



USAID
FROM THE AMERICAN PEOPLE

2011-2017

USAID EDUCATION STRATEGY PROGRESS REPORT

This report presents the results achieved to date under the 2011-2017 USAID Education Strategy.



Inside Cover: In Bangladesh, USAID helps coordinate efforts among government and donors to maximize the impact of education initiatives and help children succeed early on in their education.

Photo Credit: Kate Maloney, USAID Bangladesh

Front Cover: A young boy in Rwanda uses a “letter chart” to learn how to read.

Photo Credit: Kate Maloney, USAID Rwanda

Table of Contents

Introduction	2
Where We Work	4
Early Grade Reading	6
Youth Workforce Development	10
Higher Education	14
Access To Education in Crisis and Conflict	18
The Road Ahead	22

INTRODUCTION

Many of the most pressing challenges around the globe – including poverty, mass migration and violent extremism – could be mitigated by ensuring that children and youth receive a quality education.

USAID works in more than 50 countries to ensure that children and youth have access to the education and skills they need to be productive members of society. Investments in education show clear returns. Better education leads to more employable graduates, and thus growing emerging markets for U.S. trade. Education is also a catalyst for all of USAID's development objectives – educated societies are more often healthier, freer and more productive.

The launch of USAID's Education Strategy in 2011 set forth a clear, measurable agenda. At its core, the Strategy equipped USAID missions to deliver education that provides children and youth with the skills needed to succeed in school, employment and life. In 2016, USAID released the 2011-2015 Education Strategy Progress Report demonstrating USAID and its partners' accomplishments over the initial five years of the strategy. That report outlined how USAID's work in education strengthens education systems, uses data to inform its programs, and leverages the resources and expertise of partners to expand its reach. Although the 2011 Strategy initially covered a five year period, it has

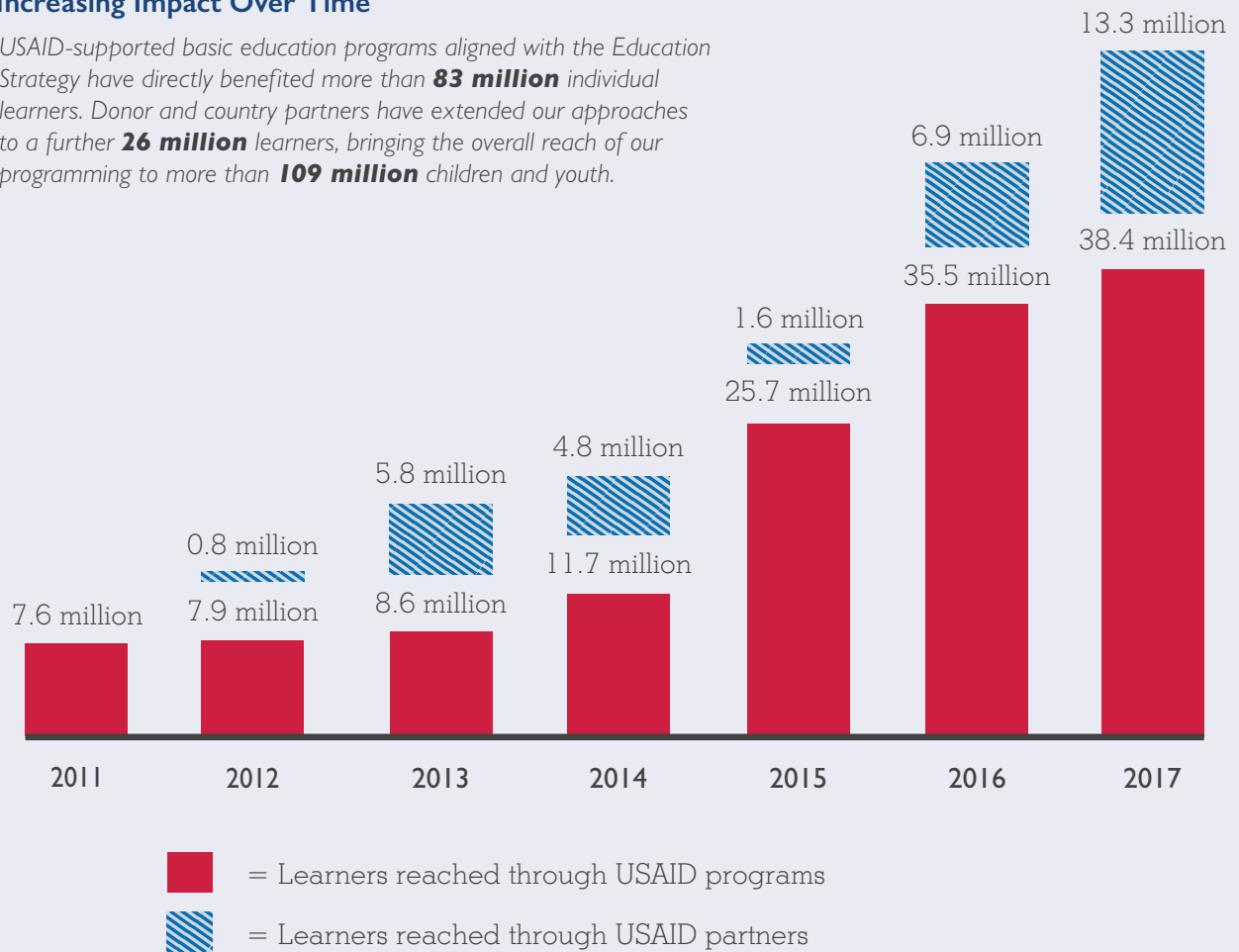
remained USAID's Education Strategy and has been extended through December of 2018.

On September 8, 2017 the President signed into law the Reinforcing Education Accountability in Development Act (READ Act), demonstrating the U.S. Government's commitment that children in developing countries receive a quality basic education. The READ Act requires a comprehensive U.S. Government Strategy to promote basic education in partner countries. The new strategy will be an opportunity to put into practice lessons learned from USAID's previous and ongoing education work.

This report builds upon the initial progress report released in 2016 by highlighting ongoing achievements and progress. The accomplishments laid out in the following pages will provide a significant foundation for USAID's continued efforts to provide the world's most vulnerable children and youth with an opportunity to receive a quality education, contribute to their communities and succeed later in life.

Increasing Impact Over Time

USAID-supported basic education programs aligned with the Education Strategy have directly benefited more than **83 million** individual learners. Donor and country partners have extended our approaches to a further **26 million** learners, bringing the overall reach of our programming to more than **109 million** children and youth.



* As stated in the previous Progress Report, aligning USAID education programs with the new Strategy took a lot of time - years in many cases. As a result, in 2016-2017 USAID and partner programs reached more than double the amount children reached during the first five years of the Strategy.



Following the devastating earthquake in Nepal in 2015, USAID supported the establishment of over 1,000 temporary learning centers to serve more than 148,000 children and provide learning and school supplies to 195,000 children. Photo Credit: Kashish Das Shrestha, USAID

Where We Work



Early Grade Reading, programs in 45 countries

Afghanistan	Ethiopia	Kenya	Nepal	South Sudan
Bangladesh	Georgia	Kosovo	Nicaragua	Tajikistan
Eastern and Southern Caribbean	Ghana	Kyrgyz Republic	Nigeria	Tanzania
Cambodia	Guatemala	Lebanon	Pakistan	Uganda
Democratic Republic of the Congo	Haiti	Liberia	Peru	West Bank and Gaza
Djibouti	Honduras	Macedonia	Philippines	Yemen
Dominican Republic	India	Malawi	Rwanda	Zambia
Egypt	Indonesia	Mali	Senegal	
	Jamaica	Morocco	Somalia	
	Jordan	Mozambique	South Africa	



Youth Workforce Development, programs in 36 countries

Afghanistan	El Salvador	Jordan	Nicaragua	Tunisia
Eastern and Southern Caribbean	Ethiopia	Kenya	Pakistan	Uganda
Democratic Republic of the Congo	Guatemala	Kyrgyz Republic	Philippines	Uzbekistan
Dominican Republic	Haiti	Liberia	Rwanda	Vietnam
Egypt	Honduras	Macedonia	Serbia	West Bank and Gaza
	India	Mali	Somalia	Georgia
	Indonesia	Mexico	South Africa	Moldova
	Jamaica	Morocco	Sri Lanka	



Education in Crisis and Conflict, programs in 22 countries

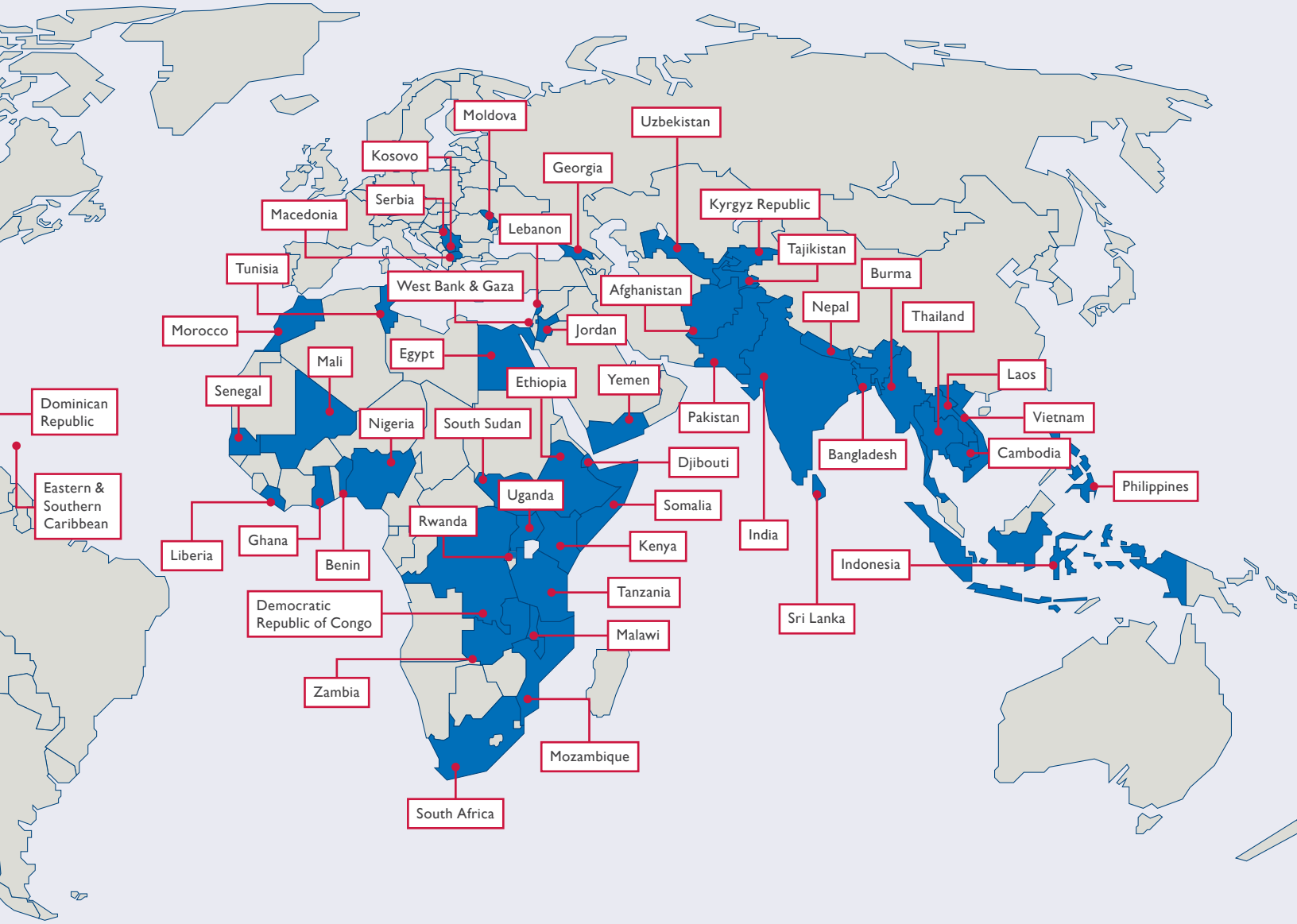
Afghanistan	Haiti	Mali	Senegal
Burma	Honduras	Nepal	Somalia
Democratic Republic of the Congo	Jordan	Nicaragua	South Sudan
El Salvador	Kenya	Nigeria	West Bank and Gaza
Guatemala	Lebanon	Pakistan	Yemen
	Liberia	Philippines	



Higher Education, programs in 46 countries

Afghanistan	Georgia	Kenya	Nepal	Tunisia
Bangladesh	Guatemala	Kosovo	Nigeria	Uganda
Brazil	Haiti	Kyrgyz Republic	Pakistan	Uzbekistan
Cambodia	India	Laos	Peru	West Bank and Gaza
Cameroon	Honduras	Lebanon	Philippines	Vietnam
Colombia	Indonesia	Liberia	Senegal	Zambia
Dominican Republic	Iraq	Mali	South Africa	
El Salvador	Jamaica	Morocco	South Sudan	
Ethiopia	Jordan	Mozambique	Tanzania	
Ghana	Kazakhstan	Myanmar	Thailand	





USAID partners with more than **50 governments** around the world to improve reading, increase access to education in crisis and conflict and provide employment opportunities. Since 2011, USAID education programs have reached **109 million** children and youth - far more than the **66 million** children enrolled in primary school in North America and Western Europe combined.



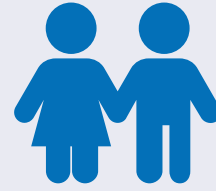
EARLY GRADE READING

The journey to self-reliance begins with learning how to read. Children who can't read by the middle of primary school are four times more likely to drop out and two times more likely to engage in criminal activity. Worldwide, 387 million children and youth cannot read or do basic math, even though 68 percent of them have attended four or more years of school.

*To address this learning gap, USAID's early grade reading programs are based on cutting-edge neuroscience and research and have a profound effect on children's learning. While most assessments of early grade reading programs are ongoing, completed assessments show more than **4 million children** with improved reading since 2011.*

69.8 million

children were provided early grade reading instruction.



49%

Female

51%

Male

USAID's Impact in Reading

Using Data to Inform Programming

Before USAID developed an early grade reading assessment, countries did not have accurate data on reading levels of students in the first grades of school. USAID-led student testing, in both stable and conflict-affected environments, revealed the extent of the global reading crisis. USAID assessments found that 96 percent of second graders in areas of Northern Nigeria, 80 percent in Mali and 64 percent in select regions of Pakistan could not read a single word. Based on these findings, USAID designed quality reading programs that incorporated frequent and regular testing to measure progress. A 2017 World Bank review found that USAID reading programs had an impact equivalent to an entire additional year or more of learning at a cost per student of just \$8 in Kenya, \$29 in Egypt and \$40 in Jordan.

Building the Capacity of National Education Systems

While evidence exists on how to improve reading, catalyzing the necessary policy, human resources and financial management reforms is challenging. Since 2011, USAID has invested in strengthening national education systems to improve early grade reading. In Ethiopia, Ghana, Uganda, Nepal, the Philippines and Mozambique, USAID has supported the development and implementation of policies to ensure children learn in a language they understand. USAID works closely with ministries of education to take early grade reading interventions to scale, reaching 5 million first grade students in Egypt, 3.4 million first through third grade students in Kenya and 5.1 million kindergarten through third grade students in the Philippines. In Egypt,

average oral reading fluency doubled in two years, and in Kenya, students scored 20 percent higher on their reading comprehension.

Innovating to Improve Reading

USAID actively innovates to improve reading instruction, including tablet or mobile systems for student assessment and classroom monitoring. Alongside 11 bilateral, multilateral and civil society partners, USAID created the Global Book Alliance to improve the availability, affordability and accessibility of early grade reading books in underserved languages – because students cannot learn to read without books. In collaboration with local publishers, and led by the Norwegian Agency for Development

Cooperation (Norad), the Alliance developed a digital library of open license children's reading materials to increase access to books. Additionally, USAID, the Australian Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade and World Vision developed All Children Reading: A Grand Challenge for Development to use technology in reading instruction. The Grand Challenge has issued 45 grants and 22 prize awards totaling more than \$13.5 million, most recently launching Sign On for Literacy, a prize competition that sources technology innovations to increase sign language and literacy outcomes for children who are deaf, hard of hearing or deaf-blind.



Children in the Philippines' Mindanao region learn to read in their mother language of Blaan. USAID works with a local Philippine organization to improve literacy rates among young Blaan learners. So far the project has printed over 12,000 storybooks and teachers' guides and produced alphabet and number charts along with the first Blaan dictionary, which features Filipino and English translations. These tools were distributed to 120 public elementary schools, benefitting over 8,500 Blaan children **Photo Credit:** Tammy David

USAID Reading Programs Expand Reach

USAID invests heavily in strengthening national education systems to improve early grade reading. Since 2011, many countries have taken USAID reading programs to scale, resulting in millions more children receiving proper reading instruction.

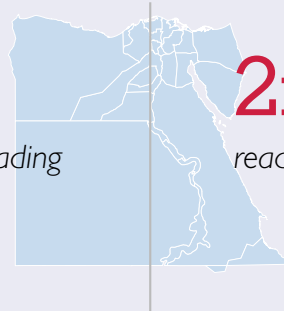
Egypt

5 million

first grade students with reading instruction

2x

reading fluency in two years



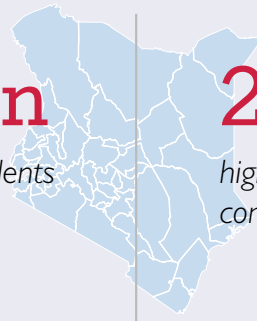
Kenya

3.4 million

first through third grade students with reading instruction

20%

higher scores on reading comprehension



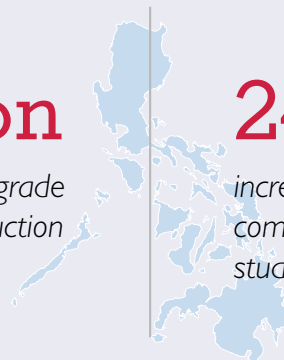
Philippines

5.1 million

kindergarten through third grade students with reading instruction

24%

increase in reading comprehension for second grade students





Young women work on an automobile in Morocco as part of a USAID vocational program. Photo Credit: USAID Morocco

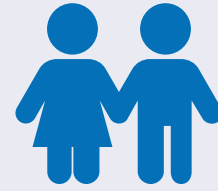


YOUTH WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT

More than 71 million youth are unemployed globally, and the search for work continues to be a significant driver of youth migration in developing countries. In a recent survey of youth from Central America who migrated to the United States, 1 in 5 specifically cited educational opportunity as the primary driver, while more than 50% cited economic opportunity as a primary driver.

*In 2017, USAID implemented **47 programs in 34 countries** across Asia, Africa, Latin America and the Caribbean, and the Middle East to produce workforces with the relevant and necessary skills to support country development goals. Through these programs, USAID contributed to new or improved employment for **725,000 youth**.*

725,000
*youth with improved
employment*



49%
Female

51%
Male

USAID's Impact in Workforce Development

Opportunities for Vulnerable Youth

USAID tailors its workforce programs to the needs of marginalized youth living in poverty and communities affected by conflict and gang violence. In Ethiopia, more than 16,000 rural youth, 46 percent of whom are young women, received soft skills training, coaching and enterprise development support and have gone on to find a job, start their own business or secure a safer or better-paying job. In high-crime municipalities in Honduras, USAID provided life skills training and cognitive behavioral therapy for youth. This short-term, goal-oriented psychotherapy treatment for more than 400 youth changed patterns of thinking or behavior, including reducing violence. Youth reported healthier behaviors, increased self-

confidence and lower stress. In addition, 7,800 youth received skills training and 2,700 received a Career Readiness Certification confirming basic competencies in math and reading. This resulted in 2,400 internships and 2,300 jobs for at-risk youth.

Marketable Skills for Employment

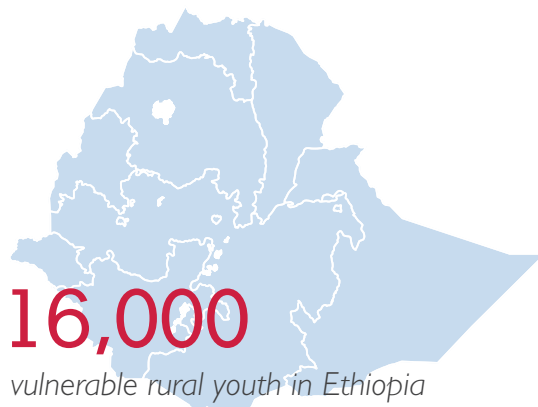
Employers say that soft skills are just as important as technical skills in preparing youth for jobs. However, research is still ongoing on how to foster and measure these skills. USAID is identifying the essential elements, such as curricula, safe spaces, role models and enabling environments, needed to build young people's soft skills. USAID produced an open-source tool

to improve soft skills training and data collection. This tool helps to determine what policies and practices create the right environment for youth to build skills such as self-confidence, critical thinking and communication. In the Philippines, USAID equipped 19,000 youth with soft skills as part of workforce training and civic engagement activities.

Working in Partnership with Youth

Engaging youth in the process of designing and implementing workforce training programs results in higher rates of youth employability and satisfaction. USAID works with youth as partners and innovators, rather than

solely beneficiaries, through a Positive Youth Development approach. To support missions to best engage youth, USAID created Compass, a tool that analyzes how youth are engaged in program design and implementation. Compass helps ensure workforce development efforts respond to young people's needs by soliciting their input. This tool is being put into practice in Kenya through Kenya Youth Employment and Skills (K-YES), which is engaging out-of-school youth without a high school degree as partners to mobilize other young people in their communities to enroll in vocational skills training. In 2017 alone, K-YES increased the employability of 94,077 youth.



vulnerable rural youth in Ethiopia received training that led to a new job, starting their own business or securing a safer or better-paying job.



youth in the Philippines have been equipped with soft skills as part of workforce training and civic engagement activities.

In Honduras, USAID is working to provide high-risk, unemployed youth with job training in the skills needed most by private sector employers. David, a former gang member and drug addict, turned his life around thanks to a USAID job training program. Photo Credit: Thomas Cristofolletti, USAID





Graduates of the USAID-funded Merit and Needs-Based Scholarship Program (MNBS) in Pakistan. Photo Credit: Pakistan, USAID



HIGHER EDUCATION

As the number of children and youth around the world receiving an education continues to increase, providing opportunities for higher education is critical. Graduates, institutions, communities and society as a whole benefit from improved civic engagement, better health, increased gender equality and higher economic returns. Youth in developing countries who receive higher education believe more strongly in the importance of democracy than those with only a primary education.

*USAID partners with American universities, governments and the private sector to build the capacity of host-country higher education institutions (HEIs). As a result of the **44 programs in 46 countries** supporting higher education goals, USAID provided institutional strengthening support to **372 host-country HEIs**, **4,400 youth** received financial assistance for seeking degrees and more than **6,400 youth** received support for short-term training opportunities.*

Higher Education Benefits

The benefits of providing higher education opportunities include improved civic engagement, better health, increased gender equality and higher economic returns.



372

USAID provided institutional strengthening support to 372 host-country HEIs



4,400

youth received financial assistance for seeking degrees



6,400

more than 6,400 youth received support for short-term training opportunities

USAID's Impact in Higher Education

Partnering with U.S. Universities

USAID works with local HEIs to generate knowledge and develop a workforce that meets local, regional and national needs. USAID, in partnership with U.S. universities, builds the capacity of local HEIs through curriculum reform, faculty or administration training, research and improving facilities. One example

is the Transformational Leadership Program, a collaboration between U.S. universities and the University of Prishtina in Kosovo to develop leaders who will drive economic, political and social change. USAID also provides institutional strengthening support to host-country universities, inspired by the American tradition

of a liberal arts education. This work promotes critical thinking skills to prepare students for the global marketplace. For example, in 2017 USAID supported the establishment of the Center for Teaching and Learning at the American University of Afghanistan (AUAF) to provide pedagogical support for staff to continuously improve the quality of teaching.

Linking Higher Education to the Private Sector

To increase meaningful employment opportunities for youth, USAID brings government, industry and academic partners together to align HEIs with industry needs and leverage private sector contributions. In Vietnam, the public-private partnership Building University-Industry Learning and Development through Innovation and Technology (BUILD-IT) supports 11 universities with equipment and software that students will use in the workplace, as well as relevant curricula, workshops and internships to ensure graduates are ready for work. BUILD-IT leveraged \$3.2 million in

resources from STEM companies in 2017, and renewed commitments by Microsoft, Pearson, Autodesk, Wiley, Rockwell, and e-Silicon will bring in \$4 million in additional resources.

Increasing Equitable Access to Higher Education

Scholarships to attend U.S. and host-country universities, provided by USAID, increase access to quality higher education for underserved and marginalized youth, including women. USAID is supporting HEIs in Jamaica, Guatemala and Honduras through curriculum improvements, professional development of faculty and staff, admissions and recruitment support, and providing scholarships to marginalized youth to educate young people in relevant workforce skills. In Pakistan, USAID's Merit and Need-Based Scholarship Program provides financial assistance for disadvantaged youth to attend university. In Egypt, USAID conducted an assessment of 32 HEIs to identify barriers to education for the country's 12 million learners with disabilities.



Through the Higher Engineering Education Alliance Program (HEEAP), USAID collaborates with Arizona State University and private sector partners to transform and modernize top engineering and technical vocational universities in Vietnam. **Photo Credit: IMPACT MED**



In the Democratic Republic of Congo - where more than 7 million children are not currently in school - USAID is working to ensure boys and girls have access to a quality education. Photo Credit: Julie Polumbo, USAID DRC



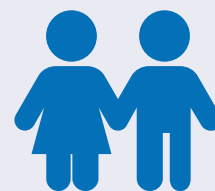
ACCESS TO EDUCATION IN CRISIS AND CONFLICT

In 2011, more than 20 million children living in conflict were out of school. Tens of millions more were displaced or otherwise affected by natural disasters. For those affected by war, famine, or natural disasters, education provides a safe space and some semblance of regularity.

*USAID's Education Strategy prioritized increasing equitable access to education for children and youth living in these environments. Since 2011, USAID has extended education to **22.6 million children** living in conflict or crisis settings. Through this work, an estimated **4.1 million children and youth**, who would otherwise have been out of school, have access to education.*

4.1 million

previously-out-of-school children and youth living in crisis and conflict affected countries were provided access to education by USAID.



49% Female | 51% Male

USAID's Impact in Education in Crisis and Conflict

Responding to Threats to Safety in Learning Environments

Gang violence, natural hazards, violent extremism and other threats to schools can hinder learning, reduce enrollment, increase drop-out and negatively affect student well-being. USAID developed diagnostic tools to identify threats to learning, helping practitioners tailor programs to local contexts. In El Salvador, USAID is working with the Ministry of Education to improve education quality and provide safe learning environments in more than 600 schools. Efforts to reduce violence include

extending the school day from 4 to 8 hours, providing interactive training for teachers with a gender-sensitive approach, and engaging in other violence-prevention activities, including empowerment for women and girls. USAID also provides education for approximately 23,000 out-of-school youth in the country allowing them to return to formal classes or earn an equivalent diploma in special weekend classes.

Strengthen Coherence of USAID Assistance in Humanitarian and Development Contexts

USAID's education work in crisis and conflict-affected countries is advancing alignment between humanitarian and development programming, in partnership with the State Department's Bureau for Population, Refugees,

and Migration and USAID's Office of Foreign Disaster Assistance and Office of Transition Initiatives. USAID partners with host-country governments to integrate refugee education policies into public education, makes links between child protection and learning, and bridges short-term relief with long-term community-based interventions through multi-year funding. In Mali, USAID is working with the Ministry of Education to provide flexible education to displaced children and youth. In Mali's north, schools and educational equipment have been damaged or destroyed, teachers and school administrators have left due to insecurity and more than 500 schools remain closed, leaving children and youth without education. USAID is supporting the Ministry of Education to address education and social protection needs, restore education infrastructure, train teachers

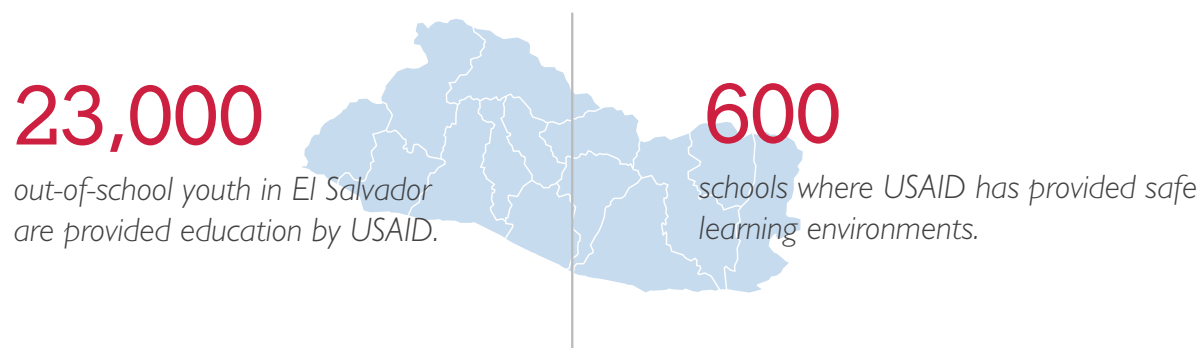
and address the needs of communities living in protracted conflict. As a result, 5,100 children and youth have enrolled in USAID's accelerated education program, allowing them to catch up on lost years of education. These children and youth have re-entered formal schools, gaining basic reading and math skills and socio-emotional support.

Global Thought Leadership to Advance our Values and Priorities

USAID is a thought leader on education in crisis and conflict, demonstrated through its participation in the Inter-Agency Network for Education in Emergencies, Education Cannot Wait and the Accelerated Education Working Group. Through these partnerships, USAID is influencing the global agenda to focus on equity, safety and conflict sensitivity.

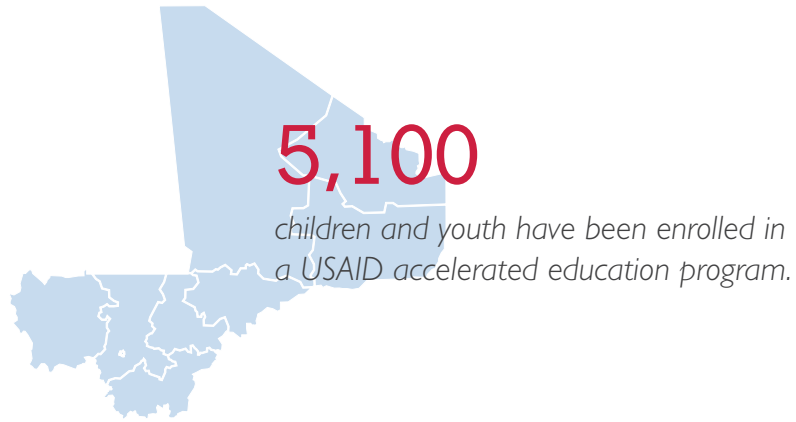
USAID Creates Safe Learning Environments in El Salvador

USAID is responding to the violence in El Salvador by working with out-of-school youth and helping to create safe learning environments.



Assisting Conflict-Affected Youth in Mali

Conflict is impacting all parts of life in Mali's north, especially education. Hundred of schools have been damaged or destroyed, and thousands of teachers have fled.



Jordan is home to more than 143,000 refugee students. This influx of children is crowding already overburdened classrooms. USAID supports Jordan's efforts to ensure all students receive a quality education by training teachers and building and renovating schools. **Photo Credit:** Thomas Cristofolletti, USAID



Collaborating with a local NGO, USAID is increasing access to quality education for children who are blind and visually impaired in Haiti. Photo Credit: Aaron Rossi, USAID

THE ROAD AHEAD

Despite the progress made over the past seven years, barriers to learning remain vast – especially for girls and youth. As USAID continues to build on the work achieved under its 2011 Education Strategy, it is critical that efforts remain focused on positioning host-country governments to ensure their youngest citizens are well educated and prepared for employment to lead their countries to greater self-sufficiency.

More than 60 percent of the population in many conflict-affected countries are under the age of 25, and quality education is essential for these children and youth to stay on a path that prevents future violence and fosters economic growth. USAID education programs will continue to work with national governments and ministries of education to strengthen their capacity to deliver quality education programs, mobilize domestic resources and create sustainability in our programs. USAID education programs will also work across sectors and units within the Agency to maximize education's role in stability, resilience, violence prevention, and economic growth.

USAID will continue to identify new ways to expand the reach of its investments. For example, to address the global funding shortage in education, USAID is using innovative financing approaches – from private capital to domestic resource mobilization – that will bring new players to the table while requiring more of traditional partners. USAID will continue to leverage its funding and expertise through partnerships such as the Global Partnership for Education (GPE) and Education Cannot Wait (ECW) to tackle complex global education challenges and expand its reach. USAID's membership in GPE - a multi-stakeholder

partnership and funding platform that aims to strengthen education systems in developing countries - influenced the development of the organization's new financing framework to increase co-financing, improve domestic resource mobilization and foster innovation. Through ECW - the first global movement and fund dedicated to education in emergencies and protracted crises - USAID helped shape the partnership's strategy to have clear outcomes and a funding model that rewards results. USAID has leveraged more than four times the total of its investment through these partnerships.

Building on the experience and lessons learned under the 2011 Education Strategy, USAID will continue to look for new and innovative ways of ensuring inclusive, equitable and quality education for all. In addition, USAID will ensure that its education programs support the Agency's goals of advancing U.S. national security and economic prosperity while promoting a path to self-reliance and resilience for developing countries.

U.S. Agency for International Development
Ronald Reagan Building
1300 Pennsylvania Ave. NW
Washington, D.C. 20523-1000

[usaid.gov](https://www.usaid.gov)
officeofeducation@usaid.gov