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Workforce Development Program Guide

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under the Global Workforce in Transition (GWIT) Project
Funded by the U.S. Agency for International Development

Indefinite Quantity of Contracts (IQC)
No. GDG – I – 00 – 02 – 00003 – 00

INTRODUCTION

The following guide is intended to assist those engaged in designing new in-country workforce development programs. Workforce development refers to programs and policies that promote the mastery of new job-related knowledge and skills, access to employment opportunities, and real jobs. Workforce development programs can help support a range of strategic objectives—from enhancing economic growth to helping with the rebuilding efforts of post-conflict countries. A well-designed workforce development program meets the education, training, and employment-related needs of a targeted group of learners. It also focuses on putting in place a supportive policy and institutional environment so that learners gain access to jobs and employers benefit from increased workforce productivity.

When embarking on the design of a workforce development program, it is important to address five issues:

- ***First, what is the strategic focus within which workforce programs will be implemented?***

The objectives within which a workforce program takes place can range from increasing productivity within a specific industry to strengthening the effectiveness of secondary school education. Given the diversity of political, economic, and social objectives that a well-designed workforce program can help achieve, it is important at the outset to establish the strategic focus for a new program. Within the context of USAID, such focus often can be provided by a mission or bureau's strategic objectives.

- ***Second, what is the projected period of time over which a program is expected to demonstrate impact?***

Workforce programs can have short- or long-term impacts. For example, a short-term program would be a focused effort to improve specific skills of textile workers so that their industry can produce products that meet global standards. An example of a long-term workforce program would be an effort focused on the development of economic policies to support the growth of exports (and workers and jobs in export businesses).

- ***Third, how is the relationship being defined between workforce demand and supply?***

All workforce development programs need to build linkages between the skills needed to support new or existing jobs (workforce demand) and the capabilities of education and training providers to train people in those skills (workforce supply). However, the ways in which workforce demand and supply are expressed will vary according to the development context within which specific workforce programs operate. For example, if the context focuses on increasing the competitiveness of specific industries, demand will be expressed as the need for specific industry skills, and supply efforts will focus on strengthening the capacity of industry training programs to provide relevant skills training. However, if the context focuses on out-of-school, unemployed youth, then demand will be expressed in terms of employment opportunities that exist or can be created for youth, and supply efforts will focus on strengthening youth non-formal education efforts.

- ***Fourth, how is impact to be measured?***

Workforce development projects often fail to measure outcomes. Some projects focus on organizational process mechanisms as an end in and of itself, like setting up a job counseling service or the establishment of an industry cluster; other projects tend to measure inputs and outputs, i.e., numbers of training sessions, numbers of people trained. While the assessment of process mechanisms and the measuring of inputs and outputs are valuable, we recommend that most workforce development programs evaluate their impact on program outcomes, such as (a) changes in the knowledge and skills of current or future workforce participants, and (b) access to jobs or job opportunities that occur as a result of targeted education and training and policy reform.

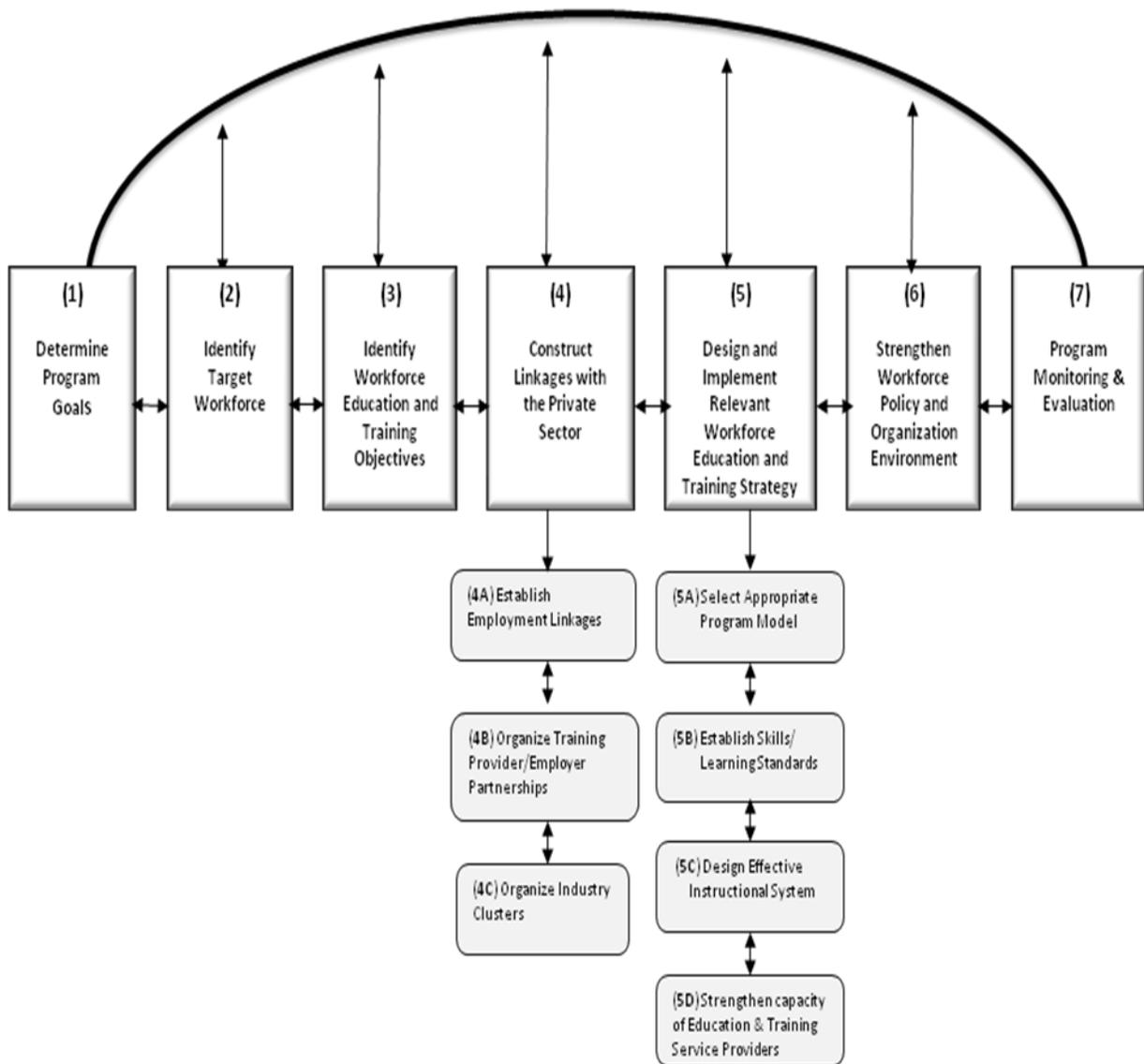
- ***Fifth, what are the roles of the education and economic growth sectors, and how can they best work together?***

Almost all workforce development programs need some integration of education and training efforts with economic policies that help create jobs and job opportunities. The difficulty comes in developing organizational mechanisms that support the integration of efforts between the education and economic growth sectors. How do the two sectors work together? Which sector takes the lead? How can activities that take place in one sector have a positive impact on activities in the other sector? How is accountability defined? There are no easy answers to these questions; the best approach lies in a sound project design that specifies the roles and responsibilities of both sectors and gets buy-in from stakeholders in each sector.

SUGGESTED WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT MODEL

The following program model presents a six-step framework that begins with determining program goals (Step One) and concludes with assessing impact (Step Seven). The six steps are not intended to be followed in a rigid sequential process. There is a great deal of inter-relatedness between the steps, and those involved in program design and implementation will probably find themselves engaged in working on several steps simultaneously. Figure 1 below diagrams the relationship between the steps.

Figure # 1: WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM MODEL



Step 1: Determine Program Goals

Workforce programs are generally driven by specific social, economic, and political conditions, which tend to vary from country to country. Here are examples of different program goals that can be achieved through well-designed workforce programs.

- Strengthening the current productivity of economically competitive industries
- Investing in and responding to a long-term strategy to increase national/regional economic growth and productivity
- Expanding access and improving quality and relevance of secondary school education
- Developing programs to harness the resources of out-of-school, unemployed young people
- Providing transition assistance for workers who have lost their jobs as a result of economic dislocation
- Rebuilding human resources and basic infrastructure in post-conflict countries

The goal and objectives of a USAID country-level workforce program should be influenced by the Mission's own country strategy, which, for example, may have a focus on such important workforce issues as increasing industry competitiveness and/or addressing a problem of youth unemployment. The selection of USAID country-level workforce goals also can be a response to economic and social policy priorities of the host country or the international donor community.

In cases where there is a lack of clarity about program goals and strategy, the Mission may want to undertake an initial country level workforce assessment to help determine the program focus. Examples of workforce development country level assessment protocols and reports can be found on the website: <http://www2.edc.org/GLG/#WORK>.

Step 2: Identify Target Workforce

Programs to increase workforce capacity can focus on a wide range of target populations, for example, secondary school-aged, out-of-school youth; secondary school-aged, in-school youth; unemployed, recent university graduates; unemployed illiterate adults; unemployed literate adults; professionals who need to have their skills upgraded, etc. Within each of these categories, there are important variables to be considered in developing a profile of our target population (e.g., gender, geographic location, educational status). Exhibit 1 provides a checklist of key variables needed to organize a target workforce profile.

EXHIBIT 1: Information Needed to Develop a Target Workforce Profile

A. Socio-Economic Background Factors

- ✓ Age range
- ✓ Income
- ✓ Geographic location
- ✓ Gender distribution
- ✓ Occupation
- ✓ Family status
- ✓ Ethnicity

B. Education Status

- ✓ No formal schooling
- ✓ Primary school completer
- ✓ Lack of literacy skills
- ✓ Primary school dropout
- ✓ Secondary school dropout
- ✓ Tertiary education degree
- ✓ Secondary
- ✓ Functionally literate

C. Work-Related Skills Competency

- ✓ Life skills
- ✓ Information technology (IT) skills
- ✓ Other work-related skills
- ✓ Employability skills
- ✓ Technical/vocational skills

D. Employment Status

- ✓ Still in school
- ✓ Unemployed, looking for work
- ✓ Employed
- ✓ Employed, looking to upgrade skills
- ✓ Self-employed

E. How to Provide Education and Training to Targeted Learners

- ✓ Through primary and secondary schools
- ✓ Through tertiary level educational institutions
- ✓ Through NGOs/CBOs
- ✓ Through government programs
- ✓ Through private sector education and training providers
- ✓ Other (please specify) _____

Step 3: Identify Workforce Education and Training Objectives

After defining the target workforce population, the next step in program design is the identification of education objectives –benchmarks against which program impact can be measured. There are almost as many different types of objectives as there are types of workforce learners. For example:

- ***School Access and Re-entry:*** Many unemployed young people of primary school age lack access to schooling; for example, in many countries there are no official primary schools within walking distance. From a workforce perspective, the most important thing to do is to provide learners with opportunities to learn basic literacy and numeracy skills that will strengthen their ability to participate in the market economy.

In developing countries a great many young people also drop out of primary or secondary school. While some may drop out because of demands to contribute to household chores or family businesses, their ability to contribute to these tasks is limited by their lack of basic education. Getting school drop-outs back in school is thus an important education intervention from a workforce development perspective. Completion of primary school establishes a foundation of knowledge and skills that enables learners to increase their contributions to work, family and community life.

- ***Completion of relevant quality primary and secondary education:*** The use of the descriptors “relevant” and “quality” is what is important here. From a workforce development perspective, these terms refer to programs that integrate basic life skills, employability skills, critical thinking and problem-solving skills into the teaching and learning of basic education. The mastery of such skills by secondary school graduates is an essential prerequisite for a national workforce that can help attract business investment and strengthen economic competitiveness.
- ***Achieve functional literacy:*** Achieving functional literacy is an important workforce objective for out-of-school youth and illiterate adults. Functional literacy refers to the application of literacy and numeracy skills to tasks in work and daily life. Achieving functional literacy enables learners to increase their employment productivity and job opportunities.
- ***Master employability skills:*** Employability skills include basic life and workplace behavioral skills, group communication skills, problem-solving skills, and IT skills. Mastery of employability skills is a priority for new entrants into the workforce and for those transitioning from the informal to the formal economy. There often also is a need to provide employability refresher training to current members of the workforce.
- ***Master new professional (technical and management) skills:*** This learner objective can apply to almost all learners, but is especially relevant to: (a) workers in existing globally competitive industries whose skills need to be upgraded, (b) workers who have been laid off and need to learn new skills, and (c) graduates of tertiary and post-tertiary level education and training programs.
- ***Master entrepreneurship skills:*** Workforce development programs can also be used to build the skills of new entrepreneurs, especially micro-level and small- and medium-business entrepreneurs. Because capital and technical support is so important to micro-

entrepreneurs in developing countries, any kind of micro-entrepreneur education program also needs to include access to micro-loans or credit, as well as mentoring support.

- **Increase new career knowledge and access to job opportunities:** Many learners, both in-school and out-of-school, lack awareness of the career and/or job opportunities that are available to them. With increased awareness comes increased interest in participating in workforce-related education and training programs.
- **Increase productivity:** Increasing workforce productivity is an objective both for learners and employers. However, interventions to increase productivity frequently require more than just education and policy; for example, investments in infrastructure equipment also may be required.
- **Gain career-related employment:** Obtaining a job that is connected to career-related work interest should be an objective for all learners in workforce development programs. It is most relevant for graduates of those secondary and tertiary level education and training programs that are targeted towards employment outcomes.
- **Gain basic employment:** The opportunity to have gainful employment is often lacking for populations in developing countries. Young people who lack basic education skills, or who live in countries emerging from conflict, often welcome the opportunity to work in basic infrastructure or service delivery programs that are needed to help reconstruct their communities.

EXHIBIT 2: Learner Objectives and Indicators

Learner Objective	Priority Learners	Indicator
School access/ re-entry	Primary/secondary school drop-outs	Enrollment rates
Complete relevant quality schooling	Primary/ secondary school age learners	Enrollment/completion rates
Achieve functional literacy	Illiterate out-of-school youth and adults	Self assessment/peer assessment, teacher assessment
Master employability skills	All learners	Peer assessment/ teacher assessment, employer assessment
Increase career knowledge and access to job opportunities	All learners	Access to effective career counseling programs
Master entrepreneurship skills	New small-scale entrepreneurs	Program assessments
Increase Productivity	All Learners government/industry	Production output
Gain career related work	All learners	# of new job placements in industries/vocations
Gain basic employment	Out-of-school youth/post-conflict	# of job placements in public works and/or unskilled labor positions

Step 4: Construct Linkages with Private Sector

One of the keys to a successful workforce development program is the organization of linkages between employers and workforce development education and training providers. Employers are generally thought of as being part of organized formal private sector (business & industry). However, in post-conflict countries where there may not be much in the way of an organized private sector, the term employers can refer to livelihood opportunities in the informal economy or even public sector.

Engagement with the employers usually begins with an assessment of the local demand for workforce skills. Most workforce development projects then establish partnerships with the private sector to support various activities, including internship and mentorship programs, joint curriculum development efforts, private sector funding for workforce training, et al. In addition, in countries with highly-developed, formal economies, the private sector often organizes industry clusters that help facilitate workforce education and training.

Step 4A: Establish Employment Linkages

An essential component of all workforce development efforts is the organization of linkages between labor market needs (demand) and the programs of education and training providers (supply). Labor market assessments are the vehicle through which providers are able to understand workforce demand.

- ***Labor Market Assessments:*** Labor market assessments can be undertaken at different levels, for example, looking at the employment needs by industry or industry cluster, by country region, or even by community. Labor market assessments are conducted by reviewing existing labor market trend data and by interviews and focus groups with employers and employer associations. Examples of the kinds of questions that can be asked include: What kinds of educational background and/or experience do companies need to compete? Where are companies experiencing labor shortages/surpluses? How far (distance) do companies go to fill key positions that may require scarce skills or experience? Do foreign-owned companies bring in their own workers? What are the leading strengths and weaknesses of new hires according to employers? How much are companies willing to invest to improve their skills?

Conducting a labor market assessment is particularly important for workforce programs that are intended to support targeted economic growth goals and strengthen the competitiveness of local industries. Labor market assessments can also be helpful for community-based workforce development programs, where the goal is to create job opportunities for unemployed youth or adults.

Some types of workforce programs, e.g., a program intended to support more relevant secondary school education, require a more broad-based approach to the promotion of linkages between education and employment, i.e., an approach that can also respond with advice and counseling to a range of career aptitudes and interests of learners. Such broad-based approaches to education and employment linkages include school-to-work transition programs, career counseling, and job placement programs.

- ***School to work transition programs:*** A School-to-Work (STW) transition program is a strategic partnership between the private and public sectors designed to ensure that secondary school students in academic and vocational programs gain the knowledge, skills and work habits employers need. Such programs help students master skills that enable them to make successful transitions from school to productive employment and further learning. These skills include the ability to:
 - Use foundation (reading, writing, mathematical, and communication) skills in practical ways to solve complex real-world problems like those found in the modern workplace;
 - Use information technology such as computers to perform needed work-related functions;
 - Work well with others in teams and negotiate with integrity;
 - Think creatively and know how to learn on one's own;
 - Make decisions, be responsible and manage one's time and available resources; and
 - Understand and serve customer needs.

Successful school to work programs incorporate school-based learning activities (that meet academic standards and work readiness requirements) with work-based learning activities, such as job internships, youth apprenticeships, youth service opportunities, and/or participation in school-based enterprises. Such work-based learning activities give students practical experience in using academic, work-readiness and technical skills to solve real-world community and work-based problems.

- ***Job placement and career counseling programs:*** Career counseling and job placement programs are important demand/supply linkage mechanisms for workforce development. Career counseling programs tend to be school-based and focus on guiding students in making intermediate and long-term choices regarding what career they wish to follow. Job placement programs tend to be more market-based, focusing on the placement of people actively looking for work in available private or public sector employment opportunities.

Qualified career counselors have knowledge of current career development theory, know global, national, and local employment trends, and possess sound individual and group assessment and counseling skills. Job placement specialists also need to have individual and group assessment counseling skills, know employment and labor market trends, and be able to identify employment openings within their regions, establish relationships with potential employers, identify and fill job openings, select the best candidate for the job and help prepare candidates for employment.

Career counseling and/or job placement programs are often absent in developing countries. Therefore, it is recommended both that a career counseling component be included in programs that seek to integrate workforce more effectively into the formal secondary or tertiary level curriculum and that support for the strengthening of job placement services be included in market-based workforce development efforts.

Step 4B: Organize Training Provider/ Employer Partnerships

Many workforce development projects benefit from the organization of partnerships that connect

key education and training providers with private sector employers. Such partnerships can take on many different forms and support a variety of activities, for example:

- The provision of internships and mentorships by employers for education and training provider students;
- Participation by employers in the development of training curricula;
- The use of experts from industry in the provision of training; and
- The provision of funds and other resources by employers for the construction of training provider facilities, the purchase of materials, scholarships for disadvantaged students, etc.

Step 4C: Organize Industry Clusters

Clusters are geographically-bound concentrations of similar, related or complementary businesses with active channels for business transactions, communications, and dialogue and shared specialized infrastructure, labor markets, and services. Clusters have life cycles, and the stage of development of a cluster affects the ways that opportunities and outcomes are distributed and the type of skills that are needed.

For example an “incubation” stage cluster often needs employees that are very flexible and adept at learning quickly. In this stage industries are still in a pilot phase, e.g. life sciences, and are trying to find their niches and bases from which to grow. Job responsibilities tend to be loosely defined and problem-solving skills critical. Companies in “growth” clusters, such as electronics or pharmaceuticals, are more apt to invest in training in order to build up their workforce. Soft skills, such as teamwork and communications, are important to growth cluster companies, as are more sophisticated technical and business management skills. In a “mature” cluster, such as food processing or metalworking, work becomes more routine, and specialized skills standards may develop. Good work habits and general workplace competencies are important, but skill upgrading is also important as industries try to modernize to stay competitive.

Workforce development programs with a priority to help countries strengthen the productivity of globally competitive industries are often grounded in the organization of industry clusters. This sometimes requires a skilled intermediary who can bring together stakeholders from different cluster businesses and facilitate a dialogue and consensus regarding key issues. Well-organized industry clusters can engage in a variety of activities aimed at strengthening the existing or next generation workforce. Such activities can include: (a) the establishment of cluster-wide skill standards that can help guide the programs of education and training providers, and (b) the establishment of working relationships with education and training providers for the purposes of sharing information about current labor market needs, helping to ensure high quality training, and providing current trainees with internship/apprenticeship opportunities. Cluster-based associations can also serve as effective advocates for the reform of workforce public policies, such as the strengthening of labor laws.

Step 5: Design and Implement Relevant Workforce Education and Training Strategy

The next step in organizing a workforce development program is to design a relevant education and training strategy. While education and training may not be sufficient to achieve targeted program goals (policy support, as outlined in Step Five of these Guidelines, is often needed), it is in almost all cases an essential building block.

The design and implementation of a workforce education and training strategy has five components: selection of program model (5A); the establishment of standards for the mastery of targeted skills and learning outcomes (5B); the development of an effective instructional system design (5C); and strengthening the capacity of education and training providers to support the program model (5D).

Step 5A: Select Appropriate Program Model

Education and Training Program Model Options: There are a variety of workforce education and training models that can be used as a departure point for the design of a program tailored to meet the needs of a specific workforce population. These program model options are briefly described below.

- ***Integrating preparation for work into primary school education:*** Because of poor school quality, many primary school learners remain unprepared to enter the workforce at even the most basic levels of the economy. Workforce elements can help enrich and make more relevant primary school education, which in many cases is the only exposure young people have to formal schooling. It has also been well documented that basic literacy and numeracy skills, major outcomes of primary school education, are essential building blocks for modern workforce participation. Workforce preparation can be further introduced into the primary school curriculum if parents and community members can serve as mentors and help students learn basic home and community livelihood skills, e.g., farming.
- ***Vocational training in junior secondary schools (Grades 7–9):*** There has been a recent increase in investment in junior secondary schools in many developing countries, especially those that are coming close to reaching universal primary school enrollment. Given that junior secondary school focuses on the critical stage of early adolescence, many countries have begun to institute life skills classes into the formal curriculum. In developed nations, good middle schools emphasize the learning of essential workforce skills such as problem-solving, critical thinking, and higher order analytical skills. Some junior secondary schools also provide students with access to career counseling and opportunities to job shadow and participate in service learning activities.
- ***Workforce preparation in senior secondary schools (Grade 10–12):*** Until recently, in many developing countries only a small number of elite students have had the opportunity to attend senior secondary school. However, as Education for All goals are met at the primary, and increasingly at the junior secondary school, senior level academic secondary schools are now beginning to expand in the poorest of nations. In many countries a secondary school entrance examination is used to determine which students (usually the elite minority) attend more academically-focused senior secondary schools and which students are slotted for technical/vocational education schools. The more academically-focused secondary schools provide solid academic training, with an emphasis on higher order thinking skills, and graduate a significant number of students ready for university. However, vocational/technical education oriented secondary schools tend to train students in a specific technical skill, e.g., carpentry, which may or may not be relevant to local labor market needs. Research shows that students are better served by more generic

technical/vocational training that can be applied to multiple work settings, rather than vocational training limited to a particular industry or job.

- ***Post-secondary vocational/technical training (including community colleges):*** Secondary school graduates, generally aged 18 and older, are often more focused than younger students on learning a particular trade, in order to support themselves and their families. Because post-secondary training systems are less closely linked to government control and mandatory age requirements, they tend to offer a more flexible infrastructure than primary and secondary systems. The demand for flexible, “just-in-time” post-secondary technical training is often met by “for profit” institutions and industry-sponsored training centers.

The community college model is one of the fastest growing approaches to meeting post secondary vocational training needs in developing countries. Community colleges provide students with the opportunity both to receive technical training and to continue their academic education. Delivery is usually flexible – available for full or part time, formal or informal enrollment. The curriculum is usually competency-based and responsive to employer and community training needs.

- ***Education and training for out-of-school, unemployed youth:*** Workforce education and training programs for out-of-school, unemployed youth can have a variety of objectives, depending on the makeup of the learner population. For example, some programs help out-of-school youth re-enter the formal school system; others provide basic education coupled with initial work experiences so out-of-school youth can have an income and develop basic employability skills; while still others combine education with an opportunity to serve as an intern and/or apprentice in industries in which youth have an occupational interest. Programs for out-of-school youth are generally offered by NGOs and private and religious organizations outside the traditional school setting. Well-designed, youth-focused education programs tend to be more flexible in their delivery modes and locations. They also often provide linkages to employment opportunities and long-term follow-up services for their graduates.
- ***Skills training for illiterate adults:*** Literacy programs in mother tongue and/or international language are a critical component of vocational training for illiterate adults. Many adults are highly motivated to gain the literacy and technical skills needed to earn a better living and support their families. With appropriate pedagogy, adults can and do learn many academic and vocational skills more rapidly than younger students, thus cutting down on program costs and delivery time. Illiterate adult learners bring a wide range of life experiences and skills, and generally much motivation, to any learning situation. Businesses and industries that employ illiterate workers are highly appreciative and sometimes financially supportive of literacy and vocational programs that can lead to improved skills and productivity in their workforce.
- ***Entrepreneurship training:*** With 91 percent of new jobs in Africa and 83 percent of new jobs in Latin America and the Caribbean being created in the informal sector, there is strong evidence of entrepreneurial drive among the world’s poor. Entrepreneurship training programs focus on sound risk-taking behavior, the use of credit, basic financial and accounting skills, business management skills, employability, information technology, and

communication skills. Mentorship with an existing successful entrepreneur can be an important element of entrepreneur education.

- ***Industry-based skills training:*** Industry-based training programs are generally driven by the demands of business and government for specific workforce skills that are needed to enhance productivity. Many businesses value investment in the training of their own workforce, as opposed to relying on the education and training provided by others. Industry-based training programs are often driven by industry-established skill standards, thus assuring greater uniformity of learner competency upon graduation. Many industry-specific training programs include apprenticeships, internships, and on-the-job training.

Step 5B: Establish Skills/Learning Standards

The movement for educational standards, in technical vocational training and academic education, derives from a variety of factors including: (a) the demand for greater accountability for results from parents, community members, employers, government, and learners themselves; (b) the need for government and the private sector to benchmark the skill competencies of workers in globally competitive industries; and (c) the need for a system of portable skills that can support worker mobility.

Skill standards, therefore, are an essential component of most workforce education and training programs. Workforce skill standards on a global level have been established by international agencies and professional associations. Such standards now exist for basic literacy and numeracy skills, life skills and employability skills, and skills that benchmark core competencies in a wide variety of industries, such as information technology, manufacturing, agriculture, business services, finance and insurance, health and human services, hospitality and tourism, etc.

Stakeholder buy-in is essential for standards to take root in specific countries. Therefore, most countries develop standards by convening key stakeholder panels (e.g., representatives from government, industry, and education and training providers) to review existing standards and develop appropriate local adaptations.

Effective skill standards include the identification of core competencies, the knowledge and skill needed to master that competency, and the criteria for successful performance of the targeted skill. Skills standards are used by employers to establish personnel qualification requirements, conduct performance reviews, and measure workforce productivity. Education and training providers use skill standards to identify and implement curriculum competencies. Training providers and industry use standards to help build a cohesive relationship through a like-minded expectation of student proficiency and work readiness.

Skill standards and learning outcomes for workforce development programs should also reflect the labor market needs of local business and industry. In order to determine local labor market needs, many workforce development projects conduct skill surveys with existing employees in the formal and informal economy. Such surveys may be used to investigate current and projected occupational needs (e.g. number of needed front-line workers or managers) or help firms determine gaps in existing skill sets among existing workers.

Step 5C: Design Effective Instructional System

The term instructional system here refers to the core inter-related components of an education and training program; i.e., the content of the program, its teaching and learning methods, the caliber of its materials, its approach to assessing learner competencies and program cost.

- **Content:** The content of workforce education and training programs refers to the actual skills and competencies that are being taught and learned. Quite often such competencies have been established at a national or international level as a set of curriculum or skill standards; for example, basic education literacy and numeracy competencies are usually found in existing Ministry of Education primary school curricula; employability skills and competencies have been codified by the NGO EQUIP for the Future; international standards for various technical/vocational skills are provided by International Organization for Standardization. Designing effective instructional systems begins with the identification of such established, measurable standards of performance.
- **Pedagogy/Andragogy:** The selection of a teaching/learning methodology is another workforce instructional systems building block. Instructional methodology will depend on the nature of the learner population. For example, it is generally recognized that the use of active learning pedagogical methods is the most effective way for teaching problem-solving, critical thinking, and social communication skills to young people; that the use of internships, apprenticeships, and real-world experiences is an effective way to learn a new job or vocation; and that the use of traditional drill and practice methods may be a valid method of instruction for those learning new technical skills.
- **Materials:** Materials can matter a great deal. In situations where there are poorly-trained teachers (or no teachers), well-designed workforce learning materials can carry the burden of instruction. In fields with highly-specialized training, good materials can help learners masters the details of technical skills. In some cases, such as industry-sponsored training programs based on global standards, the use of existing off-the-shelf materials is appropriate; while in other instances, such as the design of locally-relevant functional literacy programs, it is more preferable to invest in the development of new program materials. Extensive pre-testing of materials is highly recommended, regardless of whether materials are off-the-shelf or custom-designed.
- **Assessment:** Almost all workforce development programs seek to measure the extent to which learners have mastered targeted knowledge and skills. However, the choice of assessment methodology will depend upon (a) program content, and (b) characteristics of learners. For example, the mastery of technical vocational skills is often assessed through highly-structured, competency-based assessments that include performance of a targeted skill done to set specifications. At the other end of the spectrum, an assessment of mastery of secondary school critical thinking and problem solving skills is often measured through responses to open-ended questions and a review of a portfolio of student work. (*For more information on assessment see Step 7, Monitoring and Evaluation*).
- **Cost:** There are no formulas for determining the cost of a workforce development program. Guiding principles for determining cost depend upon the type of program.

Step 5D: Strengthen Capacity of Education and Training Service Providers

Efforts to design and implement a workforce education and training strategy must also include building the capacity of education and training providers. Such capacity-building efforts can cover many different issues, including: the ability of training providers to be responsive to changing labor market needs; the relevance and technical specificity of the training content; the use of pedagogical methods, curriculum and teaching and learning materials that are appropriate to learners; methods of instructional supervision and quality control; the ability of providers to place graduates in jobs; and financial management capabilities.

A baseline assessment of the capacities of education and training providers is highly recommended before the implementation of a workforce education and training strategy. Such an assessment can be conducted by qualified specialists or through a self-assessment that uses an established, well-tested protocol.

There are a variety of approaches that can be used to build provider capacity, including: creating training of trainer programs; instituting linkage activities involving the pairing of an outstanding provider with one that is struggling; providing support for the purchase or development of new training materials; and planning observational visits and study tours that enable providers to witness relevant first class education and training in operation.

Step 6: Strengthen Workforce Policy and Organizational Environment

Step Six focuses on strengthening the policy and organizational environment for workforce development programs. Activities involved in this step generally are driven by experts from the field of economic growth and competitiveness. They focus on (a) the development of policies that help create jobs and stimulate investment in education and training, and (b) the organization of workforce clusters which can help articulate and strengthen the demand for workforce skills.

There are several types of policies that can affect the supply and demand for workforce.

- ***Macro-Economic policies:*** such as monetary, fiscal, trade and exchange rate policies. While some experts believe that putting in place balanced policies will in and of itself stimulate employment, others argue that such policies need to be explicitly modified and targeted to foster employment creation. For example, governments can put in place incentive structures that would promote employment-intensive growth through directing investment to sectors that are most employment intensive, for example labor-intensive manufacturing industries such as garments and textiles, electronics, and food processing.
- ***Business policies and regulations:*** such as business taxes, import/export regulations, property rights policies, regulations governing business start-up and operations, and policies affecting access to credit and start-up capital. Increasing the regulatory ease of doing business is associated with less unemployment, according to the recent World Bank Report “Doing Business in 2006.” Where regulations are costly and burdensome, businesses often operate in the informal economy and remain small, creating few jobs.
- ***Labor policies and regulations:*** such as prescribed conditions of employment, wage rates, and hiring and firing policies. Such policies often make it difficult for female and young

workers to gain access to formal employment. For example, some countries place a limit on the amount of time that women are allowed to work.

Labor rights policies are another important factor affecting the environment for workforce. These include policies that affect forced and child labor, as well as worker health and safety regulations. Quite often there are inherent tensions involved in enforcing such policies, especially for countries that depend on labor-intensive industries. However, more and more global trade agreements include provisions that require signatory countries to adhere to core labor rights standards.

- ***Public works policies and programs:*** Public works projects have traditionally been an important source of new jobs, particularly for vulnerable groups such as youth. Labor-intensive public works programs have been used for regular infrastructure development and the provision of needed social services. Public works projects have also been widely used following crisis situations, such as natural disasters, emergence from armed conflict, or cyclical downturns in economic activity. In addition to the very practical aim of providing opportunities for employment and income, these activities can help restore a sense of stability and normalcy to people's lives.
- ***Policies affecting the informal sector:*** According to the ILO, most new jobs in developing countries are created in the informal sector of the economy. Oftentimes, informal sector activities are characterized by low productivity, inadequate incomes, and poor working conditions. Policies to strengthen the informal sector have tended to focus on improving access to credit, the support of technical and business training, and the promotion of linkages between the informal economy and the formal economy.
- ***Product standards policies:*** When the large majority of products or services in a particular business or industry sector conform to International Standards, a state of industry-wide standardization can be said to exist. Such standards can be applied consistently to the classification of materials, the manufacture and supply of products, testing, analysis, and the provision of services.

The International Organization for Standardization (ISO) is a network of the national standards institutes of 156 countries, on the basis of one member per country. ISO is a non-governmental organization, which has published more than 15,000 standards since 1947. Such standards can affect the demand for workforce skills and the nature of the technical training of education and training providers. Countries engaged in establishing globally-competitive industries need to have a workforce that is proficient in the skills needed to produce products and services that are compatible with ISO standards.

- ***Education and training policies:*** In many countries public sector policy plays an important role in workforce education and training. In certain situations government can function as a direct training service provider, a useful role for the public sector to play in the absence of private sector or non-governmental organization education and training providers. However, it is generally more appropriate for the public sector to rely on others to provide needed workforce development education and training services. Consequently, in some countries public policy supports the contracting out of education and training

services through a procurement process that awards training contracts to well-qualified firms. Another policy option is to provide incentives for private sector companies to invest in education training provided by the company itself or a vendor capable of delivering relevant training. Such incentives can take the form of tax rebates or financial reimbursements calibrated on a per worker training cost.

Step 7: Program Monitoring and Evaluation

From a USAID perspective, workforce development programs need to be evaluated in terms of the strategic objectives and results they seek to achieve. As was discussed in Step One above, those strategic objectives and results can vary from mission to mission. For example:

- a workforce development program framed within an economic competitiveness strategic objective would tend to assess the degree to which a workforce program affected the productivity of a specific industry or industry cluster
- a workforce development program framed within a youth strategic objective would tend to assess the extent to which out of school youth mastered basic skills and gained access to employment
- a workforce development program framed within the context of the reform of secondary and post-secondary education would assess the relevance and quality of the curriculum, the linkages between education and training providers and industry, and the effectiveness of career counseling, job placement and school to work transition programs
- a workforce development program framed within the context of economic growth policy reforms would tend to assess the impact of specific policy changes on such indicators as workforce mobility or the amount of private sector investment in education and training.

Indicators for measuring program progress and impact need to be carefully selected. Here are some typical workforce outcomes, indicators used to measure them, and some measurement issues connected to them.

Outcome	Indicator	Measurement Issues
Increased skills mastery	Test scores	Is the test well designed? How high is the bar for achievement? Where does the learner come out in relation to peers?
Greater access to jobs	# of job placements	Are the jobs appropriate for the skills and/or career background of the applicant? How long will the applicant stay on the job? Does the job provide opportunity for advancement?
Improved worker productivity	Output per worker	To what extent do non-workforce development factors confound efforts to attribute changes in worker productivity to workforce programs?

Efforts to monitor and evaluate workforce programs also should look at the degree to which a program has been able to use best practices to implement its scope of work. The identification of best practices for targeted activities should be undertaken in a participatory manner at the beginning of each program. It should also integrate what is known about the state of the art of a specific practice with what is possible to do to implement an activity within a specific local context. For example, a program focused on career counseling should review how state of the art career counseling programs function in resource rich environments, but should temper this approach with the reality of available resources, trained personnel, etc. All of the key stakeholders – i.e., guidance counselors, education and training administrators, employers – should be involved in determining best practices for their country. Once an agreement is reached, program assessment instruments can be designed to collect information to measure the degree to which the program was implemented according to the agreed upon best practice standard.

Investing in program monitoring and evaluation is as important for a workforce program as for any other kind of development activity. At the outset of the program, time should be taken to establish indicators, develop instruments and protocols, and train data collectors. Baseline data collection at the outset of the project should be followed by data gathering activities at regular intervals to record the program's evolving history and track record. Both qualitative, as well as quantitative information should be collected on a regular basis.

Baseline and follow-up data should be collected to measure: (a) changes in program outcome indicators, especially changes in workforce knowledge and skills and changes in the number of job placements made by the program; (b) changes in the design and delivery of program-sponsored education and training activities, such as changes in the capacity of education and training providers; and (c) changes in the policy and organizational environment, such as measuring the impact on job creation of program sponsored changes in labor and business policies. Workforce monitoring and evaluation specialists should assess the degree to which program-sponsored intervention efforts, e.g. education and training activities, new policy initiatives, the organization of workforce clusters, are having an impact on workforce skills training and worker productivity. Such analysis can be done in various ways, depending on interest and availability of resources for monitoring and evaluation. The simplest way is to track changes in program indicators over time; the most rigorous approach involves randomized trials to study the impact of the program on a cohort of new participants, comparing these results to outcomes for a similar cohort of workers not involved in the program.