Research Digest on Positive Youth Development
May 2017
Issue # 1

The YouthPower Learning Project is pleased to provide this compilation of article abstracts from peer-reviewed literature and other research posted on YouthPower.org related to positive youth development.

The recently published YouthPower Learning Systematic Review of Positive Youth Development in Low- and Middle-Income Countries covers research and evaluations up to the end of 2015. This document includes abstracts of more recent research and evaluations¹. These documents have not been curated based on quality or other criteria. They represent a search of journals² using similar search criteria as the systematic review and research documents posted on YouthPower.org over the last months. For password-protected sites and articles that require payment, we include the term “paywall” in the title.

For bi-monthly updates on positive youth development research, resources and events, please subscribe to the YouthPower Learning newsletter.

¹ For the journal articles, we applied similar search strings to those used in the Systematic Review of Positive Youth Development in Low- and Middle-Income Countries, such as 2016 (and) Positive development (and) Youth (and) intervention (and) evaluation; 2016 (and) Positive development (and) Youth (and) project (and) evaluation; 2016 (and) Engagement(and) Youth (and) project (and) evaluation; 2016 (and) Engagement(and) adolescent (and) project (and) impact; or 2016 (and) Competencies strengthening(and) Youth (and) intervention (and) evaluation. Only abstracts that had a youth element were included. We also selected research documents posted on YouthPower.org between late 2016 and early 2017 that had a PYD evidence focus.


This digest is made possible by the support of the American people through the United States Agency for International Development (USAID), under the terms of YouthPower Learning, Contract No. AID-OAA-I-15-00034/AID-OAA-TO-15-00011. The contents of this digest are the sole responsibility of Making Cents International and do not necessarily reflect the views of USAID or the United States Government.
USAID’s YouthPower Learning generates and disseminates knowledge about the implementation and impact of positive youth development (PYD) and cross-sectoral approaches in international youth development. We are leading research, evaluations, and events designed to build the evidence base and inform the global community about how to transition young people successfully into productive, healthy adults. PYD is defined by USAID as:

**Positive Youth Development (PYD)**

engages youth along with their families, communities and/or governments so that youth are empowered to reach their full potential. PYD approaches build skills, assets and competencies; foster healthy relationships; strengthen the environment; and transform systems.

Visit us at YouthPower.org to learn more and follow us on Facebook and Twitter for updates.

For public inquiries and additional information please email comms@youthpower.org or mail to YouthPower Learning, Making Cents International, 1350 Connecticut Ave NW, Suite 410, Washington DC 20036.
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Agriculture and Food Security

1. **Review of Research and Practice for Youth Engagement in Agricultural Education and Training Systems**


**Abstract**

This concept note advances agriculture education and training (AET) scholarship by providing a clear understanding of the process for engaging youth in development conversations and the value of doing so. Youth represent a massive, untapped potential source of improvement for rural agricultural systems in developing countries, if appropriately equipped with the necessary skills, training and education to enter society as competent, empowered and capable citizens.

This concept note explores the state of knowledge on youth and community capacity-building and development, with a focus on AET systems. The document also identifies promising strategies and practices. It synthesizes and reviews the current state of knowledge of existing research and programs and specifies critical next steps. Gaps in literature and in practice are identified and suggestions for future research, programs and policy improvements are provided.

2. **Agrifood Youth Employment and Engagement Study**


**Abstract**

The Agrifood Youth Employment and Engagement Study (AgYees) examines the potential of Sub-Saharan Africa’s agrifood systems to provide new jobs for unemployed, underemployed and disadvantaged youth, and identifies constraints affecting the capacity of youth to take up these economic opportunities. Africa has the youngest population in the world, with almost 200 million people between the ages of 15 and 24—a number that is expected to double by 2045 (African Economic Outlook 2015). Although many jobs have been created by Africa’s growing economies, job creation has not occurred at a sufficient scale and pace to accommodate the expanding youth population. The International Labor Organization estimates that only 16 million of 73 million jobs created in Africa between 2000 and 2008 were filled by youth. Sixty percent of Africa’s unemployed are youth, even more are underemployed, and youth unemployment rates are double those of adult unemployment in most countries (African Economic Outlook 2015). Across 34 African countries, citizens regard unemployment as the top problem facing their nations (Dome 2015). The rising youth population is increasingly better educated, and there is an unprecedented opportunity for economic and social development if the talents of this generation can be tapped. Alternatively, the youth could also present a significant threat to social cohesion and political stability if insufficient economic and employment opportunities are available. Unemployment of youth is of particularly critical concern in fragile states, with one in two youths joining rebel movements and citing unemployment as their primary motivation (World Bank 2011, cited in African Economic Review 2015).

**Objectives**

The Agrifood Youth Employment and Engagement Study (AgYees) examines the potential of sub-Saharan Africa’s agrifood systems to provide new jobs for unemployed, underemployed and
disadvantaged youth and identifies constraints affecting the capacity of youth to take up these economic opportunities. Two analytical tracks generate insights and guidance on cost-effective strategies and programmatic entry points most likely to improve employment options and livelihoods for disadvantaged African men and women.

The Strategic Policy and Foresighting Analysis (Chapters 2 and 3) analyzes economic mega-trends for Rwanda, Tanzania and Nigeria and projects how economic changes, specifically farm structure and dietary transformations, will affect future job prospects for rural and urban African youth. The Agrifood Landscape Analysis (Chapters 4 and 5), focusing on Rwanda and Tanzania, examines the economic and policy environment affecting youth engagement within the agrifood system, assesses the supply and demand for related workforce training and perceived gaps, and distills best practices and lessons learned related to youth economic programming.

Overall, Chapters 2 (Land/Farm) and 3 (Downstream) convey a consistent story about the major dynamics underway in African employment: Labor is moving sharply out of farming as the economies transform, yet farming remains extremely important for livelihoods and economic growth in all countries studied. Moreover, the off-farm agrifood system is growing very rapidly in percentage terms and will offer important opportunities for new businesses, but it will not match farming in the absolute level of new job creation for at least 10 years.

3. **Youth Engagement in Agricultural Value Chains across Feed the Future: A Synthesis Report**


Abstract

The report assessed 13 Feed the Future (FtF) programs, carried out field visits to four countries, (Guatemala, Liberia, Nepal, Uganda) and held focus group discussions with 384 youth aged 10-40. The bulk of the report is derived from the four country site visits. The key objective of the assessment was to determine what specific agriculture value chain activities have the capacity to absorb youth and transform their futures. This analysis seeks to understand how youth can most effectively be mainstreamed into the agriculture sector in line with USAID’s 2012 Youth in Development Policy. In each country, the assessment team asked the following questions: What innovative approaches and entry points have resulted in improvements in youth skills and opportunities? Has youth engagement in agriculture filled unmet needs? And, have upgrades in specific value chains opened new opportunities for youth employment and engagement?

4. **Youth in Agriculture in Uganda: An Assessment**


Abstract

The assessment describes Uganda’s youth labor market, youth attitudes towards agriculture, and access to productive assets, and then considers those qualities in light of how to target youth for participation in specific value chains (coffee and maize). The assessment also addresses civic engagement, education and business skills development.
Health

5. **Mentoring Interventions and the Impact of Protective Assets on the Reproductive Health of Adolescent Girls and Young Women**


**Abstract**

The Journal of Adolescent Health has published an article on “Mentoring Interventions and the Impact of Protective Assets on the Reproductive Health of Adolescent Girls and Young Women” based on a literature review carried out by YouthPower Action. The purpose of this review was to understand the types of mentoring programs for adolescent girls and young women that have demonstrated effectiveness in improving protective assets, and/or, RH knowledge, intentions, behaviors, or outcomes themselves. Based on the evidence review, YouthPower Action designed a pilot girls mentoring program to study the effect of a 6-month girls mentoring program in Uganda. The mentoring program was launched in April with 500 girls in Uganda. YouthPower Action will carry out a study to determine the feasibility and acceptability of the mentoring intervention effort.

6. **Effects of Aggression Replacement Training on Problem Solving, Anger and Aggressive Behaviour among Adolescents with Criminal Attempts in Turkey: A Quasi-Experimental Study**


**Abstract**

The research was conducted through the use of a pre-test and post-test conducted in a quasi-experimental design which aimed to determine effectiveness of Aggression Replacement Training (ART) on problem solving, anger and aggressive behaviour among adolescents with criminal attempts in Turkey. The study included 65 adolescents with criminal attempts (32 intervention, 33 control). There was no difference between the groups in terms of average age (16.13 ± 1.10 in the experimental group and 16.21 ± 0.89 in the control group). After the intervention, the experimental group showed significantly decreased Trait Anger levels (t = 1.906; P = 0.033), increased Anger Control scores (t = 2.522; P = 0.008), decreased Physical Aggression scores (t = 1.925; P = 0.031), decreased Hostility scores (t = 2.496; P = 0.009), and increased Social Problem Solving total scores (t = 2.937; P = 0.005). Increased Anger Control scores were found to be significant when compared with the control group (t = 2.273, P = 0.026). These results showed that ART was effective on problem solving, anger and aggressive behaviour and can be used to develop positive behaviours among adolescents with criminal attempts.

7. **Barriers and Facilitators to the Implementation of Interventions to Prevent Youth Violence in Latin America, A Systematic Review and Qualitative Evidence Synthesis.**

Abstract

Youth violence in Latin America is an important public health problem. However, the evidence from preventive programs within the region to address this problem is limited. Identifying context-specific factors that facilitate or hinder the success of interventions is necessary to guarantee the successful implementation of new preventive strategies. We present a systematic review and synthesis of qualitative studies to identify factors affecting the implementation of programs to prevent youth violence in Latin America. We searched 10 electronic databases and websites of international institutions. The quality of the studies was assessed using the critical appraisal skills program checklist, while the certainty of the findings of the synthesis was assessed using the certainty of the qualitative evidence approach. We included eight papers describing five programs in Argentina, Venezuela, Peru, El Salvador, and Mexico.

Most of the factors affecting the implementation of programs were aspects related to features of the programs and social/political constraints. The synthesis suggests that future programs can benefit from having a multidisciplinary and/or multisectoral approach involving different key players. At the same time, potential strategies for avoiding problems related to such active engagement should be planned via the promotion of effective channels for communication and supervision. The review also suggests the importance of increasing awareness and motivation toward the problem of youth violence among relevant agencies and stakeholders. While the limited volume and quality of the literature impacted the ability to draw conclusions, the results could be useful for new programs being designed and those seeking to be adapted from other contexts.

8. ByeTaboo: Expanding Access to Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights Education


Abstract

This article examines the design and implementation of the sexual and reproductive health online platform #ChauTabu (#ByeTaboo) in Buenos Aires, Argentina, from a practice perspective. Based on my experiences, I discuss the design process and the implementation challenges; reflect on what digital spaces can offer as education platforms; and how #ChauTabu relates to a rights-based approach to inclusive and feminist sexual and reproductive health.

9. Enabling Online Safe Spaces: A Case Study of Love Matters Kenya


Abstract

For sexual health organizations, establishing a safe space to talk about sensitive topics is an important prerequisite for information exchange and open dialogue. With the popularity of social media and mobile phones, these safe spaces are moving online. This article examines one of these spaces, the Love Matters Kenya Facebook page, as an example of a sexual health organization using social media to discuss sexuality with young people. We observed interactions on the Facebook page over a period of six weeks, and also led an online focus group discussion. The results showed that the key elements of a safe space are: good
moderation; users’ ability to create their own online personas; and a community atmosphere that enables trust and social relationships to grow.

10. The Umthombo Youth Development Foundation, South Africa: Lessons Towards Community Involvement in Health Professional Education


Abstract

Background: Internationally, the development of partnerships between institutions of higher learning and the communities they serve is stressed as a priority. The Umthombo Youth Development Foundation (UYDF) is an educational model developed in rural KwaZulu-Natal, South Africa, as a response to the scarcity of medical personnel in hospitals. Community involvement in health professional education has become a key strategy in the model, and review of the model may provide lessons for other educators towards implementing community involvement in health professional education.

Objective: To review the UYDF, with emphasis on aspects of community involvement.

Methods: This qualitative study used a social accountability theoretical framework. Data were collected using the Appreciative Inquiry method and participants who were involved in the UYDF model were interviewed. Themes arising around community involvement were generated inductively.

Results: Community involvement in health professional education grew from a funding requirement and has strengthened over time to become an integral component of the UYDF model. Community involvement occurred mainly at the student selection process, but continued during education and after graduation. Participants suggested means by which community involvement could be strengthened.

Conclusion: The UYDF successfully presents a model that facilitates community involvement in health professional education. Lessons learnt could guide other models, and the UYDF model could be strengthened by further research.

11. A Review of Social Media Technologies Across the Global HIV Care Continuum Revival Article (Paywall)


Abstract

HIV remains one of the main global health threats of the 21st century. There is a great need to reach populations that are at risk of HIV or already HIV+ across the HIV care continuum to improve HIV prevention, testing, and treatment. New technologies, such as social media (SM) and social networking sites (SNS) have shown early promise in HIV research studies. To assess the state of research on the use of SM/SNSs across the HIV continuum, we conducted a systematic literature review on HIV-related research using SM during the last 10 years. A total of 44 papers were identified, of which 17 (38.6%) were classified as intervention studies and 19 (61.3%) as observational. The focus areas of the studies were evenly distributed between
outreach/recruitment (n = 15, 34.1%), surveillance/observation (n = 13, 29.5%) and prevention/treatment (n = 16, 36.4%). Researchers engaged the community through Facebook (n = 26, 59.1%), multiple platforms (n = 13, 29.5%), or one of several geo-social networking sites (n = 10, 22.7%). Studies primarily targeted men who have sex with men (MSM) (n = 24, 54.5%) and youth (n = 13, 29.5%) with little research focused on HIV+ populations (n = 5, 11.4%). The current state of the field, trends, and limitations of this work are discussed.

12. **Applying Ecological Positive Youth Development Theory to Address Co-Occurring Health Disparities Among Immigrant Latino Youth.** (Paywall)


**Abstract**

This article outlines the theory and resulting approach employed in a multilevel, integrated, collaborative community intervention called Adelante, implemented by a university-community partnership in a Latino immigrant community to address co-occurring health disparities of substance abuse, sex risk, and interpersonal violence among youth. The basis for the intervention is a social-ecological interpretation of positive youth development theory, which focuses on changes in personal environments and contexts and community assets as a preventive mechanism. This approach is viewed as appropriate for a community facing multiple barriers to health equity. The article describes the translation of this positive youth development model to practice, including the design of the intervention, intervention components, and the protocol for evaluation. The Adelante intervention is intended to reduce health disparities and to add a broader community model to the evidence base.

13. **Mental health and psychosocial interventions for children and adolescents in street situations in low- and middle-income countries: A systematic review** (Paywall)


**Abstract**

This article reviews the available quantitative literature on mental health and psychosocial interventions among children and adolescents in street situations (CASS) in low- and middle-income countries (LAMIC). PRISMA (Preferred Reporting Items for Reviews and Meta-Analysis) standards for systematic reviews were used to search five databases as well as grey literature. There were four inclusion criteria; studies had to involve a description of an external (i.e. outside of the home) mental health or psychosocial intervention/treatment, must be focused in LAMIC, must be focused on CASS, and must empirically evaluate the effectiveness of the intervention described. A quality assessment tool was used to determine the risk of bias in included articles. Five studies were included. A multidisciplinary care approach was significant in reducing psychological distress, substance use and improving sleeping arrangements (p < 0.001, n = 400). Residency step programs were on average 52% successful in reintegrating children back into communities (n = 863). Resilience training significantly increased psychological well-being components (p < 0.001, n = 60). Emotional regulation training had a beneficial improvement in emotional regulation. FORNET (Forensic Offender Rehabilitation Narrative Exposure Therapy) (n = 32) reduced the number of
self-reported offenses committed \[t(19.26) = 1.81, p = 0.043\]. There are not enough credible studies available to develop a firm conclusion on the effectiveness of mental health and psychosocial interventions delivered to CASS in LAMIC. The limited amount of studies, inconsistent outcome measures and interventions, and imperfect study designs maintain that this is an area in need of greater attention and research focus.

14. **The Role of Community Health Workers in Preventing Adolescent Repeat Pregnancies and Births (Paywall)**


**Abstract**

Intervention by community health workers (CHWs) is believed to prevent repeated childbearing among teenagers. This review investigated the effectiveness of CHWs in reducing repeated pregnancies and births among adolescents aged <20 years, two years after the delivery of their first child. Through electronic database and hand searching, experimental and/or observational studies were screened with their results undergoing systematic review and meta-analyses. Subgroup analyses were performed to further assess how study characteristics affected the pooled estimates and heterogeneity. A total of 11 eligible articles, from January 1980 to May 2015, were included. Seven studies evaluated repeated births and eight measured repeated pregnancies. Studies showed relevant disparities in terms of selected methodological aspects and program characteristics. Although most studies (n = 9) were either of “strong” or of “moderate” quality, only two of five with significant findings exhibited a high level of quality as the other three failed to adjust results for confounders. Random effects modeling revealed an overall 30% decrease in repeated adolescent births (odds ratio = .70, confidence interval = .49–.99) among CHW-visited areas relative to non-visited sites. On the other hand, no significant association was detected in terms of repeated pregnancies (odds ratio = .96, confidence interval = .70–1.28).

15. **Lessons learnt from the CERCA Project, a multicomponent intervention to promote adolescent sexual and reproductive health in three Latin America countries: A qualitative post-hoc evaluation**

Ivanova, O., Pozo, C. K., Segura, E. Z., Vega, B., Chandra-Mouli, V., Hindin, J.M., Temmerman, M., Decat, P., De Meyer, S., Michielsen, K., (2016). *Lessons Learnt from the CERCA Project, A Multicomponent Intervention to Promote Adolescent Sexual and Reproductive Health In three Latin America Countries: A Qualitative Post-Hoc Evaluation*. Science Direct. Volume 58. **Abstract** The Community-Embedded Reproductive Health Care for Adolescents (CERCA) project was implemented in Bolivia, Ecuador and Nicaragua (201-2014) to test the effectiveness of interventions preventing teenage pregnancies. As the outcome evaluation showed limited impact, a post-hoc process evaluation was carried out to determine if and how CERCA’s design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation affected the results. We did a document analysis and conducted 18 in-depth interviews and 21 focus group discussions with stakeholders and beneficiaries. Transcripts were analyzed using directed content analysis.

Data showed that CERCA sensitized stakeholders and encouraged the discussion on the sensitive issue of teen pregnancy. In terms of design, a strong point was the participatory approach; a weak point was that the detailed situation analysis was completed too late. In terms of implementation, a strong point was that multifaceted activities were implemented; a weak point was that the activities were not pilot-tested for feasibility/acceptability and evolved substantially throughout the project.
In terms of monitoring, strong points were that regular monitoring kept the project on track administratively/financially; a weak point was that monitoring indicators did not change as the intervention package changed. In terms of evaluation, weak points were the substantial attrition rate and narrow focus on adolescents.

This study provides recommendations for future projects.

16. **Intensive Group Learning and On Site Services to Improve Sexual and Reproductive Health Among Young Adults in Liberia: A Randomized Evaluation of HealthyActions**


**Abstract**

Introduction: Young Liberians, particularly undereducated young adults, face substantial sexual and reproductive health (SRH) challenges, with low uptake of contraceptive methods, high rates of unintended pregnancy, and low levels of knowledge about HIV status. The purpose of this study was to assess the impact of a six-day intensive group learning intervention combined with on-site SRH services (called HealthyActions) among out-of-school young adults, implemented through an existing alternative education program, on uptake of contraception and HIV testing and counseling (HTC).

Methods: The intervention was implemented among young women and men ages 15-35 who were enrolled in alternative basic education learning sites in five counties of Liberia. We conducted a randomized evaluation to assess program impact. Baseline data was collected in January-March 2014, and endline data in June-July 2014. Key outcomes of condom use, contraceptive use, and HTC were estimated with difference-in-difference models using fixed effects. All analyses were conducted in Stata 13.

Results: We assessed outcomes for 1,157 learners at baseline and 1,052 learners at endline, across 29 treatment and 26 control sites. After adjusting for potential confounders, learners in the Healthy Actions intervention group were 12% less likely to report never using a condom with a regular partner over the last month compared with the control group (P = .02). Female learners who received Healthy Actions were 13% more likely to use any form of modern contraception compared with learners in control sites (P<.001), with the greatest increase in the use of contraceptive implants. Learners in Healthy Actions sites were 45% more likely to have received HTC (P<.001).

Conclusion: Providing intensive group learning in a supportive environment coupled with on-site health services improved SRH outcomes among participating learners. The focus of HealthyActions on participatory learning for low-literacy populations presents an adaptable solution for health programming across Liberia and the region.

17. **Adolescents in Bangladesh: A Situational Analysis of Programmatic Approaches to Sexual and Reproductive Health Education and Services**

Abstract

The health of Bangladesh’s 29.5 million adolescents, who make up nearly one-fifth of the country’s total population, is critical to the country’s future, but issues surrounding adolescent sexual and reproductive health (ASRH) remain taboo. ASRH initiatives have been implemented by both the Government of Bangladesh (GOB) and nongovernmental organizations (NGOs), but with limited coordination, documentation or evaluation, making it difficult to know what worked well and what did not. It is critical to identify, invest in, and accelerate the expansion of approaches to ASRH programming that have been proven, through strong evidence, to effectively and efficiently provide SRH information and services that meet the needs of adolescents. Understanding what works and what does not for adolescent SRH interventions will help inform the scale-up of promising interventions, minimize duplicative efforts, and ensure efficient use of available resources.

This report presents findings from a comprehensive review and situational analysis of ASRH programming in Bangladesh, carried out by the Evidence Project/Population Council, with financial support from USAID/Bangladesh, as part of a larger research initiative on “Improved Adolescent Sexual and Reproductive Health (ASRH) Outcomes in Bangladesh.” The objective of the review was to identify programmatic and evidence gaps, as well as best practices, and support the development of effective, inclusive, and sustainable ASRH programs that can operate at scale.

18. University Leadership for Change in Sexual and Reproductive Health in Niger


Abstract

From March 2014 to June 2016, E2A (Evidence to Action for Strengthened Reproductive Health) implemented the University Leadership for Change (ULC) project in Niger to promote youth leadership to drive social change and strengthen health systems, with the aim of reducing unintended pregnancies and maternal mortality while increasing gender equality. In Niger, public health issues, in particular family planning and reproductive health, are among the top priorities for development workers. At the heart of this project was a comprehensive approach to behavior change that sought to create an enabling environment to improve sexual and reproductive health (SRH) among young people. The project was composed of three main technical components: (1) Youth leadership and demand generation; (2) Expanded access and improved quality of SRH services; and (3) Participatory stakeholder engagement for sustainability. These three pillars were used simultaneously to work towards the achievement of the ULC project’s objectives.

This report presents the project outcomes and documents the strategies and approaches that led to the results achieved. The report also highlights considerations for scaling up the ULC approach in different contexts. The success stories and lessons learned within this report are relevant for a global health audience seeking to improve AYSRH (Adolescents and Youths’ Sexual and Reproductive Health) outcomes through effective strategies for behavior change that are coupled with the delivery of youth-friendly SRH services.

19. Blurring the Boundaries of Public Health: It’s Time to Make Safer Sex Porn and Erotic Sex Education

Abstract

Unsafe sex is now the biggest risk factor for the death of young women globally and the second biggest for young men. Alongside this, pornography, which rarely shows safer sex, is one of the key channels for sex education globally. Higher quality research needs to explore the positive and negative impact of porn while the sex education world needs to engage with it to ensure that viewing porn can promote safe sex choices and consent, as well as pleasure. We need unbiased research and innovation into the impact of porn and recognition that it can have a positive impact for public health.

20. Trauma-Informed HIV Prevention and Treatment


Abstract

The high prevalence of trauma and its negative impact on health and health-promoting behaviors underscore the need for multi-level interventions to address trauma and its associated sequelae to improve physical and mental well-being in both HIV-infected and HIV-uninfected populations. Growing global awareness of the intersection of trauma and HIV has resulted in development and testing of interventions to address trauma in the context of HIV treatment and HIV prevention in the USA and globally. Despite increasing recognition of the widespread nature of trauma and the importance of trauma to HIV transmission around the globe, several gaps remain. Through a survey of the literature, we identified eight studies (published in the past five years) describing interventions to address the effects of trauma on HIV-related outcomes. In particular, this study focused on the levels of intervention, populations the interventions were designed to benefit, and types of trauma addressed in the interventions in the context of both HIV prevention and treatment. Remarkably absent from the HIV prevention, interventions reviewed were interventions designed to address violence experienced by men or transgender individuals, in the USA or globally. Given the pervasive nature of trauma experienced generally, but especially among individuals at heightened risk for HIV, future HIV prevention interventions universally should consider becoming trauma-informed. Widespread acknowledgement of the pervasive impact of gender-based violence on HIV outcomes among women has led to multiple calls for trauma-informed care (TIC) approaches to improve the effectiveness of HIV services for HIV-infected women. TIC approaches may be relevant for and should also be tested among men and all groups with high co-occurring epidemics of HIV and trauma (e.g., men who have sex with men (MSM), transgendered populations, injection drug users, sex workers), regardless of type of trauma experience.


Abstract

People who inject drugs (PWID) experience a range of barriers to HIV treatment and access to care. The Kenyan government and community-based organisations have sought to develop HIV care for PWID. A principal approach to delivery in Kenya is to provide care from clinics serving the general population, and for this to be linked to support from community-based organisations.
providing harm reduction outreach. This study explores accounts of PWID accessing care in Kenya to identify care barriers and facilitators. PWID accounts were collected within a qualitative longitudinal study. In-depth interviews with PWID living with HIV (n=44) are combined with interviews with other PWID, care providers and community observation. Results show that some PWID are able to access care successfully, while other PWID report challenges. The results focus on three principal themes to give insights into these experiences: the hardship of addiction and the costs of care, the silencing of HIV in the community, and then discrimination and support in the clinic. Some PWID are able to overcome, often with social and outreach support, barriers to clinic access; for others, the challenges of addiction, hardship, stigma and discrimination are too constraining. We discuss how clinics serving the general population could be further adapted to increase access. Clinic-based care, even with community links, may, however, be fundamentally challenging for some PWID to access. Additional strategies to develop stand-alone care for PWID and also decentralize HIV treatment and care to community settings and involve peers in delivery should be considered.


Abstract

Youth, as our future leaders, will spearhead global efforts to improve health, education, economic development, and other outcomes. In October 2012, the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) launched the Youth in Development Policy, the first of its kind at USAID. The Policy recognizes that youth leadership is one of the many critical pathways for improved health and development for youth. However, there is not much knowledge available about what constitutes effective youth leadership programming, particularly where these programs relate to public health initiatives. On the other hand, many programs conduct one off workshops on youth leadership without providing good follow-up, mentors, or an enabling environment for young people to apply their leadership skills. USAID, in collaboration with the Leadership, Management and Governance (LMG) Project, conducted a global review to identify and examine effective youth leadership programs, models, and strategies from around the world that have demonstrated positive outcomes for youth, organizations, and communities, and contribute to health service delivery improvements.

23. Sex Education in the Digital Era


Abstract:

Young people all over the world are keen to learn about sex and relationships but are not finding the information they seek in their immediate environment. The internet provides them with a welcome alternative. In response to the rapid increased connectivity of young people, international organizations that work on comprehensive sex education for young people have moved online. While there are new opportunities to reach young people in these digital spaces, sex educators also encounter restrictions. They face the immense power of new supranational commercial digital gatekeepers such as Facebook and Google and must respond to digitally mediated sexual and gender-based violence. This article introduces a special issue of the IDS Bulletin on experiences with internet-based sex education in 14 countries. The authors explore how familiar forms of
exclusion and inequality, as well as empathy and solidarity, manifest themselves in these new digital spaces in highly diverse national settings.

24. **New Digital Ways of Delivering Sex Education: A Practice Perspective**


**Abstract**

This article explores new, under-researched genres of sex education for adolescents in sub-Saharan Africa resulting from access to the internet through mobile phones. It examines the history of developing online health information platforms tailored for youth through the experiences of digital developers and the reflections of users. Unlike traditional sources of sex education, the internet offers portability, anonymity, informality, 'personalised' responses, and the ability to interact with peers who are not local or part of face-to-face networks. This article draws on a literature review, complemented by qualitative and quantitative material generated by Every1Mobile in its production of online health communities for young people. We found massive enthusiasm for online sex education in Africa but little knowledge about how young people use, perceive and respond to this. We recommend that practitioners, funders and researchers invest more in understanding not only the many fantastic opportunities associated with digital sexual and reproductive health and rights (SRHR) information, but also the interwoven contradictions, challenges and potential for misuse.

25. **Digital Pathways to Sex Education**


Sex and relationships have a big impact on the lives of most young people. However, various gatekeepers in countries around the world restrict reliable information on sexual health that presents a positive take on pleasure and relationships. Therefore, online sex education is of vital importance for young people. Using online traffic data and information on operational realities from Love Matters – an online provider of sex education on web, mobile and social media platforms in China, Egypt, Kenya, Mexico and India – this article contributes to an understanding of how online information about sexual health education in different national contexts is accessed by users and restricted by gatekeepers. Our findings show the importance of understanding audiences, visible traditional and invisible online gatekeepers, and working with local and supranational commercial organizations for effective outreach and provision of sex education.

**Economic Growth, Education and Workforce Development**

26. **Assessment of Integrated Workforce Development and Sexual and Reproductive Health Interventions with Recommendations for the Future**

Abstract

USAID’s YouthPower Action project carried out research to explore programs that seek to address both sexual and reproductive and workforce development to better understand the nature and impact of such integrated programs. This report, the Assessment of Integrated Workforce Development and Sexual and Reproductive Health Interventions with Recommendations for the Future helps development practitioners understand how projects have integrated activities in these two sectors and which features and combinations of features of those integrated programs have the most positive impact on youth.

27. **Key Soft Skills for Cross-Sectoral Youth Outcomes**


**Abstract**

A growing body of evidence recognizes the importance of soft skills in predicting long-term life outcomes, including labor market outcomes as well as social and health behaviors. Soft skills refer to a broad set of skills, behaviors, and personal qualities that enable people to effectively navigate their environment, relate well with others, perform well, and achieve their goals. These skills are applicable across sectors and complement the acquisition of other skills such as technical and academic skills. Although the returns to cognitive and technical skills have long been recognized, recent literature suggests that soft skills rival cognitive skills in their ability to predict positive outcomes. Moreover, evidence suggests that soft skills are more malleable than cognitive skills among adolescents and youth adults.

This paper seeks to identify which soft skills enjoy the most support for predicting positive outcomes for youth across the three fields of workforce development, violence prevention, and SRH, and thus, should be cultivated as part of strategies to create those positive outcomes. Skills that emerge as enjoying the most support across sectors are recommended as targets for youth development programming employing a common skills approach. This knowledge can inform and guide the major investments that USAID and other funders make.

28. **The Impact of Connectivity in Africa: Grand Visions and the Mirage of Inclusive Digital Development**


**Abstract**

Corporations, development organisations and governments have launched ambitious programmes to ‘connect the unconnected’, reasoning that this creates economic growth and inclusive development. This paper contrasts these actors’ discourses with evidence from academic research. The evidence suggests a highly uneven economic impact of Internet connectivity across geographies and social strata. The analyzed sources of discourse (African ICT policies and reports by international organisations) instead propose Grand Visions of connectivity, attributing a self-evident positive, widespread, and transformational impact to the Internet. We discuss technological
determinism, a contextual modernism, and optimistic simplism as underlying this contrast, calling
for more reflexivity towards the opportunities of 'digital development'.

29. **Can arts-based interventions enhance labor market outcomes among youth? Evidence from a randomized trial in Rio de Janeiro**


**Abstract**

Using a randomized trial, we look at employment and earnings of a youth training program in Brazil that uses arts- and theater-based pedagogic tools. The evidence we present shows youth benefit in the medium term, displaying economically large employment and earnings impacts. We find no systematic evidence of broad impacts on socio-emotional skills, although the program appears to develop some skills related to self-control. We also find some evidence to suggest that youth who have higher initial socio-emotional skills may benefit more from the program. We argue that the estimated labor market impacts are due to a combination of both skills formation and signaling of higher-quality workers to employers.

30. **Interventions to Improve the Labour Market Outcomes of Youth: A Systematic Review of Training, Entrepreneurship Promotion, Employment Services and Subsidized Employment Interventions**


**Background**

Today’s labour market is a challenging sector for young people. Over 73 million youth are currently unemployed, and many more are affected by vulnerable employment and working poverty. Youth remain highly susceptible to changing patterns in the world of work and experience slow and difficult transitions to stable jobs. What works to support them in the labour market? This is one of the most common and pressing questions posed by policymakers and practitioners today. Yet few overview or cross-country studies review and analyze the impact of Active Labour Market Programmes (ALMPs) on youth labour market outcomes.

**Objective**

The aim of this systematic review was to investigate the impact of youth employment interventions on the labour market outcomes of young people. The review looked at the available evaluation evidence in a systematic and rigorous manner in order to fill the knowledge gaps relating to the effectiveness of the various types of youth-targeted interventions in different contexts. The systematic review is registered with the Campbell Collaboration, supported by the International Initiative for Impact Evaluation (3ie), and conducted by the ILO (International Labor Organization) in collaboration with the World Bank and the Rheinisch-Westfälisches Institut für Wirtschaftsforschung (RWI).

**Methods**

This systematic review, and discussion paper synthesize empirical evidence on the labour market outcomes of youth employment interventions worldwide. Interventions were comprised of skills
training, entrepreneurship promotion, employment services, and subsidized employment. Outcomes of interest included employment, earnings and business performance. A comprehensive systematic search for relevant evidence across more than 70 sources, using search terms in English, French, German, Portuguese and Spanish, identified over 30,000 records that were screened according to the review’s inclusion criteria. For the selected studies that met the inclusion criteria, treatment effect estimates were coded and standardized mean differences (SMDs) were computed. The search process was completed in January 2015. The analysis explores the interventions’ overall effectiveness and the roles that context, evaluation and programme design and implementation play in determining impact.

**Results**

The systematic review and meta-analysis is based on evidence from 113 counterfactual-based impact evaluations of 107 active labour market programmes in 31 low-, middle- and high-income countries. The ILO Evidence Gap Map provides an overview of the available evidence by type of active labour market programme and labour market outcomes. Meta-analysis methods were employed to synthesize the evidence, based on 2,259 imputed effect sizes (IES). Overall, empirical results indicate positive treatment effects that are statistically different from zero on labour market outcomes. In other words, investing in young people through active labour market programmes pays off with positive impacts, particularly on employment and earnings outcomes. This impact does not take effect immediately and is more pronounced among low- and middle-income countries than among high-income countries.

**Implications**

Active measures to support the (re)integration of young women and men into the labour market succeed in enhancing employment and earnings outcomes, and these measures have potential to increase human capital and employment prospects in the longterm. The evidence suggests that the type and design of youth employment intervention is important and is strongly influenced by the income level of the country in which it occurs. Programme evaluations generally show larger effect sizes in low- and middle-income countries than in high-income countries. Multi-pronged measures are shown to be effective in tackling the many barriers to success facing youth in the labour market, particularly in low- and middle-income countries, where skills training and entrepreneurship interventions have prompted significant improvements in youth employment and earnings outcomes. Targeting toward disadvantaged youth and for features such as participant profiling, participant engagement mechanisms and incentives for service providers are positively correlated with a larger magnitude of impact. The results appear robust in terms of the quality of the underlying evidence. The review did not find differential treatment effects by gender or age.

31. The Private Sector and Youth Skills and Employment Programs in Low- and Middle-Income Countries


**Abstract**

Understanding the implications, challenges and synergies of how the private sector engages in the youth employment arena is a key element in understanding how we can move forward in addressing youth employment challenges.

Public interventions to improve youth labor market outcomes are motivated primarily by the presence of market failures as well as equity concerns. Active labor Market Programs (ALMPs) are
designed to overcome these market failures, but often suffer in turn from “government failure.” Private sector involvement in youth skills and employment take many forms but can be characterized as variations of public-private partnerships (PPPs). The motivations for firms and employers to become involved in youth employment programs will vary depending on the nature of the firm, with important implications for policies. A range of factors constrain firms’ participation in youth employment initiatives, including costs, externalities, and lack of information. Turning to evidence of effectiveness, evaluations indicate that training interventions that closely involve employers to ensure they are demand driven yield benefits with regard to youth employment or incomes. The use of private (for-profit) providers to deliver TVET and other job skills training in a managed competitive framework can improve efficiency, quality, and coverage.

Despite the benefits of private sector involvement, engaging employers in training and other youth employment interventions has proved to be a challenge in many cases. Problems of signaling acquired skills to potential employers are particularly acute for informal training.

While numerous questions for research emerge from this review, an overarching conclusion is that more evaluations of a range of programs are needed.


Abstract

Globally, there are 600 million adolescent girls in developing countries who face challenges to access education and health services, and who too often face persistent discrimination and violence. They frequently have limited opportunities to gain the education, knowledge, resources, and skills that can lead to economic advancement. Programs and interventions that seek to expand those opportunities, such as those delivering financial education, can be critical levers for change in adolescent girls’ lives; helping them to gain independence, establish good financial habits, and improve their future prospects for decent work. Helping girls gain control of the decisions that affect them can help break the intergenerational cycle of poverty.

Social education may include life skills, interpersonal networking, peer relationships, communication, and personality development. Economic empowerment allows adolescent girls to maximize their own opportunities, providing them with the knowledge and skills to take advantage of the choices available to them as a result. At the same time, they are given the power and voice to determine how to do so by influencing the individual, social, and political context in the world they live in. This includes access to, knowledge of, and control over their economic livelihoods, assets, and skills. A female is economically empowered when she has both the ability to succeed and advance financially and the power to make and act on economic decisions.

This improved financial capability, and encouragement of saving in particular, can positively influence educational attitudes, health outcomes, social protection and entrepreneurial success. Through both direct and indirect pathways, financial education should be able to contribute to building a solid foundation for economic empowerment, ultimately leading to positive, long-term societal change and economic growth.
33. **Credit for Low-Income Students and Access to and Academic Performance in Higher Education in Colombia: A Regression Discontinuity (Paywall)**


**Abstract**

This study evaluates the impact of a national-level subsidized loan program, ACCES (Access with Quality to Higher Education), on a number of higher education outcomes (i.e., increase in enrollment rates, decrease in dropout rates, and increase in academic performance) of low-income students. The program intends to tackle Colombia’s wide disparities in access to postsecondary education by socioeconomic status and by region. We use national-level data along with a regression discontinuity design (RDD) to estimate the impact of the program. We provide intent to treat and the local average treatment effect estimates of the program on enrollment and dropout rates, and on academic performance. Our RDD design takes advantage of the fact that the beneficiaries of the program are selected based on a government-mandated procedure to rank individuals at the “department” (similar to geographic regions in the U.S.) level based on a cutoff score in their high school exit exams. The results confirm that the program has been effective in terms of increasing the potential number of low-income students at the margins who would have enrolled in college, decreasing the number of students who dropped out, and increasing their academic outcomes. Nonetheless, the effects of the credit program on enrollment exhibit the largest magnitude and with clearly positive heterogeneous impact on the poorest applicants. The results are less compelling for dropout, yet in the expected direction.

34. **Improving Education Outcomes in Developing Countries: Knowledge Gaps, and Policy Implications**


**Abstract**

Improvements in empirical research standards for credible identification of the causal impact of education policies on education outcomes have led to a significant increase in the body of evidence available on improving education outcomes in developing countries. This chapter aims to synthesize this evidence, interpret their results, and discuss the reasons why some interventions appear to be effective and others are not, with the ultimate goal of drawing implications for both research and policy. Interpreting the evidence for generalizable lessons is challenging because of variation across contexts, duration and quality of studies, and the details of specific interventions studied. Nevertheless, some broad patterns do emerge. Demand-side interventions that increase the immediate returns to (or reduce household costs of) school enrollment, or that increase students’ returns on effort invested, are broadly effective at increasing time in school and learning outcomes, but vary considerably in cost-effectiveness. Many expensive “standard” school inputs are often not very effective at improving outcomes, though some specific inputs (which are often less expensive) are. Interventions that focus on improved pedagogy (especially supplemental instruction to children lagging behind grade level competencies) are particularly effective, and so are interventions that improve school governance and teacher accountability. Our broad policy message is that the evidence points to several promising ways in which the efficiency of education spending in developing countries can be improved by pivoting public expenditure from less cost-effective to
more cost-effective ways of achieving the same objectives. We conclude by documenting areas where more research is needed, and offer suggestions on the public goods and standards needed to make it easier for decentralized and uncoordinated research studies to be compared across contexts.

35. **Key Soft Skills for Cross-Sectoral Youth Outcomes**


A growing body of evidence recognizes the importance of soft skills in predicting long-term life outcomes, including labor market outcomes as well as social and health behaviors. Soft skills refer to a broad set of skills, behaviors, and personal qualities that enable people to effectively navigate their environment, relate well with others, perform well, and achieve their goals. These skills are applicable across sectors and complement the acquisition of other skills such as technical and academic skills. Although the returns to cognitive and technical skills have long been recognized, recent literature suggests that soft skills rival cognitive skills in their ability to predict positive outcomes. Moreover, evidence suggests that soft skills are more malleable than cognitive skills among adolescents and youth adults.

This paper seeks to identify which soft skills enjoy the most support for predicting positive outcomes for youth across the three fields of workforce development, violence prevention, and SRH, and thus, should be cultivated as part of strategies to create those positive outcomes. Skills that emerge as enjoying the most support across sectors are recommended as targets for youth development programming employing a common skills approach. This knowledge can inform and guide the major investments that USAID and other funders make.

36. **Bridging the Skills Gap: Insights from Employers, Educators, and Youth in Latin America and the Caribbean**


The authors of this report synthesized findings from a 10-month investigation of the secondary education school-to-work transition in Colombia, the Dominican Republic and El Salvador. FHI 360 and the Results for Development (R4D) developed this study to advance an understanding of the region’s growing “skills gap” and to identify innovative models and mechanisms that promote youth employability. The report draws from in-country interviews with students, teachers, employers and public officials to connect issues regarding formal education and workforce development.

The authors address these key questions in the skills gap debate:

Which skills are needed for employability in Latin America and the Caribbean?

What skills do students currently acquire in the formal education system?

What innovative delivery models are currently used to improve skill acquisition and youth employability?

37. **Uhusiano Design for Learning**

Abstract

Kenya’s post-colonial education system, like many in sub-Saharan Africa, has endured many challenges. High enrollment in primary schools is often coupled with low completion rates in secondary and postsecondary education. In this article we examine some of the processes that may lead to the disempowerment and disenfranchisement of youth in Kenyan schools, and report on a new approach that we call “Uhusiano Design for Learning”. Uhusiano Design focuses on three aspects of learner-centered pedagogy: multiple teachers (which creates an egalitarian sense of togetherness among participants), hands-on learning, and confidence. Longitudinal data from a non-formal education implementation of Uhusiano Design indicates that the strategies and approaches may support traditionally marginalized learners in and out of Kenya’s formal education system.

38. **Employer Voices, Employer Demands, and Implications for Public Skills Development Policy Connecting the Labor and Education Sectors (Paywall)**


Abstract:

Educators believe that they are adequately preparing youth for the labor market, while at the same time, employers lament the students' lack of skills. A possible source of the mismatch in perceptions is that employers and educators have different understandings of the types of skills valued in the labor market. Using economics and psychology literature to define four skills sets -- socio-emotional, higher-order cognitive, basic cognitive, and technical -- this paper reviews the literature that quantitatively measures employer skill demand, as reported in a preference survey. A sample of 27 studies reveals remarkable consistency across the world in the skills demanded by employers. While employers value all skill sets, there is a greater demand for socio-emotional skills and higher-order cognitive skills than for basic cognitive or technical skills. These results are robust across region, industry, occupation, and education level. Employers perceive that the greatest skills gaps are in socio-emotional and higher-order cognitive skills. These findings suggest the need to re-conceptualize the public sector's role in preparing children for a future labor market. Namely, technical training is not equivalent to job training; instead, a broad range of skills, many of which are best taught long before labor market entry, should be included in school curricula from the earliest ages. The skills most demanded by employers -- higher-order cognitive skills and socio-emotional skills -- are largely learned or refined in adolescence, arguing for a general education well into secondary school until these skills are formed. Finally, the public sector can provide programming and incentives to non-school actors, namely parents and employers, to encourage them to invest in the skills development process.


Abstract

Improving children's learning and development in conflict-affected countries is critically important for breaking the intergenerational transmission of violence and poverty. Yet there is currently a stunning lack of rigorous evidence as to whether and how programs to improve learning and
development in conflict-affected countries actually work to bolster children's academic learning and socio-emotional development. This study tests a theory of change derived from the fields of developmental psychopathology and social ecology about how a school-based universal socioemotional learning program, the International Rescue Committee's Learning to Read in a Healing Classroom (LRHC), impacts children's learning and development. The study was implemented in three conflict-affected provinces of the Democratic Republic of the Congo and employed a cluster-randomized waitlist control design to estimate impact. Using multilevel structural equation modeling techniques, we found support for the central pathways in the LRHC theory of change. Specifically, we found that LRHC differentially impacted dimensions of the quality of the school and classroom environment at the end of the first year of the intervention, and that in turn these dimensions of quality were differentially associated with child academic and socioemotional outcomes. Future implications and directions are discussed.

40. Reducing Prejudice and Promoting Positive Intergroup Attitudes among Elementary School Children in the Context of the Israeli–Palestinian Conflict


Abstract

The current investigation tested the efficacy of the Extended Class Exchange Program (ECEP) in reducing prejudicial attitudes. Three hundred and twenty-two 3rd and 4th grade students from both Israeli-Jewish and Israeli-Palestinian schools in the ethnically mixed city of Jaffa were randomly assigned to either intervention or control classes. Members of the intervention classes engaged in ECEP's activities, whereas members of the control classes engaged in a social-emotional learning program. The program's outcomes were measured a week before, immediately after, and 15 months following termination. Results showed that the ECEP decreased stereotyping and discriminatory tendencies toward the other group and increased positive feelings and readiness for social contact with the other group upon program termination. Additionally, the effects of the ECEP were generalized to an ethnic group (i.e., Ethiopians) with whom the ECEP's participants did not have any contact. Finally, the ECEP retained its significant effect 15 months after the program's termination, despite the serious clashes between Israel and the Palestinians that occurred during that time. This empirical support for the ECEP's utility in reducing prejudice makes it potentially applicable to other areas in the world, especially those that are characterized by ethnic tension and violent conflicts.

41. The Effects of College Students’ Positive Thinking, Learning Motivation and Self-Regulation Through a Self-Reflection Intervention in Taiwan (Paywall)


Abstract

This quasi-experimental study examined the effects of a self-reflection intervention on college (college in this article refers to university-level education) students’ positive thinking, learning motivation and self-regulation in Taiwan. One hundred and two college students were selected to participate in an 18-week intervention, forming the experimental group (EG), which emphasized providing main lecture, role-play, self-reflection activity, group discussion and group work. Another
179 college students from two other courses were selected as a comparison group. This study showed that supportive, resourced discussion with peers and instructor, self-reflection activities and assignment as a facilitative agent improved the EG students’ positive thinking, learning motivation and self-regulation. In addition, three structural equation models revealed that positive thinking had a strong and direct relation to Taiwanese college students’ pretest learning motivation \((\beta = .85)\) and self-regulation \((\beta = .77)\); learning motivation had a strong and direct relation to students’ pretest positive thinking \((\beta = .86)\) and self-regulation \((\beta = .81)\); and self-regulation had a strong and direct relation to students’ pretest positive thinking \((\beta = .83)\) and learning motivation \((\beta = .86)\). Instructional implications and research recommendations are discussed.

42. **Adolescent Peer Relations and Socioemotional Development in Latin America: Translating International Theory into Local Research (Paywall)**


**Abstract**

Peer relations constitute a main developmental context for adolescents. Peers offer an instance for identity definition and set the norms of acceptable and valued characteristics, behaviors, and attitudes, representing a societal model that allows and restrains avenues for adolescents’ socioemotional development. The present article departs from these considerations to review research on adolescents’ peer relations in Latin America from a socio-emotional perspective. First, approaches to adolescence are discussed, with a main focus on attachment and identity theories, based on a bio ecological framework. Then, a review of research in Latin America on friendships, school climate, and intergroup relations is presented. The discussion addresses the tension between theories and evidence generated in developed societies and highlights the particularities of Latin American youth, stressing the need for collecting local data.

43. **How do Youth Skills Development Initiatives Ensure Effective Targeting, Recruitment, and Retention?**

YouthPower Learning (2016). *How Do Youth Skills Development Initiatives Ensure Targeting, Recruitment, and Retention?*

**Abstract**

This technical brief explores strategies used by skills-based youth livelihood programs to target, recruit, and retain youth beneficiaries for optimal impact, providing concrete examples of how program implementers have addressed these challenges, and documenting some lessons and best practices.

44. **Association of Sexual Risk Behaviour With Previous HIV Testing Among Voluntary HIV Counseling and Testing Clients in Kigali, Rwanda**


**Abstract**

With increased coverage of voluntary HIV counselling and testing (VCT) in Rwanda and a greater focus on repeat testing of key populations, it is important to understand whether the right clients
are returning for repeat testing and if repeat testing is effective at reducing risk. We assessed the association between repeat testing and recent sexual risk behaviours among 1852 first-time or repeat HIV testing clients in Kigali who had had sex, using data from a cross-sectional survey. Repeat testing was associated with being female, older and type of occupation. Multivariable analyses indicate that individuals who tested for HIV 1-2 times (aOR = 1.52, 95% CI: 1.08, 2.15) and 3+ times (aOR = 1.51, 95% CI: 1.06, 2.17) previously were more likely to report recent unprotected sex. Those with 3+ previous tests were more likely to have recently had multiple sexual partners (aOR = 2.19, 95% CI: 1.22, 3.92). However, a significant decrease in HIV prevalence is shown as individuals receive more HIV tests in their lifetime (p < 0.001). These findings show that individuals who report high-risk behaviours are returning for repeat tests. However, VCT may not be successful at addressing certain sexual risk behaviours. Therefore, more intensive counselling or additional HIV prevention services may be needed.

45. National HIV Care Continua for Key Populations (Paywall)


Abstract

We reviewed published national HIV care continua for men who have sex with men (MSM), people who inject drugs (PWID), and female sex workers (FSWs) to track progress toward the 90-90-90 target. We searched the Internet, PubMed, surveillance reports, United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS country reports, US President’s Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief country/regional operational plans, and conference abstracts for the continua and graded them on quality. We found 12 continua for MSM, 7 for PWID, and 5 for FSW from 12 countries. HIV diagnosis, antiretroviral therapy coverage, and viral suppression varied between (1) 5% and 85%, 2% and 73%, and 1% and 72%, respectively for MSM; (2) 54% and 96%, 14% and 80%, and 8% and 68%, respectively for PWID; and (3) 27% and 63%, 8% and 16%, and 2% and 14%, respectively for FSW. Two countries, using data from national cohorts, were high quality. There are limited key population continua in the public domain. Of the few available, none have achieved 90-90-90. Improved monitoring and evaluation of key population continua is necessary to achieve the 90-90-90 target.

46. Systematic review of mobile health behavioral interventions to improve uptake of HIV testing for vulnerable and key populations


Abstract

This systematic narrative review examined the empirical evidence on the effectiveness of mobile health (mHealth) behavioural interventions designed to increase the uptake of HIV testing among vulnerable and key populations. Methods MEDLINE/PubMed, Embase, Web of Science, and Global Health electronic databases were searched. Studies were eligible for inclusion if they were published between 2005 and 2015, evaluated an mHealth intervention, and reported an outcome relating to HIV testing. We also reviewed the bibliographies of retrieved studies for other relevant citations. The methodological rigor of selected articles was assessed, and narrative analyses were used to synthesize findings from mixed methodologies.
Results

A total of seven articles met the inclusion criteria. Most mHealth interventions employed a text-messaging feature and were conducted in middle- and high-income countries. The methodological rigor was moderate among studies. The current literature suggests that mHealth interventions can have significant positive effects on HIV testing initiation among vulnerable and key populations, as well as the general public. In some cases, null results were observed. Qualitative themes relating to the use of mobile technologies to increase HIV testing included the benefits of having low-cost, confidential, and motivational communication. Reported barriers included cellular network restrictions, poor linkages with physical testing services, and limited knowledge of appropriate text-messaging dose.

Discussion

mHealth interventions may prove beneficial in reducing the proportion of undiagnosed persons living with HIV, particularly among vulnerable and key populations. However, more rigorous and tailored interventions are needed to assess the effectiveness of widespread use.

47. Preparing Youth to Thrive: Methodology and Findings from SEL Challenge


Abstract

The SEL Challenge Technical Report highlights the methodology and findings of a two year study.

The SEL Challenge was designed in pursuit of two ambitious goals: to identify promising practices for building social and emotional learning (SEL) skills with vulnerable adolescents, and to develop technical supports for use of these SEL practices at scale in thousands of out-of-school time (OST) settings. The study design included a qualitative methodology, expert practitioners, and performance studies at each of eight exemplary programs. The products of the Challenge – standards for SEL practice and the suite of SEL performance measures – are designed to help OST programs focus deeply on SEL practice, assess their strengths, and improve the quality and effectiveness of their services using a lower-stakes continuous improvement approach.

By focusing systematically at a granular level of adult and youth behavior, the Challenge content supports use in practice-oriented settings and systems -- youth programs, school day classrooms, mentorships, residential treatment, apprenticeships, workplace, families -- where the qualities of adult-youth interaction and learning are a primary concern. We hope that local policy makers and funders will use the Challenge as a template for identifying the exemplary SEL services already available in their communities and make sure that they are adequately recognized, resourced, and replicated.
Democracy, Conflict and Humanitarian Assistance


Abstract

The war in northern Uganda involving Joseph Kony and his Lord's Resistance Army (LRA) created over 20 years of terror and turmoil. Tens of thousands of youth were either abducted as child soldiers and/or sex slaves, or they were placed in internally displaced peoples' (IDP) camps, where they lived with inadequate social provisions such as food, health care, education, and safety.

Our study used interviews and focus groups to learn about how these youth were coping post-war. In particular, we focused on youth with positive purpose and goals to understand ways in which they were supported to hold fast to positive development and life goals. Findings indicated that rehabilitation, financial support for education, role models, and sports/arts have helped many youth who experienced war in northern Uganda find pro-social purposes in their lives.

49. Barriers and Facilitators to the Implementation of Interventions to Prevent Youth Violence in Latin America


Abstract

Youth violence in Latin America is an important public health problem. However, the evidence from preventive programs within the region to address this problem is limited. Identifying context-specific factors that facilitate or hinder the success of interventions is necessary to guarantee the successful implementation of new preventive strategies. We present a systematic review and synthesis of qualitative studies to identify factors affecting the implementation of programs to prevent youth violence in Latin America. We searched 10 electronic databases and websites of international institutions. The quality of the studies was assessed using the critical appraisal skills program checklist, while the certainty of the findings of the synthesis was assessed using the certainty of the qualitative evidence approach. We included eight papers describing five programs in Argentina, Venezuela, Peru, El Salvador, and Mexico. Most of the factors affecting the implementation of programs were aspects related to features of the programs and social/political constraints. The synthesis suggests that future programs can benefit from having a multidisciplinary and/or multisectoral approach involving different key players. At the same time, potential strategies for avoiding problems related to such active engagement should be planned via promoting effective channels for communication and supervision. The review also suggests the importance of increasing awareness and motivation toward the problem of youth violence among relevant agencies and stakeholders. While the limited volume and quality of the literature impact on the ability to draw conclusions, the results could be useful for new programs being designed and the ones seeking to be adapted from other contexts.
50. **Dream Teens: Adolescents-Led Participatory Project in Portugal in the Context of the Economic Recession**


**Abstract**

This paper describes the implementation process of a nationwide project to enhance young people’s participation and active citizenship in the context of Portugal’s economic recession. This project used an innovative Positive Youth Development approach that engaged Portuguese youth (aged 11-18 years) through social media tools to facilitate their civic engagement and development. Participants from all over the country were empowered (1) to design and conduct research activities on topics of their choice and about their life contexts and (2) to create ways to improve youth civic participation in their communities, while developing supportive interactions with adults and peers. Overall, youth were engaged in their activities, felt their voices were heard, and felt that they were viewed as experts of their own wellbeing and living contexts. Youth research actions and preliminary findings were then compiled in a set of recommendations that was formally received by a high commissioner of the Ministry of Health.

51. **Sustainable youth community development in Egypt**


**Abstract**

Egypt passed through a critical political transitions and revolutions starting from early 2011 until the arrival of the democratically elected President Abdel-Fattah El-Sisi. The primary slogans of protestors during Egypt’s first 2011 Revolution were ‘bread, freedom, and justice for all (national dignity)’. These very same issues were addressed previously at the Millennium Summit in September 2000, when the largest gathering of world leaders in history adopted the UN Millennium Declaration, and set up the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), proceeded by the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). Both the MDGs and SDGs aim to extend the rights of each person to quality healthcare, basic education, shelter, and security. Although achieving the Development Goals is a top priority on the agenda of Egyptian policymakers, some of the goals have not been achieved. In addition, the global economic crisis since 2008 has imposed new challenges and restrictions that decelerated achievement within the agreed time frame set by the United Nations.

Egypt has strong potential growth possibilities, a significant human resource base, and a substantial quantity of un-recycled wastes that could be directed toward sustainable development.

The intention of this paper was to discuss and propose a methodology, which promotes a productive workforce, and addresses environmental concerns in aims of supporting the UN Millennium Declaration.

52. **Young People’s Participation in Peacebuilding: Practice Note**


This document is the product of a collaborative effort led by the Inter-Agency Network on Youth Development (IANYD) Working Group on Youth and Peacebuilding, which includes 40 partner
organizations primarily from civil society and the United Nations. This Practice Note summarizes the situation of youth in conflict-affected environments, argues for the importance of investing in youth and peacebuilding, addresses existing assumptions and theories of change regarding youth and peacebuilding, provides overviews of key issues, highlights a variety of promising practices in different sectors and thematic areas that have undergone some level of evaluation or review, and offers a set of overarching recommendations for donors, policy-makers and planners.


Mercy Corps undertook a rigorous impact evaluation of a 5-year stability-focused youth program in Somalia known as the Somali Youth Leaders Initiative (SYLI) and analyzed the impact of two program components on youth propensity towards political violence.

The research compared the impact of the following two components of the SYLI program: formal secondary education and civic engagement activities. Using survey data from Somaliland--where the program has been implemented the longest—they compared attitudes and reported violent behaviors among youth in the program and outside of it. In addition, they conducted in-depth interviews with teachers, community leaders, government officials and youth. The study found that although the provision of secondary education through the SYLI program reduced the likelihood of youth participating in violence by 16%, it increased support for political violence by 11%. However, the combination of both secondary formal education and civic engagement through the SYLI program reduced the likelihood of youth both participating in (by 13%) and supporting (by 20%) political violence.

Taken as a whole, the findings signal that education by itself does not address the underlying drivers of potentially destabilizing actions such as support for political violence. Education is important, but just the first step. What matters to youth is not just having an opportunity to learn but also being able to use their skills to influence their lives, their communities and their nation. Hence, the study concludes that to reduce violence, youth development programs must address both the lack of skills and the lack of opportunities that hinder youth from succeeding.

Multisector Research

54. Creating SPACE through Africa Yoga Project: A Qualitative Study (Paywall)


Abstract

This qualitative analysis examined teachers’ experiences of the Africa Yoga Project (AYP), a mentoring-oriented yoga program for fostering resilience among individuals and groups impacted by poverty and trauma. Interviews conducted with AYP teachers were coded using qualitative content analysis. Themes demonstrated that AYP benefited participants by creating S.P.A.C.E. (Safety and stability, Personal growth, Action, Cultural diversity, and Empowerment). The findings illustrated ways in which this program fostered individual and community wellness and positive engagement. Implications are discussed including the potential for providing yoga as a low-cost,
sustainable, and effective intervention to promote health, economic self-sufficiency, and community engagement in diverse settings with limited resources.

55. **Evaluation of an Adolescent Development Program for Girls in Tanzania**


**Abstract**

This paper evaluates a program targeted to adolescent girls in Tanzania that aims to empower them economically as well as socially. The program was found to be highly successful in Uganda in terms of economic, health, and social outcomes. In contrast, this evaluation finds that the program did not have any notable effect on most of these outcomes in the Tanzanian setting. The evaluation also measures the impact of the program with and without microcredit services. The findings show that the addition of microcredit improves the take-up of the program and savings of the participants. The paper explores programmatic implementation information that helps explain the marked difference in outcomes between Uganda and Tanzania. This research shows that layering additional microfinance services onto an adolescent development program can be an effective tool to attain greater inclusion of youth in financial services and brings out important issues of the generalizability of the research findings.

**Other/Youth**

56. **Systematic Review of Positive Youth Development in Low- and Middle-Income Countries**


**Abstract**

The Systematic Review presents the results of a rigorous analysis of existing evidence of PYD in LMICs. It expands the knowledge base on the impacts and measurement of PYD programs and provides valuable insights for international implementing organizations, researchers, and donors.

The Systematic Review documents how PYD approaches have been applied in LMICs, and what the evidence shows about the effectiveness of such approaches. It provides:

- A comprehensive framework to understanding PYD in LMICs;
- Findings of how PYD has been implemented and areas in need of further investigation;
- The latest evidence of what works in achieving positive youth-focused outcomes in LMICs;
- Lessons learned that international implementing organizations can integrate into practice;
- Recommendations to inform future program design, implementation, and evaluation efforts.

This systematic-review drew upon peer-reviewed and grey literature published in English, Spanish, and French after 1989. Using a systematic search strategy for peer-reviewed papers, a purposive search in repositories and a survey disseminated to youth-serving organizations, development agencies, and universities, we identified 21,576 peer-reviewed papers and 3,705 grey
The authors considered programs to be “PYD” if they engaged young people (10-29 years of age) and incorporated at least two outcomes within the PYD framework. The quality of the evidence presented in papers was assessed by reviewing their respective research design, measures, and analysis. One-third of all papers reported results from randomized controlled trials (RCTs). The review also included papers reporting other research designs, such as quasi-experimental, pre-post non-experimental, mixed methods, qualitative, and post-test quantitative or qualitative designs.

57. **Effectiveness of Positive Youth Development Interventions: A Meta-Analysis of Randomized Controlled Trials (Paywall)**


**Abstract**

Positive youth development is thought to be essential to the prevention of adolescent risk behavior and the promotion of thriving. This meta-analysis examined the effects of positive youth development interventions in promoting positive outcomes and reducing risk behavior. Ten databases and grey literature were scanned using a pre-defined search strategy. We included studies that focused on young people aged 10-19 years, implemented a positive youth development intervention, were outside school hours, and utilized a randomized controlled design. Twenty-four studies, involving 23,258 participants, met the inclusion criteria and were included in the analysis. The impact of the interventions on outcomes including behavioral problems, sexual risk behavior, academic achievement, pro-social behavior and psychological adjustment were assessed. Positive youth development interventions had a small but significant effect on academic achievement and psychological adjustment. No significant effects were found for sexual risk behaviors, problem behavior or positive social behaviors. Intervention effects were independent of program characteristics and participant age. Low-risk young people derived more benefit from positive youth development interventions than high-risk youth. The studies examined had several methodological flaws, which weakened the ability to draw conclusions.

Substantial progress has been made in the theoretical understanding of youth development in the past two decades. This progress needs to be matched in the intervention literature through the use of high-quality evaluation research of positive youth development programs.

58. **Measuring positive and negative aspects of youth behavior: Development and validation of the Adolescent Functioning Scale (Paywall)**


**Abstract**

This paper outlines the development and validation of the Adolescent Functioning Scale (AFS) in an Australian sample of parents of young people aged 11–18 years (N = 278). The AFS, a parent self-report measure, was designed to assess problem behavior and positive development in adolescents. Principal components analysis produced a 33-item measure comprising four subscales: Positive Development, Oppositional Defiant Behavior, Antisocial Behavior and Emotional Difficulties. Convergent validity was established via correlations between the AFS and established measures of adolescent functioning and parenting, and discriminant validity was shown through no association.
between the AFS and a measure of technology use. Internal consistency for the subscales was high (H = .82–.92 for different age groups), as was test-retest reliability (r = .77–.86). The study indicated that the AFS is a potentially valuable tool for assessing levels of problem behaviors and positive development in adolescents.

59. **Adolescent Peer Relations and Socioemotional Development in Latin America: Translating International Theory into Local Research (Paywall)**


**Abstract**

Peer relations constitute a main developmental context for adolescents. Peers offer an instance for identity definition and set the norms of acceptable and valued characteristics, behaviors, and attitudes, representing a societal model that allows and restrains avenues for adolescents’ socioemotional development. The present article departs from these considerations to review research on adolescents’ peer relations in Latin America from a socio-emotional perspective. First, approaches to adolescence are discussed, with a main focus on attachment and identity theories, based on a bio-ecological framework. Then, a review of research in Latin America on friendships, school climate, and intergroup relations is presented. The discussion addresses the tension between theories and evidence generated in developed societies and highlights the particularities of Latin American youth, stressing the need for collecting local data.

60. **Building a Youth Development System in Kenya: Comparing Kenyan Perceptions of Local and National Systems**


**Abstract**

The purpose of this paper is to begin a dialogue of developing an integrated and comprehensive system for youth in Kenya by identifying factors impacting the creation of a youth development system and exploring recommendations supporting and advancing such a system. The results of two collaborative assessments of the needs and strengths of Kenyan youth and the youth-serving programs based on the perspectives of practitioners, policymakers, and scholars of youth-development are presented. The study was framed from the perspective of a systems approach to youth development in Kenya (Bronfenbrenner & Morris, 2006; Overton & Lerner, 2012). Osgood (2012) identifies four steps for developing a systems approach for serving the needs of youth: (1) self-assessment, (2) goal identification, (3) planning, and (4) networking. The first step, self-assessment, was initiated through a Strengths/Weaknesses/Opportunities/Threat (SWOT) analysis with two different groups of youth development professionals across a two-year period (2014-2015). The 2014 SWOT analysis presented the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats related to developing a youth development system from a national level, whereas the 2015 SWOT analysis focused on these same factors but from a more local level of youth development programs and services. The results of these two analyses are presented, as are initial recommendations for building a more integrated and comprehensive youth development system in Kenya. The need for further input and investigation is also discussed.