, C. (2019). *Soft Skills for Youth Employment in Algeria*. Qualitative Research Report. World Learning. https://www.worldlearning.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/04/YEP-Qualitative-Research-Analysis_SummaryReport_MEPI.pdf.

Honeyman, C., Tsai, L.C., Chervin, N., Sany, M., & Ubaldo, J. (Forthcoming). *Workforce Skills Curriculum Development in Context: Case Studies in Rwanda, Algeria, and the Philippines.* In J. DeJaeghere & E. Murphy-Graham (Eds.), Life Skills Education for Youth: Critical Perspectives. Springer Publishing.

Ibarraran, P., Ripani, L., Taboada, B., Villa, J.M., & Garcia, B. (2014). Life skills, employability and training for disadvantaged youth: Evidence from a randomized evaluation design. *IZA Journal of Labor & Development 3*(10). https://doi.org/10.1186/2193-9020-3-10.

Ignatowski, C. (2017). *What Works in Soft Skills Development for Youth Employment. A Donor's Perspective.* Youth Employment Funders Group. http://mastercardfdn.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/08/soft-skills-youth-employment-accessible2.pdf.

International Youth Foundation (IYF). (2011). *Youth Empowerment Program Evaluation.* https://iyfglobal.org/sites/default/files/MicrosoftYEP_Final_Report.pdf.

IYF. (2014). *YouthMap Zambia - A Cross Sectoral Analysis of Youth in Zambia.* https://iyfglobal.org/sites/default/files/library/YouthMap-Zambia_Analysis.pdf.

James, V., Carlson, N., Rink, A. F., Milanzi, A., Yekeye, I., & Nyamwanza, T. (2018). *Zimbabwe:Works Impact Evaluation*.

Johnstone, C., Nikoi, A., & Kahihu, N. (2017). Uhusiano Design for learning. *International Journal of Educational Development 52*, 19-25. DOI: 10.1016/j.ijedudev.2016.10.006.

Jurgens, E., Isolio, M., Jadi, C., & Elia, L. (2013). *Report on Qualitative Study of the Adolescent Girls Initiative in South Sudan. Insight from Lessons Learned June 2010 - June 2013.* Integrity Research and Consultancy.

Karki, Y.B., Pande, T.N., Neupane, B.R., Karki, K.B., & Bajracharya, S. (2013). *Final Evaluation Report Education for Income Generation Project (EIG).* USAID/Nepal. https://pdf.usaid.gov/pdf_docs/pbaaa002.pdf.

Kautz, T., Heckman, J. J., Diris, R., Ter Weel, B., & Borghans, L. (2014). *Fostering and Measuring Skills: Improving Cognitive and Non-cognitive Skills to Promote Lifetime Success.* NBER Working Paper No. 20749. DOI 10.3386/w20749.

Kew, J., Herrington, M., Litovsky, Y., & Gale, H. (2013). Generation entrepreneur? The state of global youth entrepreneurship. *Youth Business International and Global Entrepreneurship Monitor, Newcastle*.

Kibret, B. T., 2016. Life skills training (LST) program for young people: Justifications, foundations and contents. *International Journal of School and Cognitive Psychology 3*(1), 163.

Kim, H. & Care, E. (2020). *Capturing 21st Century Skills: Analysis of Assessments in Selected Sub-Saharan African Countries*. UNESCO & the Brookings Institution. https://www.brookings.edu/wp-content/uploads/2020/09/UNESCO-Kim-Care_Africa-ministudy-2020.pdf.

Kluve, J., Puerto, S., Robalino, D., Romero, J.M., Rother, F., Stöterau, J., Weidenkaff, F., & Witte, M. (2016). *Do Youth Employment Programs Improve Labor Market Outcomes? A Systematic Review*. Institute for the Study of Labor Discussion Paper No. 10263. http://ftp.iza.org/dp10263.pdf.

Kohl, R., & French, M. (2014). *Scale and Sustainability Study: The Akazi Kanoze Youth Education and Livelihoods Project in Rwanda*. JBS International. http://idd.edc.org/sites/idd.edc.org/files/Akazi%20Kanoze%20Sustainability%20Report%20JBS.pdf.

Kwauk, C., & Braga, A. (2017). *Translating Competencies to Empowered Action*. Center for Universal Education, The Brookings Institution. https://www. brookings.edu/wp-content/uploads/2017/11/translating-competencies-empowered-action.pdf.

Kwauk, C., & Perlman Robinson, J. (2016). *Educate! Riding the Reform Wave to Scale Ip Youth Entrepreneurship in Uganda.* Center for Universal Education at Brookings. https://www.brookings.edu/wp-content/uploads/2016/07/FINAL-Educate-Case-Study.pdf.

Laterite Ltd. (2017). *Akazi Kanoze 2 Scale & Sustainability: External Evaluation of the Integration of the Work Readiness Curriculum and School to Work Transition Program into the Rwandan Education System*. MasterCard Foundation. http://idd.edc.org/resources/publications/akazi-kanoze-2-scale-sustainability.

Lemma, G. (2020). *USAID's Building the Potential of Youth Activity Final Report*. USAID/Ethiopia. https://pdf.usaid.gov/pdf_docs/PA00X5D8.pdf.

Lippman, L., Ryberg, R., Carney, R., & Moore, K.A. (2015). *Key "Soft Skills" that Foster Youth Workforce Success: Toward a Consensus Across Fields*. Workforce Connections, June 2015. Child Trends. https://www.childtrends.org/publications/key-soft-skills-that-foster-youth-workforce-success-toward-a-consensus-across-fields.

Lipsey, M. W & Wilson, D. B. (1993). The efficacy of psychological, educational, and behavioral treatment: Confirmation from meta-analysis. *American Psychologist 48*(12), 1181-1209. DOI: 10.1037//0003-066x.48.12.1181.

Management Systems International (MSI). (2017). *Mid-term Performance Evaluation of the Kenya Youth Employment and Skills Program (K-YES)*.

Martin, S., Kapungu, C., Goelz, M., & Fritz, K. (2020). *Investigating Soft Skills Program Features with a Gender Lens: A Global Review of Education and Workforce Interventions for Youth*. International Center for Research on Women. https://www.edu-links.org/resources/investigating-soft-skills-program-features-gender-lens.

MasterCard Foundation. (2014). *Engaging Young People: 2013-2014 Youth Think Tank Report.* https://mastercardfdn.org/research/engaging-young-people-2013-2014-youth-think-tank-report/.

MasterCard Foundation. (2017). *Skills at Scale: Transferable Skills in Secondary and Vocational Education in Africa*. https://youtheconomicopportunities.org/resource/8550/skills-scale-transferable-skills-secondary-and-vocational-education-africa.

MasterCard Foundation. (2020). *Secondary Education in Africa: Preparing Youth for the Future of Work.* https://doi.org/10.15868/socialsector.35972.

McIlvaine, K., Oser, C., Lindsey, J., & Blume, M. (2015). Confidence, capacity building and cash: Achieving sustained impact for ultra-poor women. *IDS Bulletin 46*(2), 83-92. https://opendocs.ids.ac.uk/opendocs/bitstream/handle/20.500.12413/7287/IDSB_46_2_10.1111-1759-5436.12131.pdf?sequence=1.

McKelway, M. (2018). *Women's Self-efficacy and Women's Employment: Experimental Evidence from India*. https://www.semanticscholar.org/paper/Women%E2%80%99s-Self-Efficacy-and-Women%E2%80%99s-Employment%3A-from-McKelway/93283540ea1b30e7fb319a88b3f1faa1b08f9598.

McKenzie, D., Puerto, S., & Odhiambo, F. (2019). *Unpacking the Determinants of Entrepreneurship Development and Economic Empowerment for Women in Kenya*. 3ie Impact Evaluation Report 95. https://www.3ieimpact.org/evidence-hub/publications/impact-evaluations/unpacking-determinants-entrepreneurship-development.

Mensmann, M., & Frese, M. (2018). Who stays proactive after entrepreneurship training? Need for cognition, personal initiative maintenance, and well-being. *Journal of Organizational Behavior 40*(1), 20-37. https://doi.org/10.1002/job.2333.

Mitana, J. M. V., Muwagga, A. M., Giacomazzi, M., Saint Kizito, O., & Ariapa, M. (2019). Assessing educational outcomes in the 21st century in Uganda: A focus on soft skills. *Journal of Emerging Trends in Educational Research and Policy Studies 10*(1), 62-70. https://www.researchgate.net/publication/336917845_Assessing_Educational_Outcomes_in_the_21_st_Century_in_Uganda_A_Focus_on_Soft_Skills.

Monschein, S., Shanstrom, M., Tines, J., & Rukera, C. (2019). *Performance Evaluation Report - Huguka Dukore Akazi Kanoze*. Dexis Consulting Group. https://pdf.usaid.gov/pdf_docs/PA00WGVG.pdf.

Montague, M. (2013). *Project Evaluation Creating a Dividend for Lasting Peace: Improving Access to Economic Opportunities for Vulnerable Youth in Post-conflict Burundi*. International Rescue Committee (IRC).

Moubayed, L., Qubajah, K., Aqrabawi, W., Barqawi, M., & al-Naber, D. (2014). *Final Performance Evaluation of the USAID/Jordan Youth for the Future (Y4F) Project.* USAID/Jordan. https://pdf.usaid.gov/pdf_docs/PA00KN57.pdf.

Murphy-Graham, E. & Cohen, A. K. (Forthcoming). *Life Skills Education for Youth in Developing Countries: What are They and Why do They Matter*? In J. DeJaeghere & E. Murphy-Graham (Eds.), Life Skills Education for Youth: Critical Perspectives. Springer Publishing.

Ndoye, Mamadou. (2017). *ADEA 2017 Triennale General Synthesis: Revitalizing Education Towards the 2030 Global Agenda and Africa's Agenda 2063*. https://www.adeanet.org/en/publications/adea-2017-triennale-general-synthesis-revitalizing-education-towards-the-2030-global.

Ngware, M., Hungi, N., Ochieng, V., Kiroro, F., Wambiya, E., Muhia, N., Gathoni, G., & Mambe, S. (2019). *Building Capabilities for Work and Life: Assessing the Production of Core Values and Capabilities among Youth in TVET Institutions in Kenya.* African Population and Health Research Center. https://aphrc.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/03/TVET-short-report-FINAL.pdf.

Noble, E., Ascencio, L., Wilondja, T., Mateba, A., Angelucci, M., & Heath, R. (2020). *The Impact of Women for Women International's Economic and Social Empowerment Program in the Democratic Republic of Congo*. Women for Women International. https://www.womenforwomen.org/sites/default/files/2020-10/DRC_RCT_ResultsBrief_Oct2020_FINAL.pdf.

Omoeva, C., Gates, S., Cunha, N., Martinez, A., & Burke, H. (2020). *Measuring Soft Skills Among Youth and Young Adults: Validation of a New Instrument*. USAID's YouthPower: Implementation, YouthPower Action. https://www.edu-links.org/resources/measuring-soft-skills-among-youth-and-young-adults.

Ondiek, C.M.M., Kahihu, N., & Muthoni, S. (2019). *What do Employers Think About Soft Skills?* https://s3.amazonaws.com/fuzu.com-pdfs/blogs/What+do+Employers+Think+About+Soft+Sills+(2).pdf.

Padilla, I., Costa, P., Murray, N., & Campuzano, L. (2020). *Final Performance Evaluation: Bridges to Employment in El Salvador*. USAID. https://pdf.usaid.gov/pdf_docs/PA00X2P5.pdf.

Pagel, R.P., Olaru, G., & Alcid, A. (2017). *Identifying Cross-Cutting Non-Cog Skills for Positive Youth Development.* EDC. http://idd.edc.org/sites/idd.edc.org/files/Cross-Cutting%20Non-Cog%20Skills_Final%20Report.pdf.

Perez-Pineda, R. (2019). *Reaching Scale and Sustainability Through a Strengthened Youth Employment Ecosystem in Rwanda: A Case Study of Education Development Center in Rwanda.* [Thesis] Brandeis University. DOI:10.13140/RG.2.2.12607.12962.

Pina, P., Kotin, T., Hausman, V., & Macharia, E. (2012). *Skills for Employability: The Informal Economy*. Results for Development Institute. https://www.voced.edu.au/content/ngv%3A60501.

Pittman, K. J., Irby, M., Tolman, J., Yohalem, N., & Ferber, T. (2011, December). *Preventing problems, promoting development, encouraging engagement*. Forum for Youth Investment. https://citeseerx.ist.psu.edu/viewdoc/download?doi=10.1.1.471.1224&rep=rep1&type=pdf#:~:text=Preventing%20Problems%2C%20Promoting%20Development%2C%20Encouraging%20Engagement%20is%20an%20attempt%20to,they%20live%2C%20learn%2C%20work%2C.

Plaut, D., Moss, C., & Jayaram, S. (2016). *How Do Youth Skills Development Initiatives Ensure Effective Targeting, Recruitment, and Retention?* USAID. https://pdf.usaid.gov/pdf_docs/PA00MFX8.pdf.

Psilos, P., & Galloway, T. (2018). *What Works in Entrepreneurship Education and Training Programs for Youth*? USAID's YouthPower: Implementation. YouthPower Action. https://www.edu-links.org/resources/what-works-entrepreneurship-education-and-training-programs-youth.

Puerta, M. L. S., Johansson de Silva, S., & Rizvi, A. (2018). *Kenya: Capturing Skills Requirements and Assessing Skills Gaps in the Modern Economy.* Jobs Working Paper No. 17. The World Bank. https://openknowledge.worldbank.org/handle/10986/30169.

Pugatch, T., & Blimpo, R. (2020). *RCT of Educate!'s Education System Solution in Rwanda.*

Ramadan, N., Abdel-Tawab, N., El Sayed, K., & Roushdy, R. (2014). *Enhancing Livelihood Opportunities for Young Women in Rural Upper Egypt: The Neqdar Nesharek Program*. Population Council. https://www.popcouncil.org/uploads/pdfs/2014PGY_NeqdarNesharekFinalReport.pdf.

Rasul, M. S., Abd Rauf, R. A., & Mansor, A. N. (2013). Employability skills indicator as perceived by manufacturing employers. *Asian Social Science 9*(8), 42. DOI:10.5539/ass.v9n8p42.

Reisman, L., & Payan, G. (2015). *Turning Away from MS-13 and Alshabaab: Analyzing Youth Resilience in Honduras and North East Kenya*. EDC. https://www.edc.org/turning-away-ms-13-and-al-shabaab-analyzing-youth-resilience-honduras-and-north-east-kenya.

Republic of South Africa, Department of Basic Education. (2011a). *Curriculum and Assessment Policy Statement Grades R-3: Life Skills.*

Republic of South Africa, Department of Basic Education. (2011b). *Curriculum and Assessment Policy Statement Grades 7-9: Life Orientation.*

Republic of Tanzania, Ministry of Education and Vocational Training. (2010). *National Life Skills Education Framework*.

Results for Development Institute. (2013). *Pathways to Employability: Lessons and Case Studies for Closing the Youth Skills Gap*. http://r4d.org/sites/resultsfordevelopment.org/files/Phase%20II%20-%20Pathways%20to%20Employability.pdf.

Ripley, M. (2017). *Educating entrepreneurs: Can In-school Youth be Taught to Start a Business? Evidence from South Africa*. Issue Brief No. 5. International Labour Organization. https://www.ilo.org/empent/units/boosting-employment-through-small-enterprise-development/WCMS_630932/lang--en/index.htm.

Rodella, A., Cuevas, F., & Atuesta, B. (2015). *Haiti Adolescent Girl Initiative: Project Report*. World Bank Group. https://documents.worldbank.org/en/publication/documents-reports/documentdetail/106851468186565029/haiti-adolescent-girl-initiative-agi-project-report-poverty-global-practice.

Ryberg, R. (2016). *The Role of Noncognitive Skills in the Transition to the Workforce for Youth in Andhra Pradesh, India*. [Master's thesis, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill]. ProQuest Publishing. https://search.proquest.com/openview/9b2e45549f9cda7268ba6dae4d1420ff/1?pq-origsite=gscholar&cbl=18750&diss=y.

Salam, D., Olobo, P., & Mpiira, R. (2016). *Educate!'s Lessons from an At-scale Impact Evaluation*.

Sanchez Puerta, M. L., Valerio, A., & Bernal, M. G. (2016). *Taking Stock of Programs to Develop Socioemotional Skills: A Systematic Review of Program Evidence*. The World Bank. https://documents.worldbank.org/en/publication/documents-reports/documentdetail/249661470373828160/taking-stock-of-programs-to-develop-socioemotional-skills-a-systematic-review-of-program-evidence.

Schaberg, K. (2019). *Teaching Soft Skills in Workforce Programs: Findings from WorkAdvance Providers*. American Enterprise Institute. https://www.aei.org/research-products/report/teaching-soft-skills-in-workforce-programs-findings-from-workadvance-providers/.

Smolovic, S., Bulut, S. D., & Vujosevic, D. (2011). *Adolescents' Peer Leader Manual for Life Skills Development*. Save the Children. https://resourcecentre.savethechildren.net/node/5182/pdf/5182.pdf.

Soares, F., Babb, S., Diener, O., Gates, S., & Ignatowski, C. (2017). *Guiding Principles for Building Soft Skills among Adolescents and Young Adults*. USAID's YouthPower: Implementation, YouthPower Action. https://www.fhi360.org/sites/default/files/media/documents/resource-yp-guiding-principals-soft-skills.pdf.

Solutions for Youth Employment. (2020). *How are Youth Employment Programs Adapting to COVID-19?* Knowledge Brief Series No. 10. World Bank Group Jobs. https://www.s4ye.org/sites/default/files/2020-10/S4YE%20Knowledge%20Brief%2010.Youth%20Employment%20Programs%20and%20COVID.pdf.

Souza, M. T. D., Silva, M. D. D., & Carvalho, R. D. (2010). Integrative review: what is it? How to do it?. *Einstein (São Paulo) 8*(1), 102-106. DOI: 10.1590/S1679-45082010RW1134.

Statman, J.M., Abera, M., Assefa, E., Ambelu, W., Leta, Y., & Korssa, A. (2020). *Final Performance Evaluation of USAID/Ethiopia's Building the Potential of Youth Activity.* USAID. https://pdf.usaid.gov/pdf_docs/PA00WJD2.pdf.

Stecher, B. M., & Hamilton, L. S. (2014). *Measuring Hard-to-measure Student Competencies: A Research and Development Plan*. RAND Corporation. https://www.rand.org/pubs/research_reports/RR863.html.

Tripney, J., Hombrados, J., Newman, M., Hovish, K., Brown, C., Steinka-Fry, K., & Wilkey, E. (2013). Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) interventions to improve the employability and employment of young people in low- and middle-income countries: A systematics review. *Campbell Systematic Reviews 2013*(9). DOI: 10.4073/csr.2013.9.

United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization (UNESCO). (2000). *The Dakar Framework for Action*. https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/content/documents/1681Dakar%20Framework%20for%20Action.pdf.

UNESCO. (2012). *Youth and Skills: Putting Education to Work*. EFA Global Monitoring Report. https://en.unesco.org/gem-report/report/2012/youth-and-skills-putting-education-work.

United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF). (2019). *Global Framework on Transferable Skills.* https://www.unicef.org/media/64751/file/Global-framework-on-transferable-skills-2019.pdf.

United States Agency for International Development (USAID). (2018). *USAID Education Policy*. https://www.usaid.gov/documents/1865/2018-usaid-education-policy.

USAID. (2019). *Social and Emotional Learning and Soft Skills USAID Policy Brief.* https://www.edu-links.org/resources/social-and-emotional-learning-and-soft-skills-usaid-education-policy-brief.

Valerio, A., Sanchez Puerta, M. L., Pierre, G., Rajadel, T., & Taborda, S. M. (2014). *STEP Skills Measurement - Snapshot 2014.* The World Bank, Multi-Donor Trust Fund, & Bank-Netherlands Partnership Program. https://www.worldbank.org/content/dam/Worldbank/Feature%20Story/Education/STEP%20Snapshot%202014_Revised_June%2020%202014%20%28final%29.pdf.

Vinogradova, E., & Taggart, N. (2012). *Technology in the HP LIFE Entrepreneurship Program: Summary Report Findings*. USAID EQUIP3. https://www.edc.org/technology-hp-life-entrepreneurship-program-summary-report-findings.

Wafula, J. (2020). *Kenya Youth Employment and Skills Program Final Report.* RTI International.

Whittemore, R., & Knafl, K. (2005). The integrative review: Updated methodology. *Journal of Advanced Nursing 52*(5), 546-553. DOI: 10.1111/j.1365-2648.2005.03621.x.

World Health Organization (WHO). (2003). *Skills for Health*. https://www.who.int/school_youth_health/media/en/sch_skills4health_03.pdf.

The World Bank. (2012). *Can Skills Training Increase Employment for Young Women? The Case of Liberia*. https://openknowledge.worldbank.org/handle/10986/25457.

The World Bank. (2013). *Life Skills: What are They, Why do They Matter, and How are They Taught?* Learning from Practice Series. https://olc.worldbank.org/content/life-skills-what-are-they-why-do-they-matter-and-how-are-they-taught.

The World Bank. (2015). *The Spirit of Boldness: Lessons from The World Bank's Adolescent Girls Initiative.* https://openknowledge.worldbank.org/handle/10986/22986.

Youth Business International (YBI). (2018). *Effectuation and its Application in Youth Entrepreneurship Training*. https://www.youthbusiness.org/resource/insights-for-success-effectuation.

YBI. (2019). *Entrepreneurial Soft Skills for the Future: A Scoping Study*. https://www.youthbusiness.org/resource/191001043044-entrepreneurial-soft-skills-for-the-future.

ANNEXES

ANNEX A. SEARCH TERMS

TABLE A. FULL LIST OF SEARCH TERMS USED

KEY WORDS	RELATED SEARCH TERMS
Soft skills	Social skills, interpersonal skills, life skills, non-cognitive skills, behavioral skills, youth development assets, 21st century skills, personality traits, people skills, higher-order thinking skills, essential skills, emotional intelligence, work readiness competencies, social-emotional learning skills, character strengths, transferable skills, employability skills, workplace skills, collaboration skills
Youth workforce development	Youth training programs, positive youth development, technical vocational training, technical vocational education, career and technical education, workforce training
Workforce outcomes	Employment, employability, income, wages, entrepreneurial success, entrepreneurialism, job stability, job performance, job retention, workforce success, formal employment, self-employment, workforce performance, promotion, occupational status, occupational level, employer satisfaction, workforce entry
Sub-Saharan Africa	Sub-Saharan African countries, low-income countries, developing countries, Africa

ANNEX B. RETRIEVED LITERATURE

The research team conducted a structured search of the following databases to retrieve relevant literature. In addition to these searches, they also identified most of the literature through targeted searches of institutional databases, the snowball method (reviewing references within seminal literature) as well as through consultations with key experts. Institutional databases that were also searched included USAID's Development Experience Clearinghouse (DEC), Education Development Center, Inc. International Rescue Committee, International Youth Foundation, Abdul Latif Jameel Poverty Action Lab (J-PAL) Mercy Corps, and The World Bank. The results of these searches are not included within the table below.

TABLE B. ACADEMIC DATABASE SEARCH RESULTS

SEARCH ENGINE	SEARCH TERMS	NO. RETRIEVED	NO. MET INCLUSION CRITERIA
Academic Search Complete	(soft skills OR life skills) AND (workforce development OR positive youth development) AND (employment OR income) AND (sub-Saharan Africa OR low income countries)	174	2
Africa-Wide Information	(soft skills OR life skills) AND (workforce development OR positive youth development) AND (employment OR income) AND (sub-Saharan Africa OR low income countries)	75	0
The American Economic Association Randomized Control Trial (RCT) Registry	(soft skills OR life skills) AND (workforce development OR positive youth development) AND (employment OR income) AND (sub-Saharan Africa OR low income countries)	26	0
EconLit	(soft skills OR life skills) AND (workforce development OR positive youth development) AND (employment OR income) AND (sub-Saharan Africa OR low income countries)	27	0
Education Full Text	(soft skills OR life skills) AND (workforce development OR positive youth development) AND (employment OR income) AND (sub-Saharan Africa OR low income countries)	119	2
U.S Educational Resources Information Center (ERIC)	(soft skills OR life skills) AND (workforce development OR positive youth development) AND (employment OR income) AND (sub-Saharan Africa OR low income countries)	299	3

TABLE B. ACADEMIC DATABASE SEARCH RESULTS

SEARCH ENGINE	SEARCH TERMS	NO. RETRIEVED	NO. MET INCLUSION CRITERIA
JSTOR	(soft skills OR life skills) AND (workforce development OR positive youth development) AND (employment OR income) AND (sub-Saharan Africa OR low income countries)	156	1
National Bureau of Economic Research (NBER)	(soft skills OR life skills) AND (workforce development OR positive youth development) AND (employment OR income) AND (sub-Saharan Africa OR low income countries)	672	2
ProQuest	(soft skills OR life skills) AND (workforce development OR positive youth development) AND (employment OR income) AND (sub-Saharan Africa OR low income countries)	104	3
PsycINFO	soft skills, life skills, work readiness skills, socio-emotional skills, workforce development, positive youth development, employment, income, sub-Saharan Africa, low income countries	27	1
SpringerLink	(soft skills OR life skills) AND (workforce development OR positive youth development) AND (employment OR income) AND (sub-Saharan Africa OR low income countries)	177	4
UNESCO	Workforce outcomes AND soft skills AND Africa	9	1
	TVET AND soft skills AND Africa	22	2

ANNEX C. LIST OF EXPERTS CONSULTED

As part of the Soft Skills Literature Review, the research team conducted interviews with the following list of experts:

Annie Alcid, *MEL Director at DAI*

Margaret Andersen, Alessia Mortara, & Akshara Gopalan, *J-PAL*

Amadou Ba & Lisa Washington, *USAID Mauritania*

Kristin Brady*, *Youth and Learning at FHI360 & Project Director of YouthPower*

Boris Bulayev & Meghan Mahoney, *Educate!*

Tamika Cameron & Dionisio Matos*, *USAID Mozambique*

Smita Das, *Gender and Innovation Lab at the World Bank*

Linda Fogarty, Liz Kim, & Matthew Breman, *IYF*

Cassandra Jessee, *ICRW & Project Director of YouthPower Learning*

Peter Joyce, *USAID Kenya*

Mardea Nyumah, Bart Pogue, Emmanuel Yarkpazua, & Numehn Dunbar, *USAID Liberia*

Melanie Sany, Nancy Chervin, & Emma Catalfamo, *EDC*

Aussi Sayinzoga*, *University of Rwanda*

Brad Strickland, *USAID Africa Bureau*

Shamsa Suleiman & Joyce Mndambi, *USAID Tanzania*

Nancy Taggart, *USAID Sr. Youth and Workforce Development Advisor*

Pascal Tshimanga, *USAID DRC*

Valence Twagizihirwe & Emmanuel Ntagungira, *Akazi Kanoze Access*

* These experts shared studies and other resources through email but were not interviewed.

ANNEX D. KEY INFORMANT INTERVIEW PROTOCOL

(KIIs) with experts who conduct research on or implement workforce and soft skills development programs in SSA. The team developed a semi-structured interview protocol with questions on each RQ and on specific research gaps identified in the literature review. During KIIs, the research team also probed certain topics in greater detail depending on the experts' responses and experience. The illustrative lists of questions outlined below are differentiated based on the various roles of the experts interviewed for the study.

INTERVIEW PROTOCOL FOR RESEARCHERS

1. What soft skills definition or framework do you use in your research? Do you find variations in and across sub-Saharan Africa?

2. Are soft skills included in secondary education and workforce development in the region where you conduct your research?

3. Which soft skills have the most impact on workforce outcomes for youth in your research? Are there causal links between them?

4. What are the most effective ways to teach and nurture soft skills among youth according to research you have done or know?

5. Have you researched or to you know research about how individual factors and contextual factors influence specific soft skills for workforce success?

6. To what extent is there support for soft skills research and programs among policymakers, government officials, and other stakeholders?

7. What challenges exist in researching the impact of soft skills on workforce outcomes? How are/were they addressed?

8. How did the COVID-19 pandemic affect researching and evaluating the impact of soft skills training on workforce outcomes?

9. Do you have any research recommendations for soft skills and youth workforce development in the future?

10. Can you refer us to anyone else who is researching this topic or implementing soft skills/workforce development programs in sub-Saharan Africa and other LMICs?

11. Are there any relevant resources that you recommend reviewing? Are there any publications in progress or soon-to-be-released?

INTERVIEW PROTOCOL FOR USAID STAFF AND IMPLEMENTERS

1. Tell us about your current workforce development/soft skills program. What are the youth participants like? How were they recruited?

2. Which soft skills are included in training? How and why were they chosen?
3. How is the development of soft skills measured?
4. How does soft skills training affect workforce outcomes?
5. How are youth taught soft skills? Have there been any adaptations made to training given the target youth population and context?
6. What challenges to implementation exist? How are/were they addressed?
7. How did the COVID-19 pandemic affect the program and youth enrolled in training?
8. Did any soft skills training programs for youth exist before this current workforce development program? If so, was it funded by the government, private sector, or other donors?
9. What is the process like working with the national and local government? Are there efforts to make the intervention scalable and sustainable?
10. Do you have any programming recommendations for soft skills and youth workforce development in the future?
11. Can you refer us to anyone else who is implementing soft skills/workforce development programs or researching this topic in sub-Saharan Africa and other LMICs?

ANNEX E. QUALITY APPRAISAL AND METHODOLOGICAL RIGOR

The following checklist should be used before classifying empirical studies into high, medium-high, medium, medium-low, and low-quality studies.

TABLE E1. EMPIRICAL STUDIES QUALITY APPRAISAL CHECKLIST

ITEM	YES	CAN'T TELL	NO
1) Was the research design appropriate to address the aims of the research? Consider if the researcher has justified the research design (e.g. have they discussed how they decided which method to use)			
2) Was the recruitment strategy or selection of studies appropriate to the aims of the research? Consider if the researcher has explained how the participants were recruited and selected as well as why the participants they selected were the most appropriate to provide access to the type of knowledge sought by the study, if the researcher explained how the studies were selected for review			
3) Was the data collected in a way that addressed the research issue? Consider if the setting for the data collection was justified, if it is clear how data were collected (e.g. focus group, semi-structured interview etc.), if the researcher has made the methods explicit (e.g. for interview method, is there an indication of how interviews are conducted, or did they use a topic guide)			
4) Have ethical issues been taken into consideration? Consider if there are sufficient details of how the research was explained to participants for the reader to assess whether ethical standards were maintained, if the researcher has discussed issues raised by the study (e.g. issues around informed consent or confidentiality or how they have handled the effects of the study on the participants during and after the study), if the researcher critically examined their own role, potential bias and influence during (a) formulation of the research questions (b) data collection, including sample recruitment and choice of location			
5) Was the data analysis sufficiently rigorous? Consider if there is an in-depth description of the analysis process, if the researcher explains how the data presented were selected from the original sample to demonstrate the analysis process, if sufficient data are presented to support the findings, if contradictory data are taken into account, and if the researcher critically examined their own role, potential bias and influence during analysis and selection of data for presentation			
6) Is there a clear statement of findings? Consider if the findings are explicit, if there is adequate discussion of the evidence both for and against the researcher's arguments, if the researcher has discussed the credibility of their findings (e.g. triangulation, respondent validation, more than one analyst), if the results are also supported by experts in the field and program stakeholders			

- **High Quality**: Empirical studies with large samples, representative sampling, and/or longitudinal with controls. Employer survey with large samples, representative sampling and/or longitudinal with controls. Program evaluations with scientific sampling and controls. Meets all of the checklist criteria above (6/6).
- **Medium-High Quality**: Empirical studies with smaller, non-representative samples. Program evaluations with large samples, but no comparison groups. Meta-analyses and literature reviews that are peer-reviewed and include scientific selection of articles as well as criteria for inclusion. Meets all of the above checklist criteria above (6/6).
- **Medium Quality**: Employer surveys with smaller, non-representative samples. Meta-analyses and literature reviews that are not peer-reviewed but include scientific selection of articles and their criteria for inclusion. Meets most of the checklist criteria above (4/6 or 5/6).
- **Medium-Low Quality**: Program final reports. Conceptual frameworks and construct development without results. Meets most of the checklist criteria above (4/6 or 5/6).
- **Low Quality**: Popular press, newspaper articles, magazine articles, press releases. Meets some of the checklist criteria above.

For literature reviews, the follow quality appraisal checklist was used.

TABLE E2. LITERATURE REVIEWS QUALITY APPRAISAL CHECKLIST

ITEM	YES	CAN'T TELL	NO
Did the review address a clearly focused question(s)?			
Was the methodology clearly explained (e.g. inclusion criteria, search process, analysis, etc.)			
Did the authors search for and review the right type of literature/studies?			
Did the authors do enough to assess the quality of the studies included and was this explained?			
Were the results of the review clearly explained?			
Were research gaps identified?			

REFERENCES

Alvarado, G., Skinner, M., Plaut, D., Moss, C., Kapungu, C., & Reavley, N. (2017). A systematic review of positive youth development programs in low-and middle-income countries. Washington, DC: YouthPower Learning, Making Cents International.

Critical Appraisal Skills Programme (2019). CASP Qualitative Studies Checklist. [online] Available at: https://casp-uk.net/casp-tools-checklists/ Accessed: 01 Mar 2021.

Critical Appraisal Skills Programme (2019). CASP Systematic Review Checklist. [online] Available at: https://casp-uk.net/casp-tools-checklists/ Accessed: 01 Mar 2021.

Gates, S., Lippman, L., Shadowen, N., Burke, H., Diener, O., and Malkin, M. (2016). Key Soft Skills for Cross-Sectoral Youth Outcomes. Washington, DC: USAID's YouthPower: Implementation, YouthPower Action.

Lippman, L. H., Ryberg, R., Carney, R. and Moore, K. A. (2015). Key "Soft Skills" that Foster Youth Workforce Success: Toward a Consensus Across Fields. Workforce Connections, June 2015. Child Trends.

ANNEX F. DATA ANALYSIS CODING STRUCTURE

In order to facilitate the data analysis and synthesis according to the RQs, the research team applied the following codes to the culled literature after it was uploaded to Atlas.ti.

TABLE F. ATLAS.TI CODE LIST

CODE	COMMENT	CODE GROUP 1
Background section	Relevant text for background (or intro) according to our outline	
Contextual factors: Conflict	Most important SS for workforce success for youth impacted by war/conflict	Contextual factors
Contextual factors: Culture	Most important SS for workforce success for youth with specific cultural differences	Contextual factors
Contextual factors: High-income	Most important SS for workforce success for youth in high-income countries	Contextual factors
Contextual factors: Low-income	Most important SS for workforce success for youth in low-income countries	Contextual factors
Contextual factors: Low/mid income	Most important SS for workforce success for youth in low and mid-income countries	Contextual factors
Contextual factors: Mid-income	Most important SS for workforce success for youth in mid-income countries	Contextual factors
Contextual factors: Rural	Most important SS for workforce success for youth in rural areas	Contextual factors
Contextual factors: SubS Africa	Most important SS for workforce success for youth in sub-Saharan Africa	Contextual factors
Contextual factors: Urban	Most important SS for workforce success for youth in urban areas	Contextual factors
COVID: Challenges teaching SS	Teaching challenges from youth soft skills programs in sub-Saharan Africa and low-income countries during the Covid-19 pandemic	COVID
COVID: Effects on SS programs	Covid-19's impact on youth soft skills programs in sub-Saharan Africa and low-income countries	COVID
COVID: Effects on youth SS	Covid-19's impact on youth soft skills development in sub-Saharan Africa and low-income countries	COVID
COVID: Innovations teaching SS	Teaching innovations from youth soft skills programs in sub-Saharan Africa and low-income countries during the Covid-19 pandemic	COVID
Impact SS: Employment subS Africa	Impact of SS on employment in sub-Saharan Africa	WF outcomes

TABLE F. ATLAS.TI CODE LIST		
CODE	COMMENT	CODE GROUP 1
Impact SS: Entrepreneurship subS Africa	Impact of SS on entrepreneurship in sub-Saharan Africa	WF outcomes
Impact SS: Financial mgmt subS Africa	Impact of SS on financial management, savings, and personal finance skills in sub-Saharan Africa	WF outcomes
Impact SS: Job performance subS Africa	Impact of SS on job performance and retention in sub-Saharan Africa	WF outcomes
Impact SS: Wages subS Africa	Impact of SS on wages, income, and earnings in sub-Saharan Africa	WF outcomes
Impact SS: WF outcomes external obstacles	WF outcomes limited due to obstacles external (out of control) of program/project	WF outcomes
Impact SS: WF outcomes female	Impact of SS on WF outcomes specific to females	WF outcomes
Impact SS: WF outcomes gen	Impact of SS on WF outcomes not specific to sub-Saharan Africa	WF outcomes
Impact SS: WF outcomes hi-income	Impact of SS on WF outcomes in high-income countries	WF outcomes
Impact SS: WF outcomes internal obstacles	WF outcomes limited due to obstacles internal (controllable by) to program	WF outcomes
Impact SS: WF outcomes low-income	Impact of SS on WF outcomes in low-income countries	WF outcomes
Impact SS: WF outcomes low/mid-income	Impact of SS on WF outcomes in low- and mid-income countries	WF outcomes
Impact SS: WF outcomes male	Impact of SS on WF outcomes specific to males	WF outcomes
Impact SS: WF outcomes mid-income	Impact of SS on WF outcomes in mid-income countries	WF outcomes
Impact SS: WF outcomes over age 30	Impact of SS on WF outcomes specific to people over 30 years old	WF outcomes

TABLE F. ATLAS.TI CODE LIST		
CODE	COMMENT	CODE GROUP 1
Impact SS: WF outcomes subS African	Impact of SS on WF outcomes in sub-Saharan African countries	WF outcomes
Impact SS: WF outcomes subS African/other	Impact of SS on WF outcomes in sub-Saharan Africa and other countries	WF outcomes
Inclusion SS: Other programs how	How SS are included in other programs in sub-Saharan Africa	Inclusion SS
Inclusion SS: Other programs what	Which SS are included in other programs in sub-Saharan Africa	Inclusion SS
Inclusion SS: Secondary ed how SS	How SS are included in secondary ed in sub-Saharan Africa	Inclusion SS
Inclusion SS: Secondary ed what SS	Which SS are included in secondary ed in sub-Saharan Africa	Inclusion SS
Inclusion SS: Workforce dev local how	How SS are included in workforce programs by sub-Saharan African governments/orgs	Inclusion SS
Inclusion SS: Workforce dev local what	Which SS are included in workforce programs by sub-Saharan African governments/orgs	Inclusion SS
Inclusion SS: Workforce dev other how	How SS are included in workforce programs by other (int.) initiatives in sub-Saharan Africa	Inclusion SS
Inclusion SS: Workforce dev other what	Which SS are included in workforce programs by other (int.) initiatives in sub-Saharan Africa	Inclusion SS
Inclusion SS: Workforce dev USAID how	How SS are included in workforce programs by USAID programs in sub-Saharan Africa	Inclusion SS
Inclusion SS: Workforce dev USAID what	Which SS are included in workforce programs by USAID programs in sub-Saharan Africa	Inclusion SS
Individual factors: Females	Most important SS for workforce success for females	Individual factors
Individual factors: Males	Most important SS for workforce success for males	Individual factors

TABLE F. ATLAS.TI CODE LIST		
CODE	COMMENT	CODE GROUP 1
Individual factors: Out-of-school	Most important SS for workforce success for out-of-school youth	Individual factors
Individual factors: Poor	Most important SS for workforce success for youth in poverty	Individual factors
Job sector: Service	Most important SS for workforce success for the service industry	Job sector
Other studies	Citations of relevant studies	Research
Research gaps	Areas for further research	Research
SS definition: African gov/org	How African government and non-govt. orgs define SS	Definitions
SS definition: Evaluations	How SS are defined in evaluations	Definitions
SS definition: Measures	How soft skills are being measured including assessment tools and questionnaires	Definitions
SS definition: Policy docs	How SS are defined in policy documents	Definitions
SS definition: Recommendations	Recommendations for defining and measuring soft skills	Definitions
SS definition: Research	How the research literature defines SS	Definitions
SS outcomes: Other high-income	SS outcomes reported in high-income countries other than workforce programs	SS outcomes
SS outcomes: Other low/mid-income	SS outcomes reported in low/mid-income countries other than workforce programs	SS outcomes
SS outcomes: SubS Africa	SS outcomes reported in sub-Saharan Africa other than workforce programs	SS outcomes
Teaching SS: Females	Most effective ways to teach/foster SS for females	Teaching SS
Teaching SS: Hi-income countries	Most effective ways to teach/foster SS in high-income countries	Teaching SS
Teaching SS: Low-income countries	Most effective ways to teach/foster SS in low-income countries	Teaching SS

TABLE F. ATLAS.TI CODE LIST		
CODE	COMMENT	CODE GROUP 1
Teaching SS: Low/mid-income countries	Most effective ways to teach/foster SS in low and mid-income countries	Teaching SS
Teaching SS: Males	Most effective ways to teach/foster SS for males	Teaching SS
Teaching SS: Mid-income countries	Most effective ways to teach/foster SS in mid-income countries	Teaching SS
Teaching SS: Obstacles	Obstacles/challenges to teaching soft skills in sub-Saharan Africa	Teaching SS
Teaching SS: Previous cognitive	Influence of previous cognitive skills on SS training uptake	Teaching SS
Teaching SS: Previous noncognitive	Influence of previous non-cognitive skills on SS training uptake	Teaching SS
Teaching SS: Recruitment	Recruitment and selection process of youth participants	Teaching SS
Teaching SS: Sub-Saharan Africa	Most effective ways to teach/foster SS in sub-Saharan Africa	Teaching SS
Teaching SS: SubS Africa materials	Teaching materials emphasized as an effective way to teach SS in sub-Saharan Africa	Teaching SS
Teaching SS: SubS Africa mentorship	Mentorship emphasized as an effective way to teach SS in sub-Saharan Africa	Teaching SS
Teaching SS: SubS Africa recommendations	Recommendations given in studies/evals regarding how to teach SS	Teaching SS
Teaching SS: SubS Africa structure/organization	Effective practices for teaching SS in SubS Africa having to do with the management/organizational structure of the program	Teaching SS
Teaching SS: SubS Africa student-centered	Student-centered teaching emphasized as an effective way to teach SS in sub-Saharan Africa	Teaching SS
Teaching SS: SubS Africa sustainability	Referring to how/if the interventions to teach SS have or have not become sustainable and why	Teaching SS
Teaching SS: SubS Africa teacher training	Teacher training emphasized as an effective way to teach SS in sub-Saharan Africa	Teaching SS

ANNEX G. USAID PROGRAMS SUMMARY

Table G. provides additional contextual information on the USAID workforce development and soft skills training programs discussed within this Soft Skills Literature Review. It is not intended to be exhaustive of all relevant USAID programs currently operating in SSA nor all the literature related to USAID workforce development and soft skills programs that was retrieved as part of this literature but not explicitly discussed within the report.

TABLE G. USAID YOUTH WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT AND SOFT SKILLS PROGRAMS IN SSA

COUNTRY	PROGRAM ACTIVITY	IMPLEMENTING PARTNER	TIME PERIOD	PROGRAM COMPONENTS	TARGET SOFT SKILLS	TARGET WORKFORCE OUTCOMES
Democratic Republic of the Congo	Integrated Youth Development Activity (IYDA) (EDC, 2020b)	EDC	2018-2021	Psychosocial support and referral services, work-based learning, job placement services	Self-efficacy, resilience, decreased propensity to engage in violence	Employment, entrepreneurship, work readiness
Djibouti	Djibouti Workforce Development Project (EDC, 2020a)	EDC	2016 – 2021	Work readiness curriculum, entrepreneurship training, capacity building of TVET schools, career guidance support, public private sector partnerships	Personal development, interpersonal communication, leadership, teamwork, financial literacy, problem solving	Employment, employment conditions, income, savings/financial management, work satisfaction
Ethiopia	Building the Potential of Youth (Statman et al, 2020)	Save the Children	2015 – 2020	Soft skills training, employment coaching, mentoring and access to work-based learning opportunities, capacity building with TVET institutions	Interpersonal communication, leadership, teamwork, analytical skills	Employment, type of employment, income, access to capital
Kenya	Kenya Youth Employment and Skills (K-YES) (MSI, 2017)	RTI International	2015 - 2020	Community-based training, capacity building of vocational training centers, youth employment compacts, mentorship support	Intrapersonal, interpersonal, decision making, leadership, resourcefulness and professionalism	Employment, self-employment, increase in income, job satisfaction, access to finance, increase in access to national identification cards

TABLE G. USAID YOUTH WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT AND SOFT SKILLS PROGRAMS IN SSA

COUNTRY	PROGRAM ACTIVITY	IMPLEMENTING PARTNER	TIME PERIOD	PROGRAM COMPONENTS	TARGET SOFT SKILLS	TARGET WORKFORCE OUTCOMES
Kenya	Yes Youth Can![23] (National Opinion Research Center, 2014)	Mercy Corps, EDC	2011-2015	Leadership, life skills and entrepreneurship training and other sensitization activities, youth-oriented think tank, village bunges organized by youth needs and interests, peace festival	Empowerment, resilience, social skills, personal skills, leadership, self-efficacy, conflict resolution, self-confidence and attitudes/behaviors towards violence.	Household income, asset ownership
Liberia	Advancing Youth Project (Auten, Dabla & Bassie, 2016)	Social Impact	2011-2016	Alternative basic education curriculum, vocational skills training, youth clubs, internships, public-private partnerships and in-kind donations to promote food security	Communication, leadership and team work, collaboration, critical thinking, decision making and interpersonal skills	Employability, self-employment
Mauritania	Empowering Mauritanian Youth through Education, Leadership, and Self-Improvement (EMELI) (Giuliano Sarr et al., 2019)	International Organization for Migration	2017-2020	Vocational training, soft skills and leadership training, establishment of a youth cultural center	Life skills, thought leadership, skills for civic engagement	Employability, entrepreneurship, job placement
Mozambique	Programa Para o Futuro (Blum et. al., 2020)	FHI 360	2015 - 2018	Life skills training that utilized a project-based learning curriculum, youth clubs, mentoring, linked to internships and vocational training and community health services	Goals and aspirations, problem solving, self-efficacy, critical thinking, teamwork, cooperation and communication and self-awareness	Employability and entrepreneurship

[23] In 2012, the Garissa Youth Project merged with the Yes Youth Can! Project to become the nationwide Yes Youth Can! Program in Kenya.

TABLE G. USAID YOUTH WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT AND SOFT SKILLS PROGRAMS IN SSA						
COUNTRY	PROGRAM ACTIVITY	IMPLEMENTING PARTNER	TIME PERIOD	PROGRAM COMPONENTS	TARGET SOFT SKILLS	TARGET WORKFORCE OUTCOMES
Nigeria	Technology in the HP Life Entrepreneurship Program under Educational Quality Improvement Program 3 (EQUIP3) (Vinogradova & Taggart, 2012)	EDC	2011 - 2012	Training on ICT, life skills and business skills, mentorship, linkages to financial services	Communication skills	Income, employability, business outcomes
Rwanda	Akazi Kanoze (Alcid et al., 2014)	EDC	2009-2016	Work readiness curriculum, entrepreneurship training, internship and apprenticeship opportunities, job placement services and/or business start-up coaching	Personal awareness, communication, professional conduct, confidence	Employment, job retention, entrepreneurship, money management
Rwanda	Huguka Dukore Akazi Kanoze (Monchein et. al., 2019)	EDC, Akazi Kanoze Access	2016 - 2021	Work readiness curriculum, entrepreneurship training, job placement support, capacity building to local organizations, employment resources, savings and internal lending communities	Personal awareness, communication, professional conduct, confidence	Employment rate, improved employment, job retention, entrepreneurship, market linkages
Somalia	Youth Livelihood Program (Cook & Yunis, 2012)	EDC	2008 – 2011	Training, internships or paid job placement support, seed capital to support entrepreneurship, follow-up business support	Within the literature, information on the specific soft skills targeted was not available.	Entrepreneurship, income, employability

TABLE G. USAID YOUTH WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT AND SOFT SKILLS PROGRAMS IN SSA

COUNTRY	PROGRAM ACTIVITY	IMPLEMENTING PARTNER	TIME PERIOD	PROGRAM COMPONENTS	TARGET SOFT SKILLS	TARGET WORKFORCE OUTCOMES
Tanzania	Advancing Youth (Blum et. al., 2020)	DAI	2017 - 2022	Training and mentoring in life skills, livelihoods and leadership. Support establishment of youth savings and loans associations	Leadership, confidence, self-esteem, sense of belonging, responsibility	Employment, establishment of microenterprises, financial assets
Uganda	YouthMap (Duggleby et al, 2015)	International Youth Foundation	2010 - 2015	Pilot program that provided skills training, internship, entrepreneurship, networking and research opportunities, job placement services and mentorship	Problem solving, conflict resolution, critical thinking, decision making, interpersonal relationships, communication and coping skills, flexibility and community service, team building and leadership	Employment, wages. Employer satisfaction
Zimbabwe	Zimbabwe: Works (James et al., 2018)	International Youth Foundation	2012-2017	Entrepreneurship and work readiness training, microloans	Interpersonal skills, community, teamwork, self-promotion, self-efficacy and self-confidence	Employment, job retention, income, economic empowerment, household assets, entrepreneurship, revenue, profits, savings,

ANNEX H. COMPLETE DATABASE OF SOFT SKILLS LITERATURE REVIEWED

TABLE H. COMPLETE DATABASE OF SOFT SKILLS LITERATURE REVIEWED

NO.	CITATION	GEOGRAPHIC COVERAGE	STUDY TYPE	METHOD	CONTEXT FACTORS	JOB SECTOR TARGETED	DATA RELEVANCE	RIGOR
1	Acevedo, P., Cruces, G., Gertler, P., & Martínez, S. (2017). Living Up to Expectations: How Job Training Made Women Better Off and Men Worse Off. National Bureau for Economic Research (NBER) Working Paper No. 23264.	Dominican Republic	Empirical	Random assignment to one of 3 modalities: full and partial treatment or the control group	At-risk youth (defined as un- or under-employed or and not having completed secondary school)	N	Medium-high	High
2	Adhvaryu, A., Kala, N., & Nyshadham, A. (2018). The skills to pay the bills: Returns to on-the-job soft skills training. NBER Working Paper No. 24313.	India	Empirical	RCT	Females	Garment factories	Medium	High
3	Adoho, F., Chakravarty, S. Korkoyah, D., Lundberg, M., & Tasneem, A. (2014). The Impact of an Adolescent Girls Employment Program: The EPAG project in Liberia.	Liberia	Program evaluation	Quantitative surveys, focus group discussions (FGDs), cost-benefit analysis	Adolescent girls	N	High	High
4	Akyeampong, K. (2014). Reconceptualised life skills in secondary education in the African context: Lessons learnt from reforms in Ghana. International Review of Education, 60(2), 217-234.	Ghana	Policy	Synthesis of initiatives and policies	N/A	N	High	Medium
5	Alcid, A. & Martin, G. (2017). Akazi Kanoze 2: Workforce Readiness and Employment Outcomes. Education Development Center, Inc.	Rwanda	Program evaluation	RCT and qualitative data	Gender differences between males and females are reported	N	High	High
6	Alcid, A. (2014). A randomized control trial of Akazi Kanoze youth in rural Rwanda.	Rwanda	Program evaluation	RCT, qualitative case studies, FGDs	N/A	N	High	High

TABLE H. COMPLETE DATABASE OF SOFT SKILLS LITERATURE REVIEWED

NO.	CITATION	GEOGRAPHIC COVERAGE	STUDY TYPE	METHOD	CONTEXT FACTORS	JOB SECTOR TARGETED	DATA RELEVANCE	RIGOR
7	Alcid, A. (2015). A Study of the WRN! Credential Test's Relationship to Youth Jobs and Employer Satisfaction.	Rwanda	Empirical	Follow-up youth livelihoods survey and employer satisfaction survey	N/A	N	High	Medium-high
8	Alibhai, S., Buehren, N., & Papineni, S. (2016). From learning to earning: An impact evaluation of the digital opportunity trust (DOT) entrepreneurship training.	Ethiopia	Program evaluation		Females	Entrepreneurship	Medium-high	Medium-high
9	Alibhai, S., Buehren, N., Frese, M., Goldstein, M., Papineni, S., & Wolf, K. (2019). Full Esteem Ahead? Mindset-Oriented Business Training In Ethiopia. The World Bank.	Ethiopia	Empirical	Quasi-experimental RCT	Females	Entrepreneurship	High	High
10	Allemano, E. & Dieng, A. (2016). YouthMap Senegal: Jeunes Agriculteurs Pilot Project Performance Evaluation. USAID.	Senegal	Program evaluation		N/A	N	High	Medium
11	Alvarado, G., Skinner, M., Plaut, D., Moss, C., Kapungu, C., & Reavley, N. (2017). A systematic review of positive youth development programs in low-and middle-income countries. Washington, DC: YouthPower Learning, Making Cents International.	Low and middle-income countries	Literature review	Literature review	N/A	N	Medium	High
12	Alvares de Azevedo, T., Davis, J., Ignatowski, C., & Tolani, N. (2018). Synthesis of findings and lessons learned from USAID-funded evaluations.	Global	Program evaluation	Meta-analysis	27% of evaluations from Africa, 35% from crisis and conflict regions, and 23% from LMICs; young people aged 15-35 years old	N	High	Medium-high

TABLE H. COMPLETE DATABASE OF SOFT SKILLS LITERATURE REVIEWED

NO.	CITATION	GEOGRAPHIC COVERAGE	STUDY TYPE	METHOD	CONTEXT FACTORS	JOB SECTOR TARGETED	DATA RELEVANCE	RIGOR
13	Amin, S., Ahmed, J., Saha., J., Hossain, M.I., & Haque, E.F. (2016). Delaying child marriage through community-based skills-development programs for girls: Results from a randomized controlled study in rural Bangladesh. Population Council.	Bangladesh	Program evaluation		Females	N	Medium	Medium-high
14	Anosike, P. (2019). Entrepreneurship education as human capital: Implications for youth self-employment and conflict mitigation in Sub-Saharan Africa.	Sub-Saharan Africa	Empirical	Semi-structured interviews	Conflict-affect regions	Entrepreneurship	Medium	Medium
15	Arias, O., Evans, D. K., & Santos, I. (2019). The Skills Balancing Act in Sub-Saharan Africa: Investing in Skills for Productivity, Inclusivity, and Adaptability. Africa Development Forum;. Washington, DC: World Bank and Agence française de développement.	Sub-Saharan Africa	Other		N/A	N	Medium	Medium
16	Asante Africa Foundation, Inc. (2019). Transforming Vulnerable Girls to Entrepreneurial Women Through Leadership, Livelihood and Entrepreneurship Skills. USAID YouthPower Learning.	Kenya, Tanzania	Program evaluation	Qualitative research: surveys, FGDs, interviews, questionnaires	Females	Self-employment /entrepreneurism	High	Medium-high
17	Assan, J. K., & Nalutaaya, V. H. (2018). Africa's Youth Unemployment Challenge and the Pursuit of Soft Skills Development by University Students. Rev. Eur. Stud., 10, 58.	Kenya	Empirical	Mixed-methods (pre- and post-questionnaires, interviews, FGDs)	Participants were all university students	N	High	High
18	Auten, S., Dabla, A., & Bassie, M. (2016). Advancing youth project performance evaluation. USAID.	Liberia	Program evaluation	Mostly qualitative, key informant interviews (KIIs), FGDs	N/A	N	Medium	Medium

TABLE H. COMPLETE DATABASE OF SOFT SKILLS LITERATURE REVIEWED

NO.	CITATION	GEOGRAPHIC COVERAGE	STUDY TYPE	METHOD	CONTEXT FACTORS	JOB SECTOR TARGETED	DATA RELEVANCE	RIGOR
19	Azevedo, T. A. D., Davis, J., & Charles, M. (2013). Testing what works in youth employment: Evaluating Kenya's Ninaweza program. Global Partnership for Youth Employment.	Kenya	Program evaluation	RCT	Females	Information Communication Technology (ICT)	High	High
20	Balwanz, D. (2012). Youth Skills Development, Informal Employment and the Enabling Environment in Kenya: Trends and Tensions. Journal of International Cooperation in Education, 15(2), 69-91.	Kenya	Other	Literature review	N/A	N	Medium	Medium
21	Bandiera, O., Buehren, N., Burgess, R., Goldstein, M., Gulesci, S., Rasul, I., & Sulaiman, M. (2020). Women's Empowerment in Action: Evidence from a Randomized Control Trial in Africa. American Economic Journal: Applied Economics 12(1), 210-259.	Uganda	Empirical	RCT	Females	N	High	High
22	Banks, N. (2015). What Works for Young People's Development? A Case Study of BRAC's Empowerment and Livelihoods for Adolescent Girls Programme in Uganda and Tanzania.	Uganda and Tanzania	Literature review	Review of program reports and evaluations	Females	N	High	Medium
23	Barkess, P. (2016). Programa Para o Futuro (PPF) MZ Review Exercise.	Mozambique	Other		Orphans and vulnerable youth	N	Medium-high	Medium-low
24	Barrera-Osorio, F., Kugler, A.D., & Silliman, M.I. (2020). Hard and soft skills in vocational training: Experimental evidence from Colombia. NBER Working Paper No. 27548.	Columbia	Empirical	RCT	Youth in poverty	N	Medium-high	High
25	Bassi, V., & Nansamba, A. (2021). Screening and signaling non-cognitive skills: Experimental evidence from Uganda. USC-INET Research Paper, (19-08).	Uganda	Empirical	Field experiment	N/A	N	Medium-high	High
26	Berg, J., Osher, D., Same, M. R., Nolan, E., Benson, D., & Jacobs, N. (2017). Identifying, defining, and measuring social and emotional competencies. Washington, DC: American Institutes for Research.	OECD countries	Policy	Literature review	N/A	N	Low-medium	N/A
27	Betcherman, G., & Khan, T. (2018). Jobs for Africa's expanding youth cohort: a stocktaking of employment prospects and policy interventions. IZA Journal of Development and Migration, 8(1), 1-20.	Sub-Saharan Africa	Literature review	Literature review	N/A	N	Medium	Medium-low

TABLE H. COMPLETE DATABASE OF SOFT SKILLS LITERATURE REVIEWED

NO.	CITATION	GEOGRAPHIC COVERAGE	STUDY TYPE	METHOD	CONTEXT FACTORS	JOB SECTOR TARGETED	DATA RELEVANCE	RIGOR
28	Bitga, A., Feige, D., & Pallatino, C. (2020). Study on the use of effectuation theory. Washington, DC: USAID's YouthPower Learning.	Global	Literature review	Literature review, KIIs, case studies	Youth in LMICs-	N	High	Medium
29	Blattman, C., & Annan, J. (2016). Can employment reduce lawlessness and rebellion? A field experiment with high-risk men in a fragile state. American Political Science Review, 110(1), 1-17.	Liberia	Empirical		Males in a post-conflict, fragile context	N	High	High
30	Blattman, C., & Ralston, L. (2015). Generating employment in poor and fragile states- Evidence from labor market and entrepreneurship programs.	Sub-Saharan Africa	Literature review		Some evidence from conflict contexts	N	Medium	Medium-low
31	Blattman, C., Green, E., Annan, J., Jamison, J. (2013). Building Women's Economic and Social Empowerment through Enterprise: An Experimental Assessment of the Women's Income Generating Support Program in Uganda. Logica study series no. 1. World Bank.	Uganda	Program evaluation	Randomized experimental design and mixed-methods	Majority young women with little to no formal schooling	N	High	High
32	Blum, R., More, A.d, Moroz, E., Felix, E., Alldredge, J. M., & Jessee, C. (2020a). From theory to practice: Applying the USAID positive youth development framework across eleven activities.	Eastern and Southern Caribbean, El Salvador, Honduras, Indonesia, Jordan, Kenya, Nicaragua, Tanzania, Burundi, Mozambique, West Bank / Gaza	Literature review	Mixed-methods (literature review, online survey, KIIs, and case studies)	LMICs; activities targeted marginalized and vulnerable youth (most commonly defined as out-of-school youth, living in extreme poverty, and/or youth with disabilities)	N	Medium	Medium
33	Blum, R., More, A.d, Moroz, E., Felix, E., Alldredge, J. M., & Jessee, C. (2020b). Review of YouthPower Activities.	Eastern and Southern Caribbean, El Salvador, Honduras, Indonesia, Jordan, Kenya, Nicaragua,	Literature review	Mixed-methods (literature review, online survey, KIIs, and case studies)	LMICs; activities targeted marginalized and vulnerable youth (most commonly defined as out-of-school youth,	N	High	Medium-high

TABLE H. COMPLETE DATABASE OF SOFT SKILLS LITERATURE REVIEWED

NO.	CITATION	GEOGRAPHIC COVERAGE	STUDY TYPE	METHOD	CONTEXT FACTORS	JOB SECTOR TARGETED	DATA RELEVANCE	RIGOR
		Tanzania, Burundi, Mozambique, West Bank / Gaza			living in extreme poverty, and/or youth with disabilities)			
34	Botea, I., Chakravarty, S., & Haddock, S. (2015). The Adolescent Girls Initiative in Rwanda.	Rwanda	Program evaluation	Mixed-methods randomized pipeline design (participatory action research plus pre- and post-quantitative surveys, FGDs)	Developing country, young women (ages 16-24), out-of-school for at least one year, some primary education, classified as highly vulnerable or at-risk	N	High	High
35	Brady, K., & Aleixo, A. (2018). YouthPower Action/Programa Para O Futuro Expansion - Mozambique.	Mozambique	Other		Orphans and vulnerable youth (lost one or both parents and meets government definition of economic vulnerability)	N	High	Medium
36	Briones, R. (2011). Workforce development initiatives for out-of-school youth - What works? USAID.	Philippines	Program evaluation	FGDs, surveys, interviews, video documentation	Out-of-school youth	N	High	Medium-high

TABLE H. COMPLETE DATABASE OF SOFT SKILLS LITERATURE REVIEWED

NO.	CITATION	GEOGRAPHIC COVERAGE	STUDY TYPE	METHOD	CONTEXT FACTORS	JOB SECTOR TARGETED	DATA RELEVANCE	RIGOR
37	Brown, A., Rankin, K., Picon, M., & Cameron, D. (2015). The state of evidence on the impact of transferable skills programming on youth in low- and middle-income countries. New Delhi: International Initiative for Impact Evaluation (3ie).	Global	Other	Assessed 90 impact evaluations	LMICs	N	High	High
38	Brown, E. K., & Slater, H. (2018). The future of work in Africa: Implications for secondary education and TVET systems.	Africa	Literature review		TVET	N	Medium-high	Medium
39	Buchert, L. (2014). Learning needs and life skills for youth: An introduction. International Review of Education, 60(2), 163-176.	Global	Literature review	Literature review	N/A	N	Medium	Low
40	Buehren, N., Chakravarty, S., Goldstein, M., Slavchevska, V., & Sulaiman, M. (2017). Adolescent Girls' Empowerment in Conflict-Affected Settings: Experimental Evidence from South Sudan.	South Sudan	Program evaluation		Females; conflict-affect region	N	High	Medium-high
41	Burnett, N., & Jayaram, S. (2012). Skills for employability in Africa and Asia.	Africa and Asia	Empirical	Employer survey	Developing countries	N	High	Medium-high
42	Campos, F., Frese, M., Goldstein, M., Iacovone, L., Johnson, H. C., McKenzie, D., & Mensmann, M. (2017). Teaching personal initiative beats traditional training in boosting small business in West Africa. Science, 357(6357), 1287-1290.	West Africa (Togo)	Empirical	RCT	Developing country; business owners who had fewer than 50 employees (average age = 41 years old)	Entrepreneurship	High	High
43	Care, E., Kim, H., Anderson, K., & Gustafsson-Wright, E. (2017). Skills for a Changing World: National Perspectives and the Global Movement. Center for Universal Education at The Brookings Institution.	Mexico, South Africa, Kenya, the Philippines	Empirical	Qualitative (FGDs and in-depth interviews with parents, community members, teachers, teacher trainers, and education administratio	N/A	N	High	Medium

TABLE H. COMPLETE DATABASE OF SOFT SKILLS LITERATURE REVIEWED

NO.	CITATION	GEOGRAPHIC COVERAGE	STUDY TYPE	METHOD	CONTEXT FACTORS	JOB SECTOR TARGETED	DATA RELEVANCE	RIGOR
				n and policy personnel)				
44	Catalano, R. F., Skinner, M. L., Alvarado, G., Kapungu, C., Reavley, N., Patton, G. C., ... & Petroni, S. (2019). Positive youth development programs in low-and middle-income countries: a conceptual framework and systematic review of efficacy. Journal of Adolescent Health, 65(1), 15-31.	Global	Literature review	Meta-analysis	LMICs	N	High	Medium
45	Chakravarty, S., Das, S., & Vaillant, J. (2017). Gender and youth employment in Sub-Saharan Africa: a review of constraints and effective interventions. The World Bank.	Sub-Saharan Africa	Policy	Literature review	Females	N	High	Medium
46	Chakravarty, S., Lundberg, M., Nikolov, P., & Zenker, J. (2016). The role of training programs for youth employment in Nepal.	Nepal	Program evaluation	Quasi-experimental (randomized pipeline design)	Developing country, females ages 16-24	N	High	High
47	Chioda, L. & Gertler, P. (2020b). Soft skills and entrepreneurship training for secondary school students in Uganda. Innovations for Poverty Action.	Uganda	Empirical	RCT	N/A	Entrepreneurship	High	Medium-high
48	Chioda, L., & Gertler, P. (2020). RCT 4-Year Follow-On Interpretation Memo.	Uganda	Empirical	RCT	N/A	N	High	High
49	Cho, Y. & Honorati, M. (2013). Entrepreneurship programs in developing countries: A meta regression analysis. Policy Research Working Paper No. 6402. The World Bank.	Developing countries	Literature review	Meta-analysis	N/A	Entrepreneurship	Medium	Medium
50	Cook, G. & Younis, A. (2012). Somali youth livelihood program.	Somalia	Program evaluation	Literature review, qualitative information (FGDs and KIIs), and quantitative data (surveys)	N/A	N	Medium	Medium-high

TABLE H. COMPLETE DATABASE OF SOFT SKILLS LITERATURE REVIEWED

NO.	CITATION	GEOGRAPHIC COVERAGE	STUDY TYPE	METHOD	CONTEXT FACTORS	JOB SECTOR TARGETED	DATA RELEVANCE	RIGOR
51	Cunningham, W. V., & Villaseñor, P. (2016). Employer voices, employer demands, and implications for public skills development policy connecting the labor and education sectors. The World Bank Research Observer, 31(1), 102-134.	Global (Europe, Latin America, Caribbean, South/East Asia, US, Africa, Middle East)	Literature review	Literature review of employer surveys	N/A	N	Low-medium	Medium
52	Cunningham, W., Acosta, P., & Muller, N. (2016). Minds and behaviors at work: boosting socioemotional skills for Latin America's workforce. World Bank Publications.	Latin America (Bolivia, Colombia, El Salvador, Peru)	Literature review	Synthesis of empirical literature	LMICs	N	High	Medium
53	De García, D., Jones, S. E., & Pucilowski M. (2014). Evaluation of the Guyana Skills and Knowledge for Youth Employment Program.	Guyana	Program evaluation		At-risk youth (majority of youth displayed at least one of five risk factors: broken household, teenage pregnancy, self-reported arrests, low socio-economic status, and low levels of educational achievement)	N	Medium	Medium
54	Duggleby, T., Kapoor, R., Lai, C., Midling, M.J., & Opolot, N. (2015). YouthMap Uganda Evaluation. USAID.	Uganda	Program evaluation	Mixed methods	N/A	N	High	Medium
55	Dupuy, K., Bezu, S., Knudsen, A., Halvorsen, S., Kwauk, C., Braga, A., & Kim, H. (2018). Life Skills in Non-Formal Contexts for Adolescent Girls in Developing Countries. CMI Report Number 5. Center for Universal Education at the Brookings Institution.	Lebanon, Tanzania and Ethiopia	Empirical	Mixed methods (literature review, surveys, KIIs, synthesis of	Females	N	High	Medium

TABLE H. COMPLETE DATABASE OF SOFT SKILLS LITERATURE REVIEWED

NO.	CITATION	GEOGRAPHIC COVERAGE	STUDY TYPE	METHOD	CONTEXT FACTORS	JOB SECTOR TARGETED	DATA RELEVANCE	RIGOR
				non-formal life skills programs)				
56	EDC, ProExam, & Akilah Institute. (2016). Measuring youth's soft skills across cultures: Evidence from the Philippines & Rwanda. Workforce Connections, April 2016.	Rwanda and the Philippines	Empirical	Tool development /assessment, employment and employer surveys	N/A	N	Medium-high	High
57	EDC. (2014). Employability Study: An Evaluation of METAS' Basic Labor Competencies Training and Certification Program.	Honduras	Program evaluation		N/A	N	Medium	Medium
58	EDC. (2016). Mindanao Youth for Development (MYDEV) Program FY15 Impact Evaluation Report.	Philippines	Impact evaluation		Vulnerable, out-of-school youth in conflict affected areas; rural v. urban	N	Medium	Medium-high
59	EDC. (2020). USAID/Djibouti workforce development program outcome evaluation report - Measuring training beneficiaries skills, employment, perceptions of gender equity and confidence.	Djibouti	Program evaluation	Quasi-experimental	N/A	N	High	Medium
60	EDC. (2020). USAID/DRC Integrated Youth Development Activity (IYDA) Cohort I Midline Outcome Evaluation Report.	DRC	Other		Conflict-affected region	N	Medium	Medium-low
61	EDC. (2021). Scaling Youth Workforce Development Outcomes by Transforming Local Systems: A Rwanda Case Study.	Rwanda	Empirical	Desk review of qualitative and quantitative research on EDC projects	N/A	N	Medium	Medium
62	Educate! (2014a). Impact Evaluation of Midline Data from Educate! Randomised Control Trial. Internal Report.	Uganda	Internal report:	RCT	N/A	N	High	High

TABLE H. COMPLETE DATABASE OF SOFT SKILLS LITERATURE REVIEWED

NO.	CITATION	GEOGRAPHIC COVERAGE	STUDY TYPE	METHOD	CONTEXT FACTORS	JOB SECTOR TARGETED	DATA RELEVANCE	RIGOR
			midline study					
63	Education Development Center. (2014). USAID Advancing Youth Project: Livelihoods and Work Readiness Report.	Liberia	Program evaluation	Livelihoods survey and work readiness assessment	Out-of-school youth with limited literacy and numeracy skills	N	Medium-high	Medium
64	Education Development Trust. (2020). Midterm review of Education Development Center's Senegal Secondary Education - Youth Work Readiness Project or APTE. Internal Report.	Senegal	Other		N/A	N	Low	Low
65	Elsayed, A., & Roushdy, R. (2017). Empowering young women through business and vocational training: Evidence from a field intervention in rural Egypt. Impact Report Series, Issue 8, international Labour Organization.	Egypt	Impact evaluation	Quasi-experimental	Females	N	Medium	Medium-high
66	Filmer, D., & Fox, L. (2014). Youth Employment in Sub-Saharan Africa. Washington, DC: The World Bank.	Sub-Saharan Africa	Literature review	N/A	N/A	N	High	Medium
67	FocusAfrica. (2010a). Youth Empowerment Program evaluation Report Kenya - African Center for Women, Information, and Communications Technology (ACWICT).	Kenya	Program evaluation	Mixed-methods (KIIs, FGDs, questionnaires)	Females	ICT	High	Medium
68	FocusAfrica. (2010b). Youth Empowerment Program evaluation Report Kenya - The Informal Sector Business Institute (ISBI).	Kenya	Program evaluation	Mixed-methods (KIIs, FGDs and questionnaires)	Males	ICT	High	Medium
69	FocusAfrica. (2010c). Youth Empowerment Program evaluation Report Kenya - NairoBits.	Kenya	Program evaluation	Mixed-methods (KIIs, FGDs, questionnaires)	N/A	ICT	High	Medium

TABLE H. COMPLETE DATABASE OF SOFT SKILLS LITERATURE REVIEWED

NO.	CITATION	GEOGRAPHIC COVERAGE	STUDY TYPE	METHOD	CONTEXT FACTORS	JOB SECTOR TARGETED	DATA RELEVANCE	RIGOR
70	FocusAfrica. (2010d). Youth Empowerment Program evaluation Report Nigeria.	Nigeria	Program evaluation	Mixed-methods (KIIs, FGDs, questionnaires)	N/A	ICT	High	Medium
71	FocusAfrica. (2010e). Youth Empowerment Program evaluation Report Senegal.	Senegal	Program evaluation	Mixed-methods (KIIs, FGDs, questionnaires)	N/A	ICT	High	Medium
72	FocusAfrica. (2010f). Youth Empowerment Program evaluation Report Tanzania.	Tanzania	Program evaluation	Mixed-methods KIIs, FGDs, questionnaires)	N/A	ICT	Medium	Medium
73	Fox, L. & Kaul, U. (2018). The evidence is in: How should youth employment programs in low-income countries be designed? Policy Research Working Paper No. 8500. Background Paper to the 2018 World Development Report. The World Bank.	Global; focus on Sub-Saharan Africa	Policy	Literature review; assessment of impact evaluations	Low-income countries	N	Medium-high	Medium-high
74	Galloway, T., Lippman, L., Burke, H., Diener, O., & Gates, S. (2017). Measuring soft skills and life skills in international youth development programs: A review and inventory of tools. Washington, DC: USAID's Youth Power Implementation IDIQ.	Global	Other	Review/assessment of measurement tools	N/A	N	Medium	High
75	Gang, G. C. A., Hashmi, S. I., & Seok, C. B. (2020). Perceiving the importance of job-related skills in the 4th industrial revolution era from the perspectives of graduates and employers. International Journal of Advanced Science and Technology, 29(11s), 702-713.	Malaysia	Empirical	Employer and student surveys	Employers and students in the sample were overwhelmingly well-educated diploma/degree holders	N	Medium	Medium
76	Gates, S., Lippman, L., Shadowen, N., Burke, H., Diener, O., and Malkin, M. (2016). Key Soft Skills for Cross-Sectoral Youth Outcomes. Washington, DC: USAID's YouthPower: Implementation, YouthPower Action.	Global	Literature review	Literature review	N/A	N	High	High

TABLE H. COMPLETE DATABASE OF SOFT SKILLS LITERATURE REVIEWED

NO.	CITATION	GEOGRAPHIC COVERAGE	STUDY TYPE	METHOD	CONTEXT FACTORS	JOB SECTOR TARGETED	DATA RELEVANCE	RIGOR
77	Gavigan, S., Ciprikis, K., & Cooney, T. (2020). The impact of entrepreneurship training on self-employment of rural female entrepreneurs in Uganda. Small Enterprise Research, 27(2), 180-194.	Uganda	Empirical	Quantitative (Analysis of employee surveys)	Females; rural	Self-employment	Medium-high	Medium-high
78	Genesis Analytics. (2019). Impact evaluation of the IYF Passport to Success life skills curriculum.	South Africa	Program evaluation	Quasi-experimental	N/A	N	High	High
79	Gielnik, M. M., Frese, M., Bischoff, K. M., Muhangi, G., & Omoo, F. (2016). Positive impact of entrepreneurship training on entrepreneurial behavior in a vocational training setting. Africa Journal of Management, 2(3), 330-348.	Uganda	Empirical	Randomized field study (self-report data)	N/A	N	Medium-high	Medium-high
80	Giuliano Sarr, K., Dininio, P., Diallo, S., Keita, M., & Mbodji Y. (2019). Empowering Mauritanian Youth through Education and Self-Improvement Final Performance Evaluation. USAID.	Mauritania	Program evaluation	Mixed-methods	At-risk youth in an area prone to violent extremism	N	High	High
81	Glick, P., Huang, C., & Mejia, N. (2015). Private sector and youth skills and employment programs in low- and middle-income countries. Washington, D.C.: The World Bank.	Global	Literature review	Literature review, synthesis of impact evaluations, performance evaluations, process evaluations, case studies	LMICs	N	High	Medium
82	Groh, M., Krishnan, N., McKenzie, D., & Vishwanath, T. (2012). Soft skills or hard cash? The impact of training and wage subsidy programs on female youth employment in Jordan.	Jordan	Empirical	Program evaluation(surveys 6 and 14 months after the start of the intervention)	Randomly selected female community college graduates in (ages 20-22), majority unmarried and have no work history	N	Medium	High

TABLE H. COMPLETE DATABASE OF SOFT SKILLS LITERATURE REVIEWED

NO.	CITATION	GEOGRAPHIC COVERAGE	STUDY TYPE	METHOD	CONTEXT FACTORS	JOB SECTOR TARGETED	DATA RELEVANCE	RIGOR
83	Groh, M., Krishnan, N., McKenzie, D., & Vishwanath, T. (2016). The impact of soft skills training on female youth employment: evidence from a randomized experiment in Jordan. IZA Journal of Labor & Development, 5(1), 9.	Jordan (classified as a lower middle-income country)	Empirical	RCT	Female community college graduates	N	Medium	High
84	Guerra, N., Modecki, K., & Cunningham, W. (2014). Developing social-emotional skills for the labor market: The PRACTICE model. Policy Research Working Paper. Washington, DC: World Bank.	Global	Literature review	Literature review	N/A	N	Medium	Medium
85	Guison-Dowdy, A. (2012). Skills for employability: economic returns to education and skills. Results for Development Institute.	Developing and developed countries	Literature review	Literature review	N/A	N	Medium-low	Low
86	Gunewardena, D., King, E., & Valerio, A. (2018). More than schooling: Understanding gender differences in the labor market when measures of skill are available.	Armenia, Bolivia, Colombia, Georgia, Ghana, Kenya, Serbia, Ukraine, Vietnam	Literature review	Literature review, analysis of STEP skills survey	Differences in results are disaggregated by gender, lower-middle and middle-income countries	N	Medium-high	High
87	Hanemann, U. (2017). Integrated Community-Based Adult Education (ICBAE), United Republic of Tanzania. UNESCO Institute for Lifelong Learning.	Tanzania	Other		N/A	N	High	Medium-low
88	Honeyman et al. (Forthcoming). Workforce Skills Curriculum Development in Context: Case Studies in Rwanda, Algeria, and the Philippines. In J. DeJaeghere & E. Murphy-Graham (Eds.), Life Skills Education for Youth: Critical Perspectives. Springer Publishing.	Rwanda, Algeria, Philippines	Literature review	Case studies	N/A	N	High	Medium-high
89	Honeyman, C. (2019). Soft Skills for Youth Employment in Algeria. Qualitative Research Report. World Learning.	Algeria	Empirical	Qualitative research: FGDs, KIIs, questionnaires	Differences in perspectives on soft skills by gender	N	High	Medium
90	Honorati, M. (2015). The impact of private sector internship and training on urban youth in Kenya.	Kenya	Empirical	RCT	Vulnerable youth (defined as those out of school and/or	N	High	High

TABLE H. COMPLETE DATABASE OF SOFT SKILLS LITERATURE REVIEWED

NO.	CITATION	GEOGRAPHIC COVERAGE	STUDY TYPE	METHOD	CONTEXT FACTORS	JOB SECTOR TARGETED	DATA RELEVANCE	RIGOR
					with no permanent job)			
91	Hunter, L., & Lean, J. (2018). Entrepreneurial learning–a social context perspective: evidence from Kenya and Tanzania. Journal of Small Business and Enterprise Development.	Kenya, Tanzania	Empirical		N/A	Entrepreneurship	Medium-low	Medium-low
92	Ibarrarán, P., Kluve, J., Ripani, L., & Rosas Shady, D. (2019). Experimental Evidence on the Long-Term Effects of a Youth Training Program. ILR Review, 72(1), 185-222.	Dominican Republic	Empirical	RCT (longitudinal; six-year follow-up)	Out-of-school youth living in poor neighborhoods	N	Low	High
93	Ibarrarán, P., Ripani, L., Taboada, B., Villa, J. M., & Garcia, B. (2014). Life skills, employability and training for disadvantaged youth: Evidence from a randomized evaluation design. IZA Journal of Labor & Development, 3(1), 10.	Dominican Republic	Empirical	Impact evaluation (randomized design)	Disadvantaged youth	N	Medium	High
94	Ignatowski, C. (2017). What works in soft skills development for youth employment. A donor's perspective. Youth Employment Funders Group.	Global	Literature review	Mixed-methods meta-analysis	Some focus on developing countries and out-of-school youth	N	Medium	Medium-low
95	International Youth Foundation. (2011). Youth empowerment program evaluation.	Kenya, Nigeria, Senegal, Tanzania	Program evaluation	Mixed-methods (surveys, interviews, questionnaires)	Developing countries	ICT	High	Medium
96	International Youth Foundation. (2013). Creating Opportunities for Youth in Hospitality. Sponsored by Hilton Worldwide.	Global	Other	Literature review	N/A	Hospitality	Medium	Medium-low
97	International Youth Foundation. (2013). Getting Youth in the Door--Defining Soft Skills Requirements for Entry-level Service Sector Jobs.	USA, South Africa	Literature review	Literature review	N/A	N	Medium	Medium
98	International Youth Foundation. (2013a). Analysis of ICT-enabled youth employment in Ghana, Kenya, and South Africa.	Ghana, Kenya, South Africa	Empirical	Qualitative (FGDs, KIIs, surveys)	N/A	ICT	Medium	Medium-high

TABLE H. COMPLETE DATABASE OF SOFT SKILLS LITERATURE REVIEWED

NO.	CITATION	GEOGRAPHIC COVERAGE	STUDY TYPE	METHOD	CONTEXT FACTORS	JOB SECTOR TARGETED	DATA RELEVANCE	RIGOR
99	International Youth Foundation. (2014). YouthMap Zambia - A Cross Sectoral Analysis of Youth in Zambia.	Zambia	Program evaluation	Mixed methods	N/A	N	Medium	Medium
100	Iseselo et al. (2019). Can training interventions in entrepreneurship, beekeeping, and health change the mind-set of vulnerable young adults toward self-employment? A qualitative study from urban Tanzania.	Tanzania	Empirical	Qualitative	N/A	N	Medium-low	Medium-high
101	James, V., Carlson, N., Rink, A. F., Milanzi, A., Yekeye, I., & Nyamwanza, T. (2018). Zimbabwe:Works Impact Evaluation.	Zimbabwe	Program evaluation		N/A	N	High	Medium-high
102	Johnstone, C., Nikoi, A., & Kahihu, N. (2017). Uhusiano Design for learning. International Journal of Educational Development, 52, 19-25.	Kenya	Program evaluation	Qualitative	Out-of-school, unemployed youth	N	Medium	Low-medium
103	J-Pal. (2013). Youth Initiative Review Paper.	Developing countries	Literature review	Literature review	N/A	N	High	Medium-high
104	Jurgens, E., Isolio, M., Jadi, C., & Elia, L. (2013). Report on qualitative study of the Adolescent Girls Initiative in South Sudan.	South Sudan	Program evaluation	Qualitative (FGDs, KIIs)	Developing country; females	N	Medium-high	Medium
105	Karki, Y.B., Pande, T.N., Neupane, B.R., Karki, K.B., & Bajracharya, S. (2013). Final Evaluation Report Education for Income Generation Project (EIG). USAID/Nepal.	Nepal	Program evaluation	Desk review, interview with stakeholders /implementers, meetings, FGDs with beneficiaries, interviews with beneficiaries in households and case studies	N/A	N	High	Medium-high

TABLE H. COMPLETE DATABASE OF SOFT SKILLS LITERATURE REVIEWED

NO.	CITATION	GEOGRAPHIC COVERAGE	STUDY TYPE	METHOD	CONTEXT FACTORS	JOB SECTOR TARGETED	DATA RELEVANCE	RIGOR
106	Kautz, T., Heckman, J. J., Diris, R., Ter Weel, B., & Borghans, L. (2014). Fostering and measuring skills: Improving cognitive and non-cognitive skills to promote lifetime success (No. w20749). National Bureau of Economic Research.	Global	Literature review	Literature review	N/A	N	High	High
107	Kluve, J., Puerto, S., Robalino, D. A., Romero, J., Rother, F., Stöterau, J., ... & Witte, M. (2016). Do youth employment programs improve labor market outcomes? A systematic review.	Global	Systematic review		N/A	N	High	High
108	Kohl, R., & French, M. (2014). Scale and sustainability study - The Akazi Kanoze Youth Education and Livelihoods Project in Rwanda.	Rwanda	Program evaluation		N/A	N	Medium	Medium
109	Kwauk, C., & Braga, A. (2017). *Translating Competencies to Empowered Action.* Center for Universal Education, The Brookings Institution.	Global	Other		N/A	N	High	Medium
110	Kwauk, C., & Perlman Robinson, J. (2016). Educate! Riding the reform wave to scale up youth entrepreneurship in Uganda. Center for Universal Education at Brookings.	Uganda	Other		N/A	N	Medium	Medium
111	Laterite Ltd. (2017). Akazi Kanoze 2 scale & sustainability: External evaluation of the integration of the work readiness curriculum and school to work transition program into the Rwandan education system.	Rwanda	Program evaluation		N/A	N	Medium-high	Medium
112	Lemma, G. (2020). USAID's building the potential of youth activity final report. USAID/Ethiopia.	Ethiopia	Other		N/A	N	High	Medium-low
113	Lippman, L. H., Ryberg, R., Carney, R. and Moore, K. A. (2015). Key "Soft Skills" that Foster Youth Workforce Success: Toward a Consensus Across Fields. Workforce Connections, June 2015. Child Trends.	Mostly developed countries (USA, UK, Germany, China, Canada, Australia) and a few developing countries (Vietnam,	Literature review	Literature review and expert interviews	N/A	N	High	High

TABLE H. COMPLETE DATABASE OF SOFT SKILLS LITERATURE REVIEWED

NO.	CITATION	GEOGRAPHIC COVERAGE	STUDY TYPE	METHOD	CONTEXT FACTORS	JOB SECTOR TARGETED	DATA RELEVANCE	RIGOR
		Georgia, Jordan, Ghana, Bolivia, Argentina, Sub-Saharan Africa)						
114	Management Systems International (MSI). (2017). Mid-term performance evaluation of the Kenya Youth Employment and Skills Program (K-YES).	Kenya	Program evaluation		N/A	N	High	Medium-high
115	Martin, S., Kapungu, C., Goelz, M., & Fritz, K. (2020). Investigating Soft Skills Program Features with a Gender Lens.	Mostly programs in sub-Saharan Africa (others in South and Southeast Asia, Latin America and the Caribbean, Middle East, North Africa, and US)	Literature review	Mixed methods (review of evaluations and assessments of youth programs)	Over half the programs trained only females	N	High	High
116	Mastercard Foundation. (2020). Secondary education in Africa: Preparing youth for the future of work.	Africa	Literature review		N/A	N	High	Medium
117	McIlvaine, K., Oser, C., Lindsey, J., & Blume, M. (2015). Confidence, capacity building and cash: Achieving sustained impact for ultra-poor women. IDS Bulletin 46(2), 83-92.	Rwanda, Democratic Republic of Congo	Empirical	Mixed-methods	Females	N	High	Medium-high
118	McIntosh, C. & Zeitlin, A. (2020). Using household grants to benchmark the cost effectiveness of a USAID workforce readiness program.	Rwanda	Empirical	RCT	N/A	N	High	High
119	McKelway, M. (2018). Women's self-efficacy and women's employment: Experimental evidence from India.	India	Empirical	2 RCTs	Females	N	Medium	High
120	McKenzie, D., & Puerto, S. (2017). Growing markets through business training for female entrepreneurs.	Kenya	Empirical	RCT	Females	Entrepreneurship	High	High

TABLE H. COMPLETE DATABASE OF SOFT SKILLS LITERATURE REVIEWED

NO.	CITATION	GEOGRAPHIC COVERAGE	STUDY TYPE	METHOD	CONTEXT FACTORS	JOB SECTOR TARGETED	DATA RELEVANCE	RIGOR
121	McKenzie, D., Puerto, S., & Odhiambo, F. (2019). Unpacking the determinants of entrepreneurship development and economic empowerment for women in Kenya.	Kenya	Program evaluation		Females	Entrepreneurship	Medium	High
122	Mensmann, M., & Frese, M. (2018). Who stays proactive after entrepreneurship training? Need for cognition, personal initiative maintenance, and well-being. Journal of Organizational Behavior, 40(1), 20-37.	Togo	Empirical	RCT	N/A	Entrepreneurship	Medium	High
123	Mercy Corps. (2015). Trusting in Youth in Zimbabwe Project.	Zimbabwe	Other		At-risk youth	N	Medium	Low
124	Miller, C., Sawyer, M., & Rowe, W. (2011). My Skills, My Money, My Brighter Future in Zimbabwe. An Assessment of Economic Strengthening Interventions for Adolescent Girls. Catholic Relief Services: Harare.	Zimbabwe	Program evaluation	Qualitative (FGDs, KIIs)	Females	N	High	Medium
125	Mitana, J. M. V., Muwagga, A. M., Giacomazzi, M., Saint Kizito, O., & Ariapa, M. (2019). Assessing educational outcomes in the 21st century in Uganda: a focus on soft skills. Journal of Emerging Trends in Educational Research and Policy Studies, 10(1), 62-70.	Uganda	Empirical	Student and teacher surveys	Urban and rural districts in Uganda	N	Medium	Low-medium
126	Monschein, S., Shanstrom, M., Tines, J., & Rukera, C. (2019). Performance evaluation report - Huguka Dukore Zkazi Kanoze.	Rwanda	Program evaluation	Mixed-methods	Vulnerable youth, rural vs. urban	N	High	Medium-high
127	Montague, M. (2013). Project Evaluation - Creating a dividend for lasting peace: Improving access to economic opportunities for vulnerable youth in post-conflict Burundi.	Burundi	Program evaluation		Post-conflict setting	N	High	Medium-high
128	Moubayed, L., Qubajah, K., & Aqrabawi, W. (2014). Final performance evaluation of the USAID/Jordan youth for the future (Y4F) project.	Jordan	Program evaluation	Mixed-methods: phone interviews, FGDs, KIIs, group interviews, surveys	At-risk youth	N	High	Medium-low

TABLE H. COMPLETE DATABASE OF SOFT SKILLS LITERATURE REVIEWED

NO.	CITATION	GEOGRAPHIC COVERAGE	STUDY TYPE	METHOD	CONTEXT FACTORS	JOB SECTOR TARGETED	DATA RELEVANCE	RIGOR
129	Murphy-Graham, E. & Cohen, A. K. (Forthcoming). Life skills education for youth in developing countries: What are they and why do they matter? In J. DeJaeghere & E. Murphy-Graham (Eds.), Life Skills Education for Youth: Critical Perspectives. Springer Publishing.	Global	Literature review		N/A	N	High	Medium
130	National Opinion Research Center. (2014). Yes Youth Can! Impact Evaluation Final Report.	Kenya	Program evaluation		Youth at high risk for post-election violence	N	High	Medium
131	New Dimension Consulting. (2014). Final performance evaluation for the Zimbabwe:Works programme.	Zimbabwe	Program evaluation		N/A	N	High	Medium-high
132	Ngware, M., Hungi, N., Ochieng, V., Kiroro, F., Wambiya, E., Muhua, N., Gathoni, G., & Mambe, S. (2019). Building capabilities for work and life: Assessing the production of core values and capabilities among youth in TVET institutions in Kenya.	Kenya	Empirical	Mixed-methods (assessments, FGDs, KIIs, questionnaires, in-depth interviews)	TVET	N	High	Medium-high
133	Noble, E., Ascencio, L., Wilondja, T., Mateba, A., Angelucci, M., & Heath, R. (2020). The Impact of Women for Women International's Economic and Social Empowerment Program in the Democratic Republic of Congo. Washington DC: Women for Women International.	DRC	Program evaluation	RCT	Females	N	High	Medium-high
134	Okul, E. O., & Maigua, J. W. (2019). A tracer study of CAP YEI direct reach alumni from 2011 to 2018.	Kenya	Program evaluation	Tracer study, literature review, surveys, interviews	Out-of-school, unemployed youth	N	High	Medium
135	Olenik, C., Fawcett, C., & Boyson, J. (2013). State of the field report: Examining the evidence in youth workforce development. Washington, DC: USAID.	Majority of work done in developing countries with a handful of	Literature review	Literature review of program evaluations	Majority of studies for out-of-school youth	N	Medium	Medium

TABLE H. COMPLETE DATABASE OF SOFT SKILLS LITERATURE REVIEWED

NO.	CITATION	GEOGRAPHIC COVERAGE	STUDY TYPE	METHOD	CONTEXT FACTORS	JOB SECTOR TARGETED	DATA RELEVANCE	RIGOR
		studies from the U.S.						
136	Omoeva, C., Gates, S., Cunha, N., Martinez, A., & Burke, H. (2020). Measuring Soft Skills Among Youth and Young Adults: Validation of a New Instrument. Washington, DC: USAID's YouthPower: Implementation, YouthPower Action.	Uganda and Guatemala	Other	Tool development /assessment	Disadvantaged youth	N	Medium	High
137	Ondiek, C.M.M., Kahihu, N., & Muthoni, S. (2019). What do employers think about soft skills?	Kenya	Empirical		N/A	N	High	Medium
138	Padilla, I., Costa, P., Murray, N., & Campuzano, L. (2020). Final performance evaluation: Bridges to Employment in El Salvador. USAID.	El Salvador	Program evaluation		Vulnerable youth, retuned migrants, and youth who have a higher risk of migrating or being internally displaced in selected high-crime municipalities	N	Medium-high	Medium-high
139	Pagel, R.P., Olaru, G., & Alcid, A. (2017). Identifying Cross-Cutting Non-Cog Skills for Positive Youth Development. EDC.	Rwanda, Philippines, Honduras	Empirical	Soft skills assessment, FGDs with 700 youth, 100 employers, 100 educators	Gender and cultural differences of youth, educators and employers' perceptions of how different soft skills are valued	N	High	Medium-high
140	Perez-Pineda, R. (2019). Reaching Scale and Sustainability Through a Strengthened Youth Employment Ecosystem in Rwanda: A Case Study of Education Development Center in Rwanda. [Thesis] Brandeis University.	Rwanda	Other	Narrative, citing primary sources	N/A	N	High	Low

TABLE H. COMPLETE DATABASE OF SOFT SKILLS LITERATURE REVIEWED

NO.	CITATION	GEOGRAPHIC COVERAGE	STUDY TYPE	METHOD	CONTEXT FACTORS	JOB SECTOR TARGETED	DATA RELEVANCE	RIGOR
141	Pina, P., Kotin, T., Hausman, V., & Macharia, E. (2012). Skills for employability: the informal economy. Results for Development Institute.	India, Cambodia, Senegal, Kenya	Literature review	Qualitative	N/A	N	High	Medium
142	Plaut, D., Moss, C., & Jayaram, S. (2016). How Do Youth Skills Development Initiatives Ensure Effective Targeting, Recruitment, and Retention?	Global	Other		N/A	N	Low-medium	N/A
143	Psilos, P., & Galloway, T. (2018). What works in entrepreneurship education and training programs for youth? Washington, DC: USAID's YouthPower: Implementation. YouthPower Action.	Global	Literature review		N/A	N	Medium-high	Medium
144	Puerta, M. L. S., Johansson de Silva, S., & Rizvi, A. (2018). Kenya: Capturing skills requirements and assessing skills gaps in the modern economy. Washington, DC: World Bank.	Kenya	Policy	Analysis of STEP employer surveys	N/A	N	Medium	Medium-low
145	Pugatch, T., & Blimpo, R. (2020). RCT of Educate!'s Education System Solution in Rwanda.	Rwanda	Empirical	RCT	N/A	N	High	Medium
146	Ramadan, N., Abdel-Tawab, N., El Sayed, K., & Roushdy, R. (2014). Enhancing Livelihood Opportunities for Young Women in Rural Upper Egypt: The Neqdar Nesharek Program. Population Council.	Egypt	Program report	Preliminary findings from a quasi-experimental impact evaluation	Females	N	Medium	Medium-low
147	Rankin, K., Cameron, D. B., Ingraham, K., Mishra, A., Burke, J., Picon, M., Miranda, J., & Brown, A. N. (2015). Youth and transferable skills: An evidence gap map. 3ie Evidence Gap Report 2. New Delhi: International Initiative for Impact Evaluation (3ie).	Global	Other	Assessed 90 impact evaluations	LMICs	N	Low-medium	High
148	Reisman, L., & Payan, G. (2015). Turning away from MS-13 and Alshabaab: Analyzing youth resilience in Honduras and North East Kenya.	Honduras and East Kenya	Program evaluation		High rates of violence and crime; youth at risk of being recruited into violent groups	N	Medium-high	Medium-high
149	Results for Development Institute (US)(R4D). (2013). Pathways to employability: lessons and case studies for closing the youth skills gap.	Africa and Asia	Empirical	Case study	Developing countries	N	High	Medium-high

TABLE H. COMPLETE DATABASE OF SOFT SKILLS LITERATURE REVIEWED

NO.	CITATION	GEOGRAPHIC COVERAGE	STUDY TYPE	METHOD	CONTEXT FACTORS	JOB SECTOR TARGETED	DATA RELEVANCE	RIGOR
150	Ripley, M. (2017). Educating entrepreneurs: Can in-school youth be taught to start a business? Evidence from South Africa.	South Africa	Program evaluation	Mixed-methods	N/A	Entrepreneurship	Medium	Medium
151	Rodella, A., Cuevas, F., & Atuesta, B. (2015). Haiti Adolescent Girl Initiative: Project Report.	Haiti	Program evaluation	Qualitative (randomized pipeline design)	Females ages 17-21, out of school for at least a year, basic literacy and numeracy ability, living in one of the five selected neighborhoods of Port-au-Prince	N	High	High
152	Ryberg, R. (2016). The role of noncognitive skills in the transition to the workforce for youth in Andhra Pradesh, India. [Master's thesis, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill]. ProQuest Publishing.	India	Other	Literature review and quantitative analysis of a longitudinal survey (Young Lives)	-Rural area -Gender differences in parents' educational expectations for children, enrollment rates, spending on girls' education, and employment -Youth from lower castes	N	High	Low-medium
153	Salam, D., Olobo, P., & Mpiira, R. (2016). Educate!'s lessons from an at-scale impact evaluation.	Uganda	Program evaluation	Quasi-experimental (surveys, FGDs)	N/A	N	High	High

TABLE H. COMPLETE DATABASE OF SOFT SKILLS LITERATURE REVIEWED

NO.	CITATION	GEOGRAPHIC COVERAGE	STUDY TYPE	METHOD	CONTEXT FACTORS	JOB SECTOR TARGETED	DATA RELEVANCE	RIGOR
154	Sanchez Puerta, M. L., Valerio, A., & Bernal, M. G. (2016). Taking stock of programs to develop socioemotional skills: A systematic review of program evidence. The World Bank.	Global, including LMICs	Literature review	Review of literature from before-school programs (early childhood), in-school (K-12), and out-of-school (vulnerable youth)	N/A	N	High	High
155	Sayinzoga, A., Alcid, A., Bulte, E., Lensink, R., & Treurniet, M. (2020). Short and Medium Term Impacts of an Entrepreneurship Training: Evidence from a Randomized Field Experiment in Rwanda. Manuscript submitted for publication.	Rwanda	Empirical	Randomized field experiment	N/A	N	High	High
156	Schaberg, K. (2019). Teaching Soft Skills in Workforce Programs: Findings from WorkAdvance Providers. American Enterprise Institute.	USA	Program evaluation	RCT	Low-wage workers	N	High	N/A
157	Sharma, A., Viljoen, K., Ajadi, S., Moreau, M. M., & Muheim, P. (2020). Powering youth employment through the mobile industry in sub-Saharan Africa by 2025.	Ghana, Senegal, Nigeria	Other	KIIs, two-day workshop, desk review	N/A	Mobile industry	Low-medium	Low
158	Smolovic, S., Bulut, S. D., & Vujosevic, D. (2011). Adolescents' Peer Leader Manual for Life Skills Development. Save the Children.	Global	Other		N/A	N	Medium	N/A
159	Soares, F., Babb, S., Diener, O., Gates, S., and Ignatowski, C. (2017). Guiding Principles for Building Soft Skills among Adolescents and Young Adults. Washington, DC: USAID's YouthPower: Implementation, YouthPower Action.	Global	Literature review	Synthesis of literature reviews, meta-analyses, general guides, technical documents, and reports	N/A	N	High	Medium

TABLE H. COMPLETE DATABASE OF SOFT SKILLS LITERATURE REVIEWED

NO.	CITATION	GEOGRAPHIC COVERAGE	STUDY TYPE	METHOD	CONTEXT FACTORS	JOB SECTOR TARGETED	DATA RELEVANCE	RIGOR
160	Solutions for Youth Employment. (2020). How are youth employment programs adapting to COVID-19?	Global	Other	Expert consultations	COVID-19	N/A	Medium-high	N/A
161	Statman, J.M., Abera, M., Assefa, E., Ambelu, W., Leta, Y., & Korssa, A. (2020). Final Performance Evaluation of USAID/Ethiopia's Building the Potential of Youth Activity. USAID.	Ethiopia	Program evaluation		Rural v. urban	N	High	Medium
162	The MasterCard Foundation. (2014). Engaging Young People: 2013-2014 Youth Think Tank Report.	Rwanda, Sierra Leone, Ghana, Zambia, Kenya	Other	Qualitative (interviews and facilitated online discussions)	N/A	N	Medium-low	Medium-low
163	The MasterCard Foundation. (2017). Skills at scale: Transferrable skills in secondary and vocational education in Africa.	Rwanda, Kenya, Nigeria	Literature review	Case studies, KIIs	N/A	N	Medium	Medium
164	The World Bank. (2013a). Measuring AGI pilot programs.	Liberia, Rwanda, South Sudan, Jordan, Haiti, Nepal, Lao PDR	Other	Summary of findings from experimental and quasi-experimental evaluations of female workforce development programs	Females	N	Low-medium	N/A
165	The World Bank. (2015b). The Spirit of Boldness: Lessons from The World Bank's Adolescent Girls Initiative. Washington DC: World Bank.	[redacted] Nepal, Haiti, Liberia, Rwanda, South Sudan, Jordan, Lao PDR	Program evaluation	Mix of quasi-experimental, RCTs, surveys	Females, LMICs	N	High	Medium

TABLE H. COMPLETE DATABASE OF SOFT SKILLS LITERATURE REVIEWED

NO.	CITATION	GEOGRAPHIC COVERAGE	STUDY TYPE	METHOD	CONTEXT FACTORS	JOB SECTOR TARGETED	DATA RELEVANCE	RIGOR
166	Tripney, J., Hombrados, J., Newman, M., Hovish, K., Brown, C., Steinka-Fry, K., & Wilkey, E. (2013). Technical and vocational education and training (TVET) interventions to improve the employability and employment of young people in low-and middle-income countries: A systematic review. Campbell systematic reviews, 9(1), 1-171.	Global	Literature review		LMICs	N	Medium	Medium
167	UNESCO. (2019). Entrepreneurial learning in TVET - Discussion paper.	Global (with an example of Madagascar)	Policy	Literature review	N/A	N	Medium	Low
168	Kim, H. & Care, E. (2020). Capturing 21st Century Skills: Analysis of assessments in selected sub-Saharan African countries.	Cote d'Ivoire, Chad, DRC, Gambia, Kenya, Lesotho, Mali, Senegal, Zambia	Policy	Review of national curricula (primary/secondary), policy documents, and assessment tools for 21st century skills from roughly 5 schools in each country	Some are conflict countries	N	High	Medium-low
169	USAID. (2019). Social and Emotional Learning and Soft Skills USAID Policy Brief.	Global	Policy	N/A	N/A	N	High	N/A
170	Valerio, A., Puerta, M. L. S., Pierre, G., Rajadel, T., & Taborda, S. M. (2014). STEP skills measurement - Snapshot 2014.	Global	Empirical	STEP survey	N/A	N	Medium-low	Medium-low
171	Vinogradova, E., & Taggart, N. (2012). Technology in the HP LIFE Entrepreneurship Program: Summary report findings.	China, India, Kenya, Nigeria, South Africa	Program evaluation		N/A	ICT	Medium	Medium-low
172	Wafula, J. (2020). Kenya youth employment and skills program final report.	Kenya	Other		Orphans, vulnerable youth, youth	N	High	Medium-low

TABLE H. COMPLETE DATABASE OF SOFT SKILLS LITERATURE REVIEWED

NO.	CITATION	GEOGRAPHIC COVERAGE	STUDY TYPE	METHOD	CONTEXT FACTORS	JOB SECTOR TARGETED	DATA RELEVANCE	RIGOR
					with disabilities, COVID-19			
173	Wiger, N. P., Chapman, D. W., Baxter, A., & DeJaeghere, J. (2015). Context matters: A model of the factors associated with the effectiveness of youth entrepreneurship training. Prospects, 45(4), 533-547.	East Africa	Literature review	Literature review	N/A	Entrepreneurship	Low	Low
174	Women for Women International. (2015). A study of occupational and economic well-being among marginalized women in Rwanda.	Rwanda	Program evaluation	Mixed-methods	Females	N	High	Medium-high
175	Youth Business International (YBI). (2018). Effectuation and its application in youth entrepreneurship training.	Brazil	Other	Reporting on primary and secondary data	N/A	Entrepreneurship	Medium-high	Medium-low
176	Youth Business International. (2019). Entrepreneurial soft skills for the future: a scoping study. *London: Youth Business International.*	Global, including Uganda	Literature review	Literature review	N/A	Entrepreneurship	Medium-high	Medium
177	Zimbizi, G. & Chingarande-Mutanga, S. (2017). End of project performance evaluation.	Zimbabwe	Program evaluation		N/A	N	High	Medium-high