



Dropout Prevention in Conflict Settings: Youth and Dropout Prevention

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Summit

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Strategies for Increasing Retention in Youth Workforce Development Programs

Context: El Salvador

Challenges: Official youth unemployment rate 13%, double the adult rate; employers face skills gaps and challenges filling vacancies with qualified job candidates; high homicide and violence rates; youth migration

Approach: USAID/El Salvador Improving Access to Employment Program developed partnerships between employers and training institutions to prepare youth for employment

Outcomes: 85% retention rate, 90% placement rate in formal jobs, placing 14,622 individuals in new or better jobs through 21 partnerships in 9 sectors



Strategies to Increase Retention

- Ensure youth see value of training
- Schedule training to meet participant needs
- Modularize/compress training to meet participant needs
- Match participant readiness and interests to training, jobs
- Provide early opt-out option with alternative pathway

Ensure youth see value of training

- Develop demand-driven training to build vocational and soft skills identified by employers, with a guaranteed interview



Schedule training to meet participant needs

- Survey participants to understand availability: women's schedules often distinct from men's



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Modularize/compress training to meet participant needs

- Motorcycle delivery person course compressed from 6 months of part-time training to 8 weeks of full-time training; retention increased from 50% to 80%



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Match participant readiness and interests to training, jobs

- Provide counseling to match participant readiness and interests to training, and to employer profiles of qualified job candidates



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Provide early opt-out option with alternative pathway

- During first morning class, showcase the career, the job, and the training, then ask participants to decide if this is right for them at this time



What's Next?

- Plans to develop early-alert Job Retention Program for at-risk youth, based on attendance and job performance, with mentor support



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