



**USAID**  
FROM THE AMERICAN PEOPLE



## DEVELOPING ETHIOPIA'S YOUTH

“We cannot always build the future for our youth, but we can build our youth for the future.” – *Former U.S. President Franklin D. Roosevelt*

Ethiopia's youthful population is an incredible asset and untapped resource for positive growth. Of Ethiopia's population, estimated at 104 million, 41 percent is under the age of 15. More than 28 percent is aged 15 to 29. Youth unemployment is estimated at nearly 27 percent. One reason for the high youth unemployment rate is low literacy (68 percent). Ethiopia's secondary school gross enrollment rate is 39.8 percent—far too inadequate for a country with Ethiopia's natural resources, economic potential and global ambition. Technical and vocational education and training reached 352,000 students in 2015 and female enrolment continues to be higher than male enrolment.

### WHY IS THIS IMPORTANT FOR ETHIOPIA

As Ethiopia's population age structure changes, the knowledge, skills, and capabilities of its future working-age population will determine the extent to which it can realize its demographic dividend and the associated economic growth all Ethiopians desire. These individuals, when properly educated and trained, represent the labor force that will support Ethiopia's industrialization and progression toward middle income status.

### WHY IS THIS IMPORTANT FOR THE UNITED STATES

In 2012, USAID launched its Youth in Development Policy to strengthen and expand high-quality youth programming. Ethiopia's national youth policy also aims to enable youth to participate in the process of building a democratic system, good governance and development endeavors. The policy seeks to ensure

that youth have the professional competence, skill and ethics to participate in and benefit from Ethiopia's accelerated development. Ethiopia can only accelerate the nation's development progress by strengthening its commitment to young people and to their health, education, and job prospects.

## PROGRAMMING

**EXPANDING ECONOMIC OPPORTUNITIES FOR YOUTH:** At the core of our strategy to support Ethiopia's Economic Growth and Transformation Plan is the U.S. Government's **Feed the Future** initiative. Launched in 2015, our Building the Potential of Youth activity is integrated into Feed the Future activities and zones of influence in the Amhara, Oromia, Tigray and the Southern Nations, Nationalities and People's regions. This activity focuses on providing unemployed and underemployed youth ages 15 to 29 with tools needed to succeed, while building the ability of national and local institutions to deliver demand-driven soft and hard skills. This activity helps youth in rural areas and towns obtain the abilities, knowledge, and social capital to increase their income and long-term economic self-sufficiency.

**AGRICULTURE AND BEYOND:** Our four development fund security activities and two Feed the Future activities are enhancing economic opportunities for unemployed and under-employed rural youth with technical training and assistance, youth financial services, and intensive coaching. The Pastoralists' area Resilience Improvement through Market Expansion Activity assists youth to attend technical and vocational education and training, creates job opportunities and job linkages with employers and micro-franchises, and conducts training in adult literacy, behavior change and nutrition.

**MAKING YOUTH HEALTHY:** In the area of HIV, we are working on training, educating and improving the livelihoods of youth, orphans and vulnerable children. HIV prevention interventions target vulnerable youth who are part of groups that are at increased risk of HIV infection, such as mobile and migrant workers. Our HIV activities reach 400,000 to 500,000 youth each year with comprehensive HIV prevention services, and through our orphans and vulnerable children program, we support more than 200,000 youth. In addition, we train social workers in collaboration with the Government of Ethiopia's technical, vocational education and training centers. All of the trainees are youth and many are adolescent girls.

**INVOLVING YOUTH IN DEMOCRACY:** The Access to Justice and Legal Awareness Program supports 69 law students at the Haramaya University to serve as paralegals at legal aid clinics. The law students offer free legal aid services to residents from low income and/or marginalized areas of East and West Hararge Zones of Oromia and Harari Regional State, while at the same time, getting practical legal training. The Akobo Conflict Mitigation and Violence Prevention Activity provides vocational skills training to youth in Gambella Region. In addition, the Sustained Dialogue Activity targets young people in five universities. The goal of this activity is to create a culture of trust and collaboration to increase resilience to triggers, produce more broad-minded graduates, and reduce social interaction and inter-group violence.