

Foreign Aid and the Education Sector: Programs and Priorities

Updated November 2, 2016

Congressional Research Service

<https://crsreports.congress.gov>

R44676

Summary

Education has long been considered an important part of the U.S. foreign assistance strategy. There is general agreement that education is crucial to bettering livelihoods and improving economic stability in developing countries. According to the World Bank, an increase of one standard deviation in student reading and math scores is associated with an increase of two percentage points in annual gross domestic product (GDP) per capita growth.

Access to and quality of education continues to pose a challenge to foreign aid donors. Approximately 263 million children and youth worldwide do not attend school. For those who attend school, the quality of education is lacking—one estimate suggests that 25% of children who complete four years of primary school have not learned basic literacy and numeracy skills.

Congress has played a role in education-sector assistance through authorization of education programs and annual funding of appropriations. The Foreign Assistance Act of 1961 (P.L. 87-195, as amended) includes provisions on education assistance. Congress has also directed that specific amounts of foreign aid budgets be spent on basic and higher education purposes. In FY2016, combined U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) and Department of State education programming amounts to about \$856 million. On September 7, 2016, the Education for All Act (H.R. 4481) was approved by the House of Representatives.

Multiple U.S. departments and agencies provide education assistance to developing countries. However, three agencies—USAID, the Peace Corps, and the Millennium Challenge Corporation (MCC)—accounted for 92% of assistance in FY2014. USAID makes up about two-thirds of annual funding for education. It offers an array of activities aimed at improving reading skills for 100 million primary school children, improving workforce development programs to build appropriate skills to meet developing country needs, and increasing equitable access to education in crisis and conflict environments. More than one-third of Peace Corps volunteers are in the education sector, teaching students and teachers in rural communities in 45 different countries. The MCC currently conducts programs in the education sector in two countries (El Salvador and Georgia); a program in Morocco is expected to begin soon.

To achieve its education development goals, the U.S. government implements different types of assistance activities, such as

- education management and policy reform,
- teacher training,
- developing and distributing textbooks and learning materials,
- improving literacy,
- participant training and workforce development, and
- school construction.

In 2015, the Obama Administration launched the *Let Girls Learn* initiative to address the challenges girls face in educational attainment. When girls are educated, the development impact is especially strong—for example, an extra year of secondary school for girls can increase future earnings by 18%. USAID, MCC, the Peace Corps, and the Department of State are participants in *Let Girls Learn* efforts.

This report provides a descriptive profile of recent foreign aid education sector activities, outlining actors, policy, funding levels, and programs.

Contents

The Role of Education Assistance in Development	1
The Role of Congress: Policy and Funding.....	3
U.S. Agencies Implementing Education Programs	5
USAID	5
Peace Corps.....	6
Millennium Challenge Corporation	7
<i>Let Girls Learn</i> : An Obama Administration Initiative.....	9
Types of Education Activities.....	11
Access and Enrollment.....	12
Education Management and Policy Reform.....	13
Teacher Training.....	14
Developing and Distributing Textbooks and Learning Materials	14
Improving Literacy.....	15
Participant Training and Workforce Development.....	17
School Construction	18

Figures

Figure 1. Number of Out-of-School Children Worldwide in 2014.....	2
Figure 2. State & USAID Education Assistance: FY2001-FY2017 Request.....	5
Figure 3. U.S. Agencies Implementing Education Programs: FY2014.....	6
Figure 4. FY2015 Regional Distribution of Education Assistance.....	12

Contacts

Author Information.....	19
-------------------------	----

The Role of Education Assistance in Development

This report is a descriptive profile of recent U.S. foreign aid education sector activities, outlining actors, policy, funding levels, and programs.

The education sector has long been considered an important element of the U.S. foreign assistance program. As noted in a 1980 Government Accountability Office report on U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) education programs, “Education is a vital element in the successful socio-economic development of a country. Ignorance and illiteracy hinder developing-country economic development and block the poor from participating in and benefiting from economic development.”¹

Today, the value of education assistance continues to be advocated. The State Department’s 2015 Quadrennial Diplomacy and Development Review identifies education as a means of lifting developing countries out of poverty, countering violent extremism and promoting global stability, and strengthening global health initiatives.² USAID, the leading development agency of the U.S. government, sees the expansion of quality education as “foundational to human development and critical to broad-based economic growth and democratic governance.”³

Many organizations have found statistical support for the claim that education is crucial to bettering livelihoods and improving economic stability in developing countries. Research supports the claim that the benefits of education extend beyond individuals, with ripple effects on the greater community. According to the World Bank, direct benefits of education include the following:

- **Economic growth:** An increase of one standard deviation in student reading and math scores is associated with an increase of two percentage points in annual GDP per capita growth.

Defining Education Assistance

This report encompasses all foreign assistance activities run by the U.S. government that aim to improve education in developing countries. As described in the Foreign Operations Annual Budget Justification for FY2017, education programming is intended to “promote effective, accountable, and sustainable formal and non-formal education systems.” The document further divides education into two elements:

Basic Education to “improve early childhood education, primary education, and secondary education, delivered in formal or non-formal settings. It includes literacy, numeracy, and other basic skills programs for youth and adults;”

Higher Education to “improve the quality, contributions and accessibility of higher education.... This program area places a special emphasis on ensuring equitable access to tertiary education and workforce development programs, especially for youth from lower income and marginalized groups including girls and young women and students with disabilities.”

This report does not encompass the international education exchange programs managed by the Department of State, which, even when they benefit non-U.S. citizens, are chiefly designed to enhance U.S. public diplomacy rather than facilitating the economic development of developing countries.

¹ U.S. General Accounting Office, *U.S. Efforts To Educate and Train The Poor In Developing Countries*, ID-80-18, May 5, 1980, p. 1.

² U.S. Department of State, *Enduring Leadership in a Dynamic World*, Quadrennial Diplomacy and Development Review 2015, at <http://www.state.gov/documents/organization/241429.pdf>.

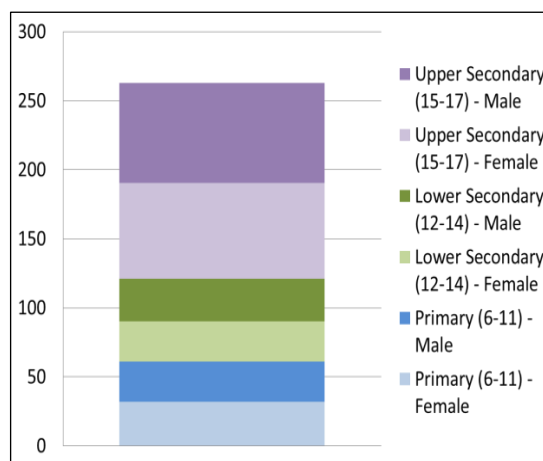
³ U.S. Agency for International Development, *USAID Education Strategy 2011-2015*, Washington, DC, February 2011, p. 1, at http://pdf.usaid.gov/pdf_docs/PDACQ946.pdf.

- **Economic stability:** Households with more education cope with economic shocks and exploit new economic opportunities better than less-educated households.
- **Decrease in infant and child mortality rates:** Of the 8.2 million fewer deaths of children age 5 and younger between 1970 and 2009, one-half can be attributed to more education among women of reproductive age.
- **Adaptation to environmental change:** Countries with better-educated female populations are more capable of coping with extreme weather events than countries with low levels of female education.⁴

The international community has widely accepted the importance of education in international development. In 2000, member states of the United Nations made achieving universal primary education one of the eight Millennium Development Goals meant to serve as a development roadmap for both donors and developing countries from 2000 to 2015. Moreover, in 2015, they included quality education as one of the follow-on 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). According to the U.N. resolution establishing the SDGs, the goal for 2030 is to provide “inclusive and equitable quality education at all levels.”⁵

Much progress has been made in recent years; between 2000 and 2013, the number of children in primary and secondary schools has increased by 20%.⁶ Nevertheless, the challenges remain great. According to 2014 school year data collected by the United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) Institute for Statistics, approximately 263 million children and youth are out of school, a figure that does not include most refugees and internally displaced children. Of those, 61 million (23%) are of primary school age (ages 6-11), 60 million (23%) are of lower secondary school age (ages 12-14), and 142 million (54%) are of upper secondary school age (ages 15-17). Regionally, sub-Saharan Africa faces the largest out-of-school rates, with 21.2% of primary, 34.1% of lower secondary, and 57.7% of upper secondary school-aged children out of school. And girls in general continue to be left behind—15 million girls

Figure 1. Number of Out-of-School Children Worldwide in 2014
(in millions)



Source: UNESCO Institute for Statistics, *Leaving no one behind: How far on the way to universal primary and secondary education?*, Policy Paper 27/Fact Sheet 37, July 2016.

⁴ World Bank Group, *Learning for All: Investing in People's Knowledge and Skills to Promote Development*, World Bank Group Education Strategy 2020, Washington, DC, 2011, p. 12-13.

⁵ United Nations General Assembly, *Transforming our World: The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development*, Resolution adopted by the General Assembly, A/RES/70/1, New York, NY, September 25, 2015, p. 7, http://www.un.org/ga/search/view_doc.asp?symbol=A/RES/70/1&Lang=E.

⁶ International Commission on Financing Global Education Opportunity, *The Learning Generation*, September 2016, p. 33.

of primary school age will never set foot in a classroom, compared with approximately 10 million boys.⁷

For those who attend school, the quality of education is often lacking. Studies of educational attainment in individual countries show that many children are leaving school without acquiring basic reading and math skills.⁸ One estimate suggests that 25% of the 530 million children worldwide who complete four years of primary school—130 million children—have not learned basic literacy and numeracy.⁹

The Role of Congress: Policy and Funding

Congress affects education assistance in two ways: through policymaking and annual appropriations. Congress first made education a distinctive policy objective of foreign assistance in 1973, when it added sector-specific objectives to the aid program's key authorizing legislation as part of its "New Directions" policy which sought to target assistance on satisfying the basic human needs of the poor in developing countries. Section 105 of the Foreign Assistance Act of 1961 (P.L. 87-195, as amended) seeks "to reduce illiteracy, to extend basic education, and to increase manpower training in skills related to development."

More recently, in the FY2008 State, Foreign Operations appropriations (P.L. 110-161), Congress mandated establishment of a position within the State Department to oversee and coordinate all basic education assistance in the U.S. government and to provide a strategy for such assistance. A Basic Education Coordinator was appointed in 2007 and served in that position for one year, after which no other individual occupied the post. Although the FY2012 Consolidated Appropriations Act (P.L. 112-74) shifted the post to USAID, the agency has, instead, divided responsibilities for basic education between a Senior Advisor for International Education appointed in March 2013 and other officials in the Bureau for Economic Growth, Education, and the Environment.

A number of bills are currently under consideration in the House and Senate focusing to some degree on education assistance policy. These include the following:

- **H.R. 4481 (Lowey), the Education for All Act of 2016**, amends the Foreign Assistance Act of 1961 to make it U.S. policy to achieve sustainable quality universal basic education and directs the President to develop a comprehensive strategy in this regard. The legislation includes provisions specifically addressing countries affected by conflict and crises, as well as directives to focus programs

⁷ Sub-Saharan Africa and Southern Asia account for the bulk of this disparity. UNESCO Institute for Statistics, *Leaving no one behind: How far on the way to universal primary and secondary education?*, Policy Paper 27/Fact Sheet 37, July 2016, p. 5, at <http://unesdoc.unesco.org/images/0024/002452/245238E.pdf>.

⁸ For example, a Ghana survey found that 80% of grade 2 students could not correctly answer questions about an English text read aloud to them; 94% of Malawi students in second-grade could not correctly answer questions about a story they read in their national language; in Nicaragua, 90% of second graders could not do a subtraction question. UNESCO, *Education for All 2000-2015: Achievements and Challenges*, p. 193.

⁹ UNESCO, *Education for All Global Monitoring Report 2013/2014*, p. 19. To meet the SDG education targets, an International Commission on Financing Global Education Opportunity, chaired by former British Prime Minister Gordon Brown, recommended a near tripling of today's \$1.2 trillion in annual education spending (by all developing countries and donors) in low- and middle-income countries to a \$3 trillion level by 2030. This figure includes an increase in Official Development Assistance (ODA) by donors from \$13 billion in 2014 to \$49 billion per year by 2030, a 9% annual increase. The United States claims a 2014 level of education ODA of \$1.5 billion. International Commission on Financing Global Education Opportunity, *The Learning Generation*, September 2016, p. 128.

on girls' education and marginalized groups. It requires that programs seek measurable goals with appropriate metrics and be subject to rigorous monitoring and evaluation. The legislation calls for designation by USAID of a Senior Coordinator on basic education and submission by the President of an annual report on education strategy implementation. On September 7, 2016, the bill was approved by the House of Representatives.

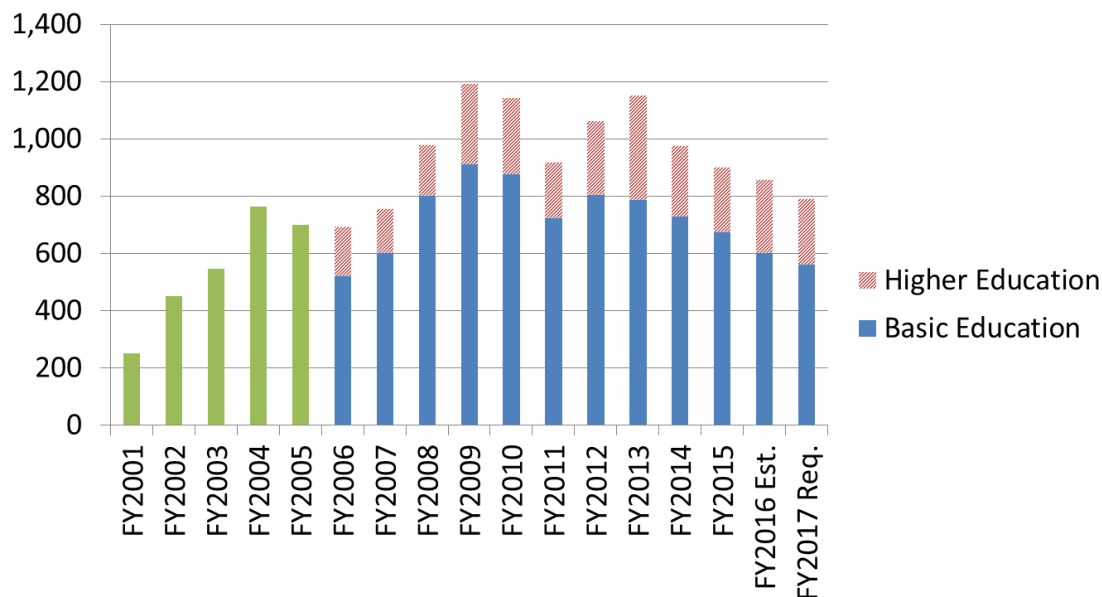
- **S. 1632 (Collins), To Require a Regional Strategy to Address the Threat Posed by Boko Haram**, including plans to strengthen security for schools and protection of girls' access to education. A sense of Congress notes that increased access to education would diminish Boko Haram's ability to radicalize and recruit individuals. On September 22, 2015, the bill was approved by the Senate.
- **S. 1875 (Menendez), the Afghanistan Accountability Act of 2015**, which lauds the increase in the number of girls enrolled in primary education in Afghanistan from 5,000 under the Taliban to more than 2,400,000 as of 2010, and notes that assistance programs in direct support of Afghan women and girls, such as those supporting education, remain a priority for the United States. On April 28, 2016, the bill was approved by the Senate.

With regard to funding, Congress supports U.S. government education activities through annual appropriations legislation and has for many decades directed in legislative language that a specific amount be spent for basic education purposes and, since FY2009, for higher education.¹⁰ Most education development programs are funded through the annual State-Foreign Operations appropriations. In FY2016, combined USAID and Department of State education programming of about \$856 million composed nearly 4% of total USAID/State economic (i.e., nonsecurity) assistance program appropriations. At roughly \$1.2 billion, total education obligations in FY2014 from all U.S. agencies, including the Peace Corps and the Millennium Challenge Corporation (MCC), accounted for nearly 4% of total economic aid obligations in that year.

As shown in **Figure 2**, education assistance, based on available figures for USAID and State alone, has risen considerably since FY2001. In FY2001, the total funding obligated for education was \$252 million. The funding level then reached an all-time high in FY2009, when the total funding provided was \$1.2 billion. Since 2010, the funding level has varied from year to year but averaged about \$1 billion. The FY2017 request level is \$788 million—\$562 million for basic education and \$226 million for higher education—which, if met, would represent the lowest level of funding for education in 10 years. In most years, the basic education component has represented 75%-80% of total education assistance. Nearly 41% of State/USAID education funding in FY2015 was directed at sub-Saharan Africa, followed by the Near East/North Africa and South and Central Asia at 22% each (**Figure 4**).

¹⁰ For FY2016, Congress directed that not less than \$800 million "should" be made available for basic education and \$225 million "shall" be made available for higher education (P.L. 114-113, the Consolidated Appropriations Act, 2016, Division K).

Figure 2. State & USAID Education Assistance: FY2001-FY2017 Request
(\$ millions)



Source: For FY2001 to FY2005: USAID, U.S. Overseas Loans and Grants (Greenbook), <https://explorer.usaid.gov/reports-greenbook.html>. For FY2006 to FY2017: foreignassistance.gov.

Notes: This table reflects planned appropriations for State and USAID only for FY2006 to FY2017 request. For FY2001 to FY2005, the table shows obligated amounts for State and USAID not broken out by education level.

U.S. Agencies Implementing Education Programs

Multiple U.S. agencies fund and implement education programs. In FY2014 (the most recent year for which data were available for all agencies), such agencies included USAID, Peace Corps, the Departments of State, Commerce, and Interior, the African Development Foundation, the Inter-American Foundation, and the Millennium Challenge Corporation.¹¹ Together, three of these agencies account for 92% of all education funding (**Figure 3**). These three—USAID, Peace Corps, and MCC—are discussed below.

USAID

Contributing more than two-thirds of education spending, USAID plays the most significant role in U.S. government education assistance programs.¹² Under its *Education Strategy 2011-2015*, USAID adopted three primary goals for its education initiatives:

- improved reading skills for 100 million children in primary grades by 2015;

¹¹ Some agencies support education indirectly. By providing food aid to school children, the Department of Agriculture's McGovern-Dole International Food for Education and Child Nutrition program directly addresses nutritional needs of children while at the same time indirectly encouraging school attendance. Such indirect assistance is not counted in total education funding data.

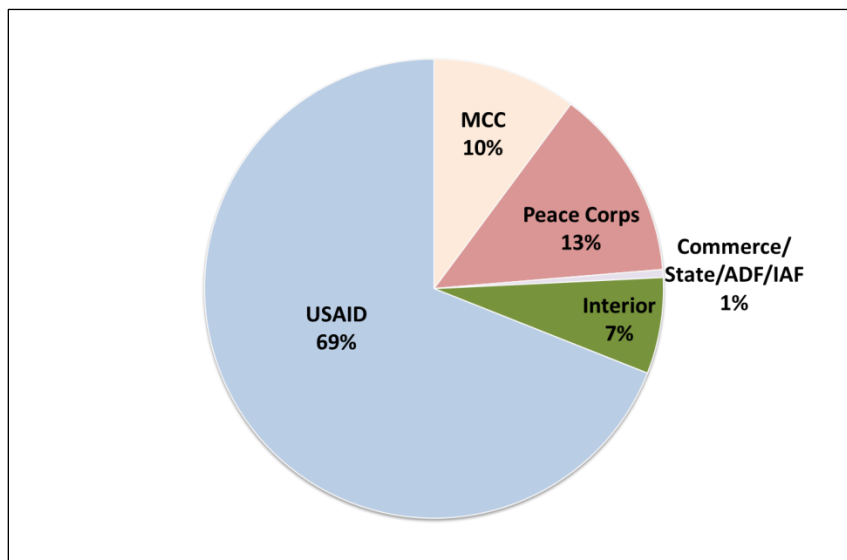
¹² For background on USAID, see CRS Report R44117, *U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID): Background, Operations, and Issues*, by Curt Tarnoff.

- improved ability of tertiary and workforce development programs to generate workforce skills relevant to a country's development goals; and
- increased equitable access to education in crisis and conflict environments for 15 million learners by 2015.¹³

According to USAID, 155 basic education projects in 45 countries benefitting over 41 million children have been established to support these goals during the 2011-2015 strategy period. (For examples of USAID education programs, see the “Types of Education Activities” section below.)

A new education strategy for the period 2016-2020 is being designed. The strategy is expected to maintain its focus on the previous goals, while further defining priorities in workforce development and higher education. The 2011-2015 strategy remains in effect until the new strategy is issued.¹⁴

Figure 3. U.S. Agencies Implementing Education Programs: FY2014
(percentage of total obligations)



Source: USAID, U.S. Overseas Loans and Grants (Greenbook), <https://explorer.usaid.gov/reports-greenbook.html>.

Notes: ADF = African Development Foundation and IAF = Inter-American Foundation.

Peace Corps

Peace Corps' volunteers are divided among six technical sectors, the largest of which is education.¹⁵ In 2015, 2,580 volunteers (37% of all volunteers) worked on education in 45 different countries. Volunteers teach math, science, information and communication technologies, English, literacy/numeracy, and gender empowerment. Because volunteers generally live and work in rural communities, they often reach into more low-income parts of host countries—those

¹³ *USAID Education Strategy 2011-2015*, p.1.

¹⁴ Agency Notice 08304, dated August 24, 2015; CRS communications with USAID, August 1 and September 12, 2016.

¹⁵ For further discussion of Peace Corps, see CRS Report RS21168, *The Peace Corps: Current Issues*, by Curt Tarnoff.

least likely to receive the best trained teachers and most well-equipped schools—likely increasing their impact. All volunteers work with local counterparts; so volunteer assignments include a strong element of teacher training.

Peace Corps and USAID collaborate through the Global Education Framework. Through this interagency agreement, launched in FY2011, USAID has funded the technical training of volunteers and supported other Peace Corps educational initiatives that coincide with its own strategy.

Millennium Challenge Corporation

In FY2014, the education sector accounted for about 10% of MCC funding.¹⁶ However, MCC funding is not consistent from year to year, depending on which sectors the very few countries eligible for MCC assistance select for support. At the present time, two of the MCC's eight active country programs, called compacts, contain education components and a third will enter into force in the near future.

MCC's education efforts are justified in the context of its mandate to mitigate poverty through economic growth. The MCC currently focuses these efforts in several countries worldwide—in El Salvador, Georgia, and Morocco.

- In the case of El Salvador, the lack of a skilled labor force capable of meeting the demands of an international trade market was viewed as a constraint to growth. The \$100.7 million, five-year education project within the compact launched in 2015 aims to improve secondary education quality in an estimated 400 schools. It will also focus on strengthening the curricula and accreditation system for technical and vocational education so that it better meets the needs of employers.¹⁷
- Georgia's workers, too, are viewed as lacking skills sought by the labor market, especially in science, technology, engineering, and mathematics. The entire \$140 million, five-year Georgia compact, which entered into force in 2014, is designed to address this shortfall through public school rehabilitation, educator training, and improvements specifically targeted on workforce development as well as a component aimed at raising the quality of higher education in science and technology.¹⁸
- Like the projects in El Salvador and Georgia, the \$220 million Morocco education project, which has not yet entered into force, is expected to focus on improving the employability of students by introducing a model of secondary schools to be piloted in about 100 schools and by improving private sector-driven technical and vocational education.

¹⁶ For background on MCC, see CRS Report RL32427, *Millennium Challenge Corporation*, by Curt Tarnoff.

¹⁷ MCC, *Congressional Notification: El Salvador*, October 9, 2014.

¹⁸ MCC, *Congressional Notification: Georgia*, August 8, 2013.

The Broader Challenges to Educational Achievement¹⁹

The social and economic environment of the developing countries in which education programs take place presents severe challenges to their long-term success. Some education interventions address these problems, but others are entirely outside the scope of education and must be addressed through economic growth and other assistance efforts. The following conditions, among others, may pose obstacles to the achievement of education objectives:

Teacher shortage and absence: According to UNESCO, “the equity gap in education is exacerbated by the shortage and uneven distribution of professionally trained teachers, especially in disadvantaged areas.”²⁰ An estimated 3.2 million teachers are needed by 2030 to achieve universal primary education and an additional 5.1 million would be required to reach universal secondary education. This estimate does not account for replacing teachers who choose to leave the workforce in that same time period.

School fees: While only six countries charge formal tuition fees at the primary level and 22 charge at the secondary level, there are often indirect costs associated with attending school.²¹ These include, but are not limited to, exam fees, transport costs, school uniforms, and school supplies.

Learner absence or lateness: Children are often required to work to provide additional sources of income to their families. For example, in 2014 sub-Saharan Africa had the highest incidence of child labor with an estimated 59 million children between the ages of 5 and 17 engaged in child labor.²² Children, particularly girls and young women, are often given responsibilities in the home, including obtaining and carrying water considerable distances or caring for younger family members.

Learners come to school hungry: According to UNESCO, approximately 171 million children in developing countries are stunted by hunger by the time they reach five. This lack of nutrition can slow children’s cognitive development and set children back by up to four grades of schooling.²³ The U.S. Department of Agriculture’s McGovern-Dole program seeks to address this factor in poor student learning.

Overcrowded Classrooms: Small education budgets and insufficient teaching staff often result in large class sizes and overcrowded classrooms. Overcrowding is often exacerbated in conflict regions where refugees and IDPs are also seeking educational attainment. In 2013 the Mafrq Governate in Jordan, for example, found that 15% of out-of-school children had requested school enrollment but were on waiting lists due to space limitations.²⁴

Lack of Electricity: Many rural areas continue to have limited access to reliable electric power. In sub-Saharan Africa, for example, two out of three people do not have access to power.²⁵ The United States and its international partners are working to improve access to power through initiatives like *Power Africa*²⁶ but many still remain without power.

Discrimination: In addition to the many challenges that girls face in educational attainment, there are few programs that address the needs of ethnic, religious, or language minorities as well as those of children with disabilities. Children who are disadvantaged due to discrimination are very easily left behind.²⁷

¹⁹ Challenges drawn in part from Education Development Center, Inc. for USAID, *Literacy, Language and Learning Initiative (L3) National Fluency Assessment of Rwandan Schools Midline Report*, January 2016, p. 67.

²⁰ UNESCO, *Education 2030: Incheon Declaration and Framework for Action*, ED-2016/WS/2, Paris, December 2015, pp. 23-24, at <http://unesdoc.unesco.org/images/0024/002432/243278e.pdf>.

²¹ WORLD Policy Analysis Center, *Is education tuition-free?*, at <http://www.worldpolicycenter.org/policies/is-education-tuition-free/is-beginning-secondary-education-tuition-free>.

²² U.S. Department of Labor, *2014 Findings on the Worst Forms of Child Labor: Sub-Saharan Africa*, 2014, at <https://www.dol.gov/agencies/ilab/resources/reports/child-labor/sub-saharan-africa>.

²³ UNESCO Global Education First Initiative (GEFI), *Priority #2: Improve the Quality of Learning*, at <http://www.unesco.org/new/en/gefi/priorities/quality-of-learning>.

²⁴ UNHCR, *The Future of Syria: The Challenge of Education*, at <http://unhcr.org/FutureOfSyria/the-challenge-of-education.html>.

²⁵ USAID, *Power Africa*, <https://www.usaid.gov/powerafrica/aboutus>.

²⁶ Power Africa was launched in 2013 by President Obama with the goal of increasing electricity generation capacity by 30,000 megawatts, supporting power connections for 60 million or more households and businesses, and facilitating U.S. and international public and private sector investments in the electricity sector in Africa. For more information, see CRS Report R43593, *Powering Africa: Challenges of and U.S. Aid for Electrification in Africa*, by Nicolas Cook et al.

²⁷ Human Rights Watch, *The Education Deficit: Failures to Protect and Fulfill the Right to Education through Global* (continued...)

Let Girls Learn: An Obama Administration Initiative

According to USAID, 62 million girls between the ages of 6 and 15 are not in school, and research indicates that women and girls face unique physical, cultural, and financial barriers to education. However, an educated girl generates benefits not only for herself, but for her family, community, and country. For example, according to USAID

- an extra year of secondary school for girls can increase future earnings by 18%;
- girls with secondary schooling are up to six times less likely to marry as children than those with little or no schooling; and
- for mothers, each extra year of education decreases the probability of infant mortality by 5%-10%.²⁸

To draw attention to and address the challenges girls face in educational attainment throughout the world, the *Let Girls Learn* initiative was launched in March 2015 by the Obama Administration through the leadership of first lady Michelle Obama as a collaboration of USAID, the MCC, the Peace Corps, and the Department of State using existing appropriated resources. The Departments of Labor and Agriculture have joined the initiative more recently.

In addition to U.S. government efforts, *Let Girls Learn* has garnered financial commitments from other donors. Nearly \$600 million has been pledged by foreign governments, including the United Kingdom, Japan, and South Korea. The U.S. private sector has also become involved; Proctor and Gamble, Newman's Own Foundation, and other companies donated \$2.5 million to the Peace Corps *Let Girls Learn Fund*; J.Crew is supporting *Let Girls Learn* through its Garments for Good initiative; and the Central Asia Institute has promised \$500,000 to benefit girls' schooling in Afghanistan, among other contributions.²⁹

Each U.S. government agency participating in *Let Girls Learn* was working to some extent on girls' education before the initiative was introduced. The program has, however, caused these agencies to strengthen and expand attention and activity on this issue.

U.S. Agency for International Development. USAID has announced a three-pillar *Let Girls Learn* strategy that encompasses the range of girls' education concerns in the developing world.

- **Increasing Access to Quality Education** includes teaching girls to read and write; providing safe access to schools, particularly in conflict zones; and offering educational alternatives, workforce training, and employment opportunities.
- **Reducing Barriers** pillar is aimed at addressing any and all vulnerabilities girls face on a daily basis. These include health risks (early pregnancy, malnutrition, menstrual hygiene, and HIV/AIDS), economic challenges (school fees and the

(...continued)

Development Agendas, June 2016, pp. 24-35.

²⁸ USAID, *Let Girls Learn Fact Sheet*, available at <https://www.usaid.gov/news-information/fact-sheets/let-girls-learn>; and the White House Fact Sheet: *Let Girls Learn*, available at https://www.whitehouse.gov/sites/default/files/image/files/let_girls_learn_fact_sheet_03032015.pdf.

²⁹ The White House, Office of the First Lady, *FACT SHEET: First Lady Michelle Obama Celebrates One Year of Let Girls Learn, And Announces New Commitments To The Initiative*, Washington, DC, March 8, 2016, <https://www.whitehouse.gov/the-press-office/2016/03/08/fact-sheet-first-lady-michelle-obama-celebrates-one-year-let-girls-learn>.

cost of materials), and security threats (gender-based violence, trafficking, and forced marriage).

- **Empowering Adolescent Girls.** Programs in this pillar focus on building skills to improve girls' rights, leadership, and opportunity. To this effect, USAID provides access to education in finance, digital literacy, science, technology, engineering, agriculture, and mathematics. It also runs community programs to build support for gender parity.³⁰

The Peace Corps. For many years, individual Peace Corps volunteers have initiated girls' leadership camps and other efforts to encourage girls' education and empowerment in local communities. Under *Let Girls Learn*, the agency is actively promoting and funding such programs and incorporating *Let Girls Learn* objectives into its in-country programming with a three-pillar strategy:

- **Empowering Leaders.** Peace Corps Volunteers and community leaders are being trained to effectively incorporate gender awareness into their programming.
- **Working Hand in Hand with Communities.** Private sector donations to a *Let Girls Learn* fund support volunteer-initiated projects in local communities to implement gender-related projects.
- **Increasing the Impact of Peace Corps Volunteers.** The Peace Corps is increasing the number of volunteers whose work focuses on the advancement of girls' education and women's empowerment.

The Peace Corps currently targets 35 countries for *Let Girls Learn* programming.³¹

The Millennium Challenge Corporation. With an operational model that relies on aid recipients to develop and implement assistance projects, the MCC's ability to initiate girls' education efforts on its own is limited. However, the MCC has always been attentive to the role of gender in economic development—gender analysis is a regular part of its compact projects and the level of girls' school enrollment is a qualifying factor in its compact eligibility process. Its current education projects, which pre-date *Let Girls Learn*, address gender equality concerns. For example, the Georgia project described above includes measures to promote the inclusion of women and girls in science, technology, engineering, and math (STEM) fields, both at student and faculty levels.³²

The Department of State. The Department of State uses its diplomatic and public outreach capacities to support girls' empowerment and access to education, building partnerships to facilitate progress. One programmatic example is the implementation of a Girls STEAM (Science, Technology, Engineering, Art and Design, and Math) camp in Rwanda to provide the learning space and resources for girls to gain skillsets needed to be competitive in the workforce. Girls who participate are able to take courses on computer science, robotics, and design, and are given access to mentors in the STEAM fields. An \$85 million President's Emergency Plan for

³⁰USAID, *Let Girls Learn Fact Sheet*.

³¹ The information in this section is drawn from the Peace Corps' dedicated *Let Girls Learn* site, available at <http://www.letgirlslearn.peacecorps.gov/>.

³² MCC, *Helping Girls Learn and Prosper Through Better Education*, available at <https://www.mcc.gov/resources/doc/fact-sheet-031015-helping-girls-learn-and-prosper-through-better-education>.

AIDS Relief (PEPFAR) partnership is dedicated to helping young girls access school and remain in school.³³

Department of Labor. The Department of Labor addresses the issue of child labor by providing education programs. Its *Let Girls Learn* contribution is to direct funding specifically to the education of adolescent girls engaged in or at high risk of entering child labor. For example, a \$5 million grant has been issued to increase 2,500 girls' access to formal and non-formal education and training in Zambia.³⁴

Department of Agriculture. The Department of Agriculture is contributing \$7 million under the McGovern-Dole International Food for Education and Child Nutrition Program to keep girls in Malawi in school by providing meals, scholarships, and classroom construction.³⁵

A New Narrative: Women and Girls' Education in Countering Violent Extremism

In recent years, social science research has pointed to an emerging connection between women and girls' education and countering violent extremism (CVE). Experts have agreed that a woman's increased access to secular and mainstream education can prevent her radicalization and that educated women are better positioned to intervene and stop the radicalization of their children or other members within their community.³⁶ As described in the Global Counterterrorism Forum's report on women and CVE, "Education enhances the capacity of young women and girls to help build resilience among their peers, their families and their communities ... [it] reduces their susceptibility to violent extremist narratives that exploit religion or use certain interpretations of history or politics, and equips them to question and challenge these narratives."³⁷

CVE has been a growing priority for U.S. foreign policy. It was articulated as one of four strategic priorities in the State Department's 2015 Quadrennial Diplomacy and Development Review (QDDR). Within that, it was made clear that the U.S. government has accepted the connection between women and girls' education and successful CVE: the strategy includes strengthening education systems, particularly for vulnerable populations including women and girls, as a means to both prevent radicalization and build resistance against extremist recruitment.³⁸

Types of Education Activities

To achieve its education development goals, the U.S. government implements different types of assistance activities, including those focused on access and enrollment; education management and policy; teacher training; developing and distributing textbooks and learning materials; improving literacy; participant training and workforce development; and school construction.

³³ Department of State, *Girls' Education*, available at <http://www.state.gov/s/gwi/c62293.htm>; WiSci: *Girls STEAM Camp*, at <http://www.state.gov/s/partnerships/ppp/wisci/>; *PEPFAR Dreams*, at <http://www.pepfar.gov/partnerships/ppp/dreams/>; and John Kerry, *Remarks at Launch of U.S. Strategy for Adolescent Girls Event*, March 15, 2016, at <http://www.state.gov/secretary/remarks/2016/03/254724.htm>.

³⁴ The White House, *Fact Sheet: Let Girls Learn – A Comprehensive Investment in Adolescent Girls Education*, October 11, 2016.

³⁵ Ibid.

³⁶ U.S. Congress, House Committee on Foreign Affairs, *Hearing on Women's Education: Promoting Development, Countering Radicalism; And Markup of H.R.3583, Malala Yousafzai Scholarship Act*, 113th Cong., 2nd sess., April 3, 2014, H.Hrg.113-165 (Washington: GPO, 2014).

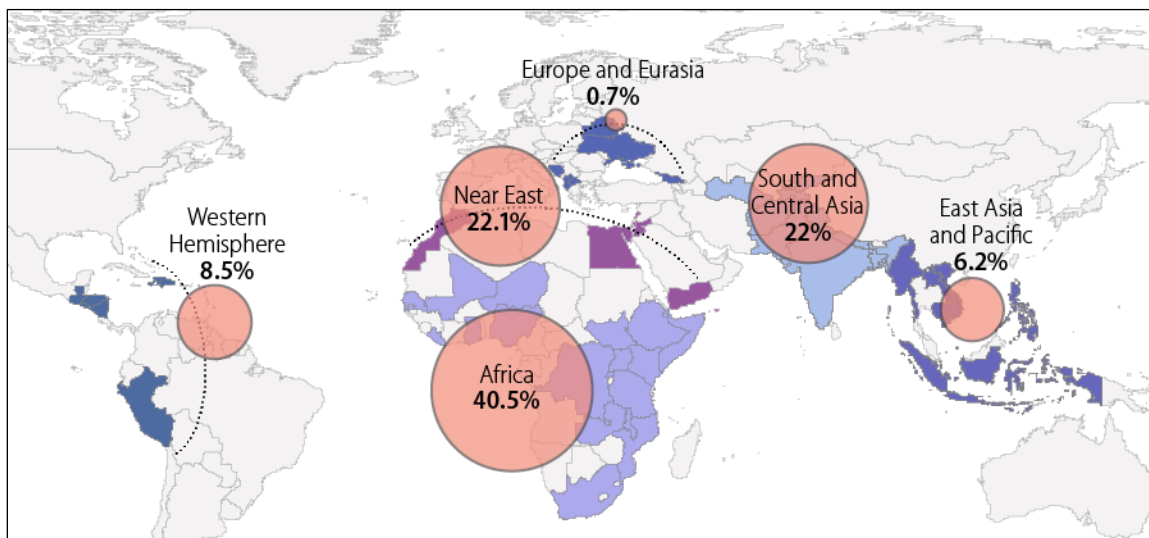
³⁷ Joint Initiative between the Global Counterterrorism Forum and the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe, *Good Practices on Women and Countering Violent Extremism*, 2016, at <https://www.thegctf.org/Portals/1/Documents/Framework%20Documents/GCTF%20Good%20Practices%20on%20Women%20and%20CVE.pdf?ver=2016-03-29-134644-853>.

³⁸ Department of State, *Quadrennial Diplomacy and Development Review 2015*, pp.25-27.

Most education projects combine two or more of these elements to address a particular set of educational concerns in a developing country.

The sections below provide examples of programs from USAID and other agencies active in education assistance. The examples, which are drawn from different countries to demonstrate the broad regional scope of activities, illustrate the types of programs housed within each category. (Figure 4 illustrates the regional distribution for USAID education assistance funding.)

Figure 4. FY2015 Regional Distribution of Education Assistance
(percentage of total appropriated funds for basic and higher education assistance)



Source: FY2017 International Affairs Congressional Budget Justification.

Notes: This figure reflects appropriations for State, USAID, and P.L. 480 programs only. The levels also reflect all funds appropriated for Overseas Contingency Operations or in emergency supplemental appropriations.

Access and Enrollment

According to UNESCO, approximately 61 million primary school-aged children throughout the world do not attend school. Of those, 21.5 million are in countries affected by armed conflict.³⁹ Conflict zones pose unique challenges to development, particularly when they result in high numbers of displaced persons. In such cases, children are left without access to a safe and stable school, which disrupts their education and makes it difficult to close the education gap later in life. In response, USAID articulated its goal to “increase equitable access to education in crisis and conflict environments for 15 million learners by 2015” in its 2011-2015 *Education Strategy*.⁴⁰

One program that supports this goal is Back to Learning, a USAID and UNICEF partnership in South Sudan. South Sudan has the lowest rate of school attendance in the world—only 51% of school-aged children attend school. Back to Learning was initiated in 2014 to improve school access and enrollment for vulnerable school-aged children through USAID- and UNICEF-operated schools. The program took a two-pronged approach: the first addressing the education needs of displaced children and adolescents in Protection of Civilian (PoC) sites in 6 of South

³⁹ UNESCO Institute for Statistics, *Leaving no one behind: How far on the way to Universal Primary and Secondary Education?*

⁴⁰ USAID *Education Strategy 2011-2015*, p.1.

Sudan's 10 states, and the second assisting vulnerable children in the 4 remaining states through community-based education interventions. By the end of 2015, the program provided access to education for nearly 360,000 school-aged children.⁴¹

The goal of USAID's Out-of-School Youth Project (OSYP) in Mali, which ran from 2010 to 2015, was to "enable rural youth between the ages of 14 and 25 who had either never been to school or had dropped out in the early grades to become more educated, economically productive, civically engaged and empowered to improve their lives and those of their families and communities."⁴² Like South Sudan, Mali has historically struggled with youth enrollment in schools, an issue that has been further challenged by continued violence in the country. At the start of OSYP, one-third of the youth population was not in school and there were low retention and return rates for children who did attend. These low rates resulted in Mali having one of the highest adult illiteracy rates in the world: 71% of males and 79% of females.⁴³

OSYP was designed to address these issues by increasing access to and improving enrollment in schools. Three youth cohorts were provided four to six months of basic education, followed by modular entrepreneurship courses for the remainder of year one and year two. In addition to receiving learning materials to be used in schools, each student was provided with a mobile device to ensure access to content outside the classroom. In its five years, the program benefitted 10,951 rural youths.

Education Management and Policy Reform

Educational systems are usually managed by the national ministry of education or regional equivalents; therefore, USAID often helps governments formulate education policy and build an institutional capacity to effectively implement policy. Significant recent examples of management and policy reform assistance to developing country governments have occurred in Egypt and Indonesia, among others.⁴⁴

The Quality Basic Education Reform Support Project, implemented from 2009 to 2014 in Peru, encompasses many features of this type of assistance.⁴⁵ In this case, the agency worked closely with both the Ministry of Education and regional governments to strengthen and implement an education decentralization reform that had begun in an earlier USAID-sponsored project. USAID partner FHI 360, a nongovernmental organization specializing in international development, provided technical expertise to help revise the national law that regulates the roles, responsibilities, and functions of the education sector. In addition, the program introduced tools (e.g., information systems, a model for local education management) that allowed regional and local governments to take on responsibility for education planning. USAID provided workshops, on-the-job training, and technical assistance to regional governments so that they could provide more intensive support to rural and semi-urban schools. Among other things, USAID's partner increased the capacity of regional government staff to design, budget, apply for, and execute

⁴¹ UNICEF, "South Sudan: Highest Proportion Of Out-Of-School Children in Global Conflict Zones," press release, January 12, 2016, at <http://www.childrenofsouthsudan.info/south-sudan-highest-proportion-of-out-of-school-children-in-global-conflict-zones/>.

⁴² USAID, *Out Of School Youth Project*, Final Report, p.4, at http://pdf.usaid.gov/pdf_docs/pa00m38s.pdf.

⁴³ UNICEF, *Mali Statistics*, at http://www.unicef.org/infobycountry/mali_statistics.html#68.

⁴⁴ Aguirre Division of JBS International, Inc. for USAID, *Indonesia: Decentralized Basic Education Project Final Evaluation*, November 2012; and DevTech Systems, Inc. for USAID, *Final Performance Evaluation Education Support Program USAID/Egypt*, April 2015.

⁴⁵ FHI360, *Quality Basic Education Reform Support: Final Report*, June 30, 2014.

projects that could attract public funding, including projects to expand schools, strengthen teaching skills, and improve reading abilities.

Peru project implementers also addressed reform of the teaching profession, including advising the Ministry of Education on establishing standards of good teaching, methods for teacher evaluation, and improvements to in-service training. They created and distributed a package of materials to provide guidance to teachers in classroom practice in reading and math, including lesson plans.

Teacher Training

Teacher training is intrinsic to improving the quality of education in developing countries. Both USAID and the Peace Corps play a large role in implementing teacher training.

Many Peace Corps volunteers work to build capacity among local educators. Examples of such teacher training include the following:

- “Literacy Bike Trek” in The Gambia. In FY2015, six groups of volunteers traveled through the country conducting interactive workshops with teachers, instructing them on how to read aloud to their students. The program resulted in 239 trained teachers, who were then able to participate in World Read Aloud Day.⁴⁶
- Co-planning and co-teaching English in Nicaragua. Co-teaching was done in secondary schools with classes of 45 or more students. Co-planning involved lesson planning that incorporated different learning styles, critical thinking, and interactive activities, and was conducted in English to further improve teachers’ language skills.

In addition to these activities, Peace Corps has a Teaching English as a Foreign Language (TEFL) program, which includes a teacher training component in which volunteers serve as conversation partners for teachers who need to build their competence and confidence with the English language.⁴⁷

Under its Basic Education Program in Kosovo, USAID collaborated with the Kosovo Ministry of Education, Science and Technology and Municipal Education Directorates. The program (2010-2015) sought to improve Kosovan education institutions through teacher training and continuing professional development as well as curriculum development. According to USAID, the program resulted in 25 Professional Development Centers for teacher training and the distribution of professional development courses to nearly 26,000 educators.⁴⁸

Developing and Distributing Textbooks and Learning Materials

In many developing countries, the cost of textbooks and other learning materials is high, the process for ordering and distributing books within countries and schools systems is inefficient and often lends itself to corruption, and, once books reach the classroom, they may be used

⁴⁶ Peace Corps, *Performance and Accountability Report: Fiscal Year 2015*, Washington, DC, November 16, 2015, at <http://files.peacecorps.gov/multimedia/pdf/policies/annrept2015.pdf>.

⁴⁷ Peace Corps, Office of Overseas Programming and Training Support, *Education Infobrief*.

⁴⁸ USAID, *Basic Education Program*, January 11, 2016, at <https://www.usaid.gov/news-information/fact-sheets/basic-education-program>.

ineffectively by teachers. USAID has sought to address these various problems, most recently by establishing a Global Book Alliance with other international donors, including the United Kingdom, Norway, and UNICEF. The Alliance plans, among other aims, to develop strategies on book financing adapted from the health sector's ability to lower drug costs through improved procurement processes, among other interventions. With Alliance partners Australia Aid and World Vision, USAID has sponsored an *All Children Reading* competition under the All Children Reading program (discussed below) that hopes to achieve greater accountability for book distribution by identifying workable systems to track and trace school materials from in-country warehouses to their receipt at schools.

For many years, USAID has invested in the development and production of textbooks and learning materials, often in conjunction with curriculum development programs. In developing these materials, USAID aims to be context-specific, culturally appropriate, and politically sensitive as well as to align them with the educational priorities of the country in which they will be used.⁴⁹ To broaden its distribution of materials, USAID is increasingly taking advantage of new technologies, including video, Internet, and mobile devices, among others.⁵⁰ Between 2011 and 2015, USAID provided 146 million textbooks and other learning materials in 37 countries.⁵¹

The Textbooks and Learning Materials Program (TLMP) in Ethiopia, Ghana, Malawi, Senegal, South Africa, and Tanzania exemplifies USAID's efforts to improve education quality through the development and distribution of textbooks and learning materials. TLMP started in 2005 as part of President George W. Bush's Africa Education Initiative (AEI).⁵² Between 2009 and 2012, TLMP was extended to include a joint endeavor among USAID and five partner universities.⁵³ While the textbook and learning materials development varied slightly depending on the country and university partner, the general practice was to conduct a needs assessment, develop the narrative and accompanying illustrations, determine the teaching methodology, and field test to gauge quality. In the three-year period over 30 million textbooks and learning materials (TLM) representing some 500 different titles in 13 languages were produced.⁵⁴

Improving Literacy

One of USAID's strategic goals for education assistance has been to improve reading skills for 100 million children in primary grades by 2015. While many of the types of education assistance

⁴⁹ Edward Jay Allan, Project Director and Nancy Horn, Team Leader, Evaluation of the USAID-Funded Textbooks and Learning Materials Program (TLMP) in Ethiopia, Ghana, Malawi, Senegal, South Africa and Tanzania, U.S. Agency for International Development, Final Evaluation Report - Volume II - Country Reports, December 2013, p.47, at http://pdf.usaid.gov/pdf_docs/pa00jmr7.pdf.

⁵⁰ *USAID Education Strategy 2011-2015*, p.7.

⁵¹ USAID response to CRS, July 11, 2016.

⁵² The Africa Education Initiative was launched in 2002 as a \$200 million, five-year initiative to "increase access to quality basic education and to increase the number of teachers in Africa, especially at the primary school level." USAID partnered primarily with U.S. universities and worked closely with host country ministries of education to ensure the success of its mission (http://pdf.usaid.gov/pdf_docs/PBAAB310.pdf). In 2005, President Bush announced the continuation and expansion AEI for an additional four years and \$400 million (<https://georgewbush-whitehouse.archives.gov/news/releases/2005/06/20050630-7.html>).

⁵³ Chicago State University (Ghana), Alabama A&M (Ethiopia), Elizabeth City [NC] State University (Senegal), South Carolina State University (Tanzania), and the University of Texas San Antonio (South Africa and Malawi).

⁵⁴ Edward Jay Allan, Project Director and Nancy Horn, Team Leader, Evaluation of the USAID-Funded Textbooks and Learning Materials Program (TLMP) in Ethiopia, Ghana, Malawi, Senegal, South Africa and Tanzania, USAID, Final Evaluation - Volume I, December 7, 2013, at http://pdf.usaid.gov/pdf_docs/PA00JMR6.pdf.

may contribute to this goal, USAID implements numerous programs directly targeting literacy in developing countries.

One example of a USAID-run literacy program is the Literacy, Language, and Learning Initiative (L3) in Rwanda (2014-2016). Under the program, USAID's implementing partner, the Educational Development Center, Inc., has sought to work with the Rwandan Ministry of Education to improve primary students' (grades one through four) literacy and numeracy skills. It created national reading performance standards and worked with facilitators to introduce proven reading teaching strategies using innovative instructional materials. Writers' workshops were used to produce locally developed reading materials; audio instruction programs were developed to reinforce both teachers' and students' reading and English language skills; "traveling libraries" were deployed to low-income, rural communities; and more than 1 million supplementary books were distributed. A midline assessment in October 2015 found that learners in all grades showed improvement in their reading from the baseline.⁵⁵

USAID continues to seek new, more effective methods for achieving its development goals, including the goal of improving literacy. Through its Global Development Lab, USAID launched *All Children Reading: A Grand Challenge for Development* in 2011 as a \$25 million partnership with World Vision and the Australian government. According to USAID, the competition "leverages science and technology to improve literacy skills in developing countries by advancing partnerships and soliciting ideas for creative, cost-effective innovations from the science, technology, education and broader development communities."⁵⁶ The initiative is structured as a series of competitions, through which innovative ideas may find pilot funding and eventually be "scaled-up" and adopted more broadly.

The first round (2011-2013) received 450 submissions and resulted in 32 projects in 22 countries. The second round (2014-2017) is focused on technology-based innovations and targets three specific focus areas: (1) mother tongue instruction and reading materials; (2) family and community engagement; and (3) children with disabilities. The second round has received 214 proposals, from which 14 winners have been selected to date.⁵⁷ Projects have included the following:

- Save the Children in Sri Lanka is developing simple, replicable strategies for identifying the causes of reading problems of early grade children along with a package of low-cost, easy-to-implement learning and teacher training materials to increase reading levels.
- Sesame Workshop Initiatives India Pvt. Ltd. is building a mobile app to allow children to read and learn at their own pace in the Marathi language.
- University of Jyväskylä, Finland, in Zambia, is developing a literacy game for children to improve teacher in-service training, help identify struggling students, and support basic reading skills in the local language.
- SIL International has built software that facilitates creation of books in a mother tongue.

⁵⁵ Education Development Center, Inc. for USAID, *Literacy, Language and Learning Initiative (L3): National Fluency Assessment of Rwandan Schools*, Midline Report, January 2016, at http://pdf.usaid.gov/pdf_docs/pa00m41r.pdf.

⁵⁶ USAID, *Partnering for Impact: USAID and the Private Sector*, 2014-2015.

⁵⁷ The information in this section is drawn from the *All Children Reading: A Grand Challenge for Development* site, available at <http://allchildrenreading.org>.

Participant Training and Workforce Development

USAID provides a wide range of academic and non-academic training intended to convey knowledge and skills that would enable a participant to contribute to country development goals. Many of these programs fall under the umbrella of “participant training,” which includes any structured long- (more than six months) or short-term (less than six months) educational program provided in the United States, a recipient country, or a third country.

Historically, participant training has been a significant part of USAID’s development strategy. Participant training was especially important in building the capacities of developing country government cadres in the first decades after their independence, when there was a scarcity of almost every skill and expertise. Because established educational institutions were lacking in many countries, most participant training was conducted in the United States. As late as FY1993, 14,382 participants were trained in the United States, 5,640 of whom were in formal academic programs (41% Masters, 21% Ph.D.), largely in development priority fields such as industry and engineering (29%), agriculture (27%), and business and public administration (23%).⁵⁸ In FY2015, the number receiving U.S. training was sharply diminished largely due to the high cost—only 1,011 participants received long-term U.S. training, another 1,428 received short-term training. Overall, in FY2015, including U.S., host, and third-country training, there were 365,818 participants on long-term programs and 2,371,482 participants on short-term programs, the latter mostly technical training, study visits, and leadership development programs.

One of the few higher education scholarship programs still providing education in the United States is the Scholarships for Education and Economic Development (SEED) program aimed at Latin America and the Caribbean. Under SEED, launched in 2008 as a continuation of much larger programs begun in 1984, over 1,340 participants were expected to complete their studies by end of 2015.⁵⁹ A 2012 evaluation of the cost-effectiveness of the program, however, noted that the cost per beneficiary was high compared to other development assistance programs—a one-year scholarship of U.S.-based academic training cost \$25,000 per participant versus \$1,000 for workforce development programs conducted in the Latin American region.⁶⁰

Most workforce programs are linked in some way to specific development goals. In Afghanistan, for example, the USAID program Promote targets “the education, promotion, and training of a new generation of Afghan women leaders with the goal of increasing women’s contributions to Afghanistan’s development.”⁶¹ Among other activities, it includes the following programs:

- **Women in Government** provides internships for high school and university graduate students interested in working in government with the goal of bringing more women into public service.
- **Women’s Leadership in the Economy** focuses on workforce and private sector development with the aim of equipping women with the tools they need to contribute to Afghanistan’s economic development and poverty reduction goals.

⁵⁸ USAID, Office of International Training, *Participant Training Program: Statistics for FY1993*, January 1994, p. 2.

⁵⁹ SEED was a continuation of CASS, the Cooperative Association of States for Scholars program (1989 through 2008), which itself was an extension of the Latin America and Caribbean Higher Education Scholarship Program (1984-1988).

⁶⁰ USAID, *Background on Scholarships for Education and Economic Development*.

⁶¹ Unless otherwise indicated, information on Promote is drawn from USAID’s Promote site, available at <https://promoteafghanwomen.org/en>.

- **Education** provides scholarships to 580 women to complete undergraduate and graduate degrees, as well as professional certification programs at American University of Afghanistan or the American University of Central Asia.⁶²

Several agencies provide vocational training in their workforce development programs. The Department of Labor’s Engaged, Educated, Empowered, Ethiopian Youth Project (E4Y) (2014-2018) addresses the existence of child labor in Ethiopia, often due to the large portion (80%) of Ethiopian youth who have left school by age 15. To mitigate child labor growth, E4Y seeks to improve educational attainment and provide greater access to appropriate and safe work opportunities for youth engaged in or at risk of child labor. Among other activities, the program provides vocational and skills training; places youth in apprenticeships and appropriate jobs; and assists with job searches. Ultimately, it aims to work with 12,000 Ethiopian youth between the ages of 14 and 17. Of those selected, at least 6,500 will be female and 400 will have disabilities.⁶³

After the 2004 Indian Ocean earthquake and tsunami, USAID launched a vocational scholarship and job training program in Indonesia in a partnership with Chevron Corporation to improve the livelihoods of those most vulnerable following the tsunami. It provided scholarships for more than 300 youth—primarily from the Aceh province and the island of Nias—between the ages of 16 and 27 to attend a three-month vocational skill-building training. It offered courses in masonry, electrical installation, bookkeeping, welding, electronic repair, and carpentry, among others.⁶⁴

School Construction

A number of agencies have been involved in school construction programs. The Department of Defense (DOD) undertakes construction projects particularly in areas affected by natural disasters or conflict. U.S. military forces rehabilitated or reconstructed many schools during the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan. In 2015, during a deployment to Honduras to assist with hurricane disaster relief, Marines completed the construction of three new elementary schools in Puerto Lempira.⁶⁵

The MCC’s 2005-2007 Burkina Faso Threshold Program, aimed at improving girls’ education in the 10 provinces that had the lowest number of girls’ primary education completion rates, included a schools construction component that built 132 “girl-friendly” schools. These schools were intended to create a safe environment for girls by providing separate girls’ and boys’ bathrooms, on-site canteens, day care centers, and safe access to water.⁶⁶

Perhaps the most well-known USAID school construction program is the American Schools and Hospitals Abroad (ASHA) program. In existence since the late 1940s, the program provides educational and medical facilities to U.S. affiliated institutions around the world. In the 2013-2014 period, approximately half of the \$42 million appropriated for ASHA was committed to

⁶² USAID, *Fact Sheet: Promote-Scholarship*, at <https://www.usaid.gov/news-information/fact-sheets/promote-scholarship>.

⁶³ U.S. Department of Labor, *Technical Cooperation Project Summary: Engaged, Educated, Empowered, Ethiopian Youth Project (E4Y)*, at https://www.dol.gov/ilab/projects/summaries/Ethiopia_E4Y.pdf.

⁶⁴ Lembaga Pengabdian Kepada Masyarakat for USAID, *USAID-Chevron Vocational Training Monitoring & Evaluation*, Final Report, September 2007, at http://pdf.usaid.gov/pdf_docs/pdacr392.pdf.

⁶⁵ United States Southern Command, “Marines Complete Training Deployment to Central America,” press release, November 9, 2015, at <http://www.southcom.mil/>.

⁶⁶ MCC, *Burkina Faso Threshold Program*, at <https://www.mcc.gov/where-we-work/program/burkina-faso-threshold-program>.

education initiatives. Of that, \$7 million was dedicated to 12 construction projects.⁶⁷ ASHA projects include initiatives at various levels of education from secondary to university level. Individual FY2015 projects include the following examples:

- construction of a new facility to expand Ashesi University College's engineering program in Ghana;
- construction of new middle school classrooms, dining halls, and bathrooms, and installation of new water, power, and waste systems for the Abaarso School of Science and Technology in Somalia;
- extension of an outdoor recreational area and construction of a new, two-story performing arts building for the Hughes Schools in Bolivia; and
- construction of a library and multimedia resource center designed to improve access to information and promote gender equality at the Dar al-Kalima University College of Arts & Culture in the West Bank.⁶⁸

Author Information

Curt Tarnoff
Specialist in Foreign Affairs

Acknowledgments

This report was produced with the invaluable and extensive research and writing assistance of Emily Morgenstern, CRS Research Associate.

Disclaimer

This document was prepared by the Congressional Research Service (CRS). CRS serves as nonpartisan shared staff to congressional committees and Members of Congress. It operates solely at the behest of and under the direction of Congress. Information in a CRS Report should not be relied upon for purposes other than public understanding of information that has been provided by CRS to Members of Congress in connection with CRS's institutional role. CRS Reports, as a work of the United States Government, are not subject to copyright protection in the United States. Any CRS Report may be reproduced and distributed in its entirety without permission from CRS. However, as a CRS Report may include copyrighted images or material from a third party, you may need to obtain the permission of the copyright holder if you wish to copy or otherwise use copyrighted material.

⁶⁷ USAID, *Office of American Schools & Hospitals Abroad, Report for Fiscal Years 2013 & 2014*, p. 9, at <https://www.usaid.gov/sites/default/files/documents/1866/FINAL%20VERSION%20ASHA%20ANNUAL%20REPORT%20FY%2013%2014.pdf>.

⁶⁸ USAID, *USAID American Schools and Hospitals Abroad Awards for FY2015*.