

SKYE Project Coaching Survey Report

Coaching is not a standalone intervention. Research demonstrates that youth who have someone that encourages them and believes in their skills and abilities is in a better position to achieve their goals.¹ Coaching is a key component of the USAID-funded SKYE Project in Guyana. The project recruits full-time coaches to support youth during the work-readiness training and in their job search.

The SKYE project and EDC’s Youth Team are interested in gaining a better understanding of the value of coaching as a project intervention. In order to achieve this, the project administered a Coaching Survey to over 300 SKYE training graduates in March 2015. The objective of the SKYE Coaching Survey is two-fold:

1. *To assess how helpful the coaches are for youth;*
2. *To assess which aspects of the coaching are most useful for youth when looking for a job, entering the workforce, or starting their own business.*

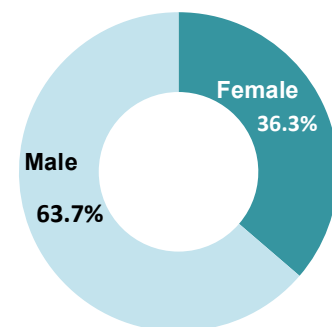
The following report details the results of the coaching survey in four sections: 1) Demographics of the sample, 2) Employment and the job search, 3) Overall coaching experience and 4) Final comments from SKYE youth.

Key Demographics

A total of 303 youth were surveyed. These youth had completed the SKYE training within the past six months. The **mean age of the sample was 20 years old** with a minimum of 15 and a maximum of 25 years old.

- **Sex:** About two-thirds of SKYE youth interviewed for the coaching survey were male and one-third was female.
- **Geographic Region:** Respondents were from five regions. Over 50% of respondents were in Region 4, 20% was from Region 6, 16.5% from Region 10, 6.3% from Region 3 and 3.3% from Region 5.

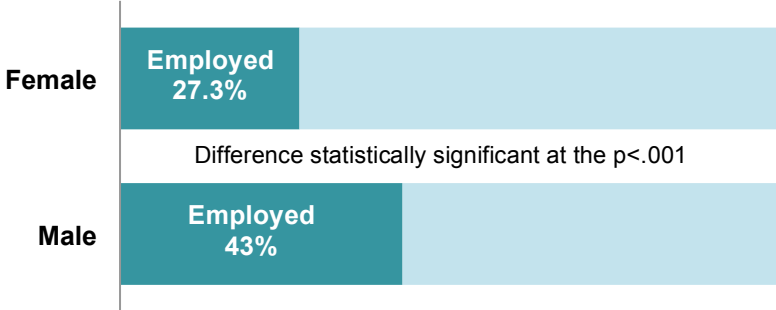
Sex of respondents



¹ Rhodes, J.E. & DuBois D.I (2008) “Mentoring Relationships and Program for Youth.” Association for Psychological Science, 17 (4), 254 - 258; Tolan P., Henry, D., Schoeny, M., Lovegrove, P. and E. Nichols (2013). “Mentoring interventions to affect juvenile delinquency and associated problems.” Journal of Experimental Criminology. 10 (2), pp. 179-206.

Employment and the Job Search

At the time of the survey, 37.3% of youth interviewed were working and 62.7% reported not earning money or being paid in other ways for their work. When disaggregated by sex, more young men were working than young women. 43% of male respondents reported being employed as opposed to only 27.3% of female respondents.



Of those who are employed (n=113), over 90% of them are working for someone else. Only 11 youth, or 9.7% reported being self-employed.

Employed youth worked in a variety of sectors. Between sexes there was no statistically significant difference in sectors where youth were employed. The **most common sectors** were:

1. General services (16%)
2. Food/restaurant services (12.4%)
3. Telecommunications and appliances (12.4%)
4. Business/enterprise (12.4%)

The average length of employment or time running their business was 8.92 months (standard deviation= 6.37). The average number of jobs since completing SKYE (*working for someone else youth only*) was 1.38 jobs. Over 93% of youth working for someone else reported less than three jobs since finishing SKYE.

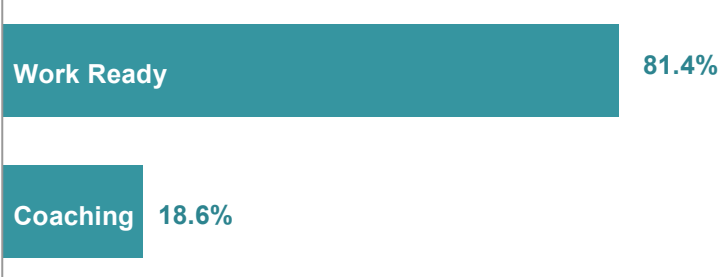
Youth working for someone else:

When asked if coaching was helpful in looking for a job, 66.7% of youth working for someone else replied that it was helpful. Those youth that reported coaching being helpful were asked about the specifics of why they found coaching helpful in looking for work. Youth were asked to select all that applied and the following is a table of the responses:

How was coaching helpful in looking for work? (n= 68)	
My coach placed me in a job	39.7% (n=27)
Coaching gave me confidence to look for work	32.4% (n=22)
My coach gave me the skills to look for work	17.6% (n=12)
My coach gave me the information to look for work	66.2% (n=45)
My coach told me about job opportunities	70.5% (n=48)

Although the majority of youth reported that coaching was helpful in looking for work, they still believe that the Work Ready training was more helpful in finding a job. Over 81% of youth reported that the Work Ready training was more helpful than SKYE coaching.

Which is more helpful for finding a job?



Youth self-employed:

There was only a small group of youth that reported being self-employed. A total of 11 youth said that they ran their own microbusinesses. Of these youth, almost all of them said that coaching was helpful in starting their own business. 81.8% (or 9 youth) reported positively and were asked about the specifics of how coaching helped them start their own enterprise. Their responses are summarized in the following table:

How was coaching helpful in starting your own business (n=9)	
Coaching gave me confidence to start my own business	88.9% (n=8)
My coach gave me skills to start my own business	33.3% (n=3)
My coach gave me the information to start my own business	77.8% (n=7)
My coach told me about business opportunities	100% (n=9)

Similar to their peers who are working for someone else, self-employed SKYE graduates thought that the Work Ready training was more helpful than coaching for starting their own business. Nine out of 11 youth believed that the Work Ready training was more helpful.

Additional skills coaches may help with:

Individual Livelihood Plan: About 71% of youth reported that their coaches helped them with issues important to their ILPs. About 6% and 23% of youth reported 'sometimes' or 'no', respectively.

Only 12.5% of youth said that there were skills the coach could not help them with. About 26% of these youth said that the coach could not help them with finding work. Some of the most common things that are mentioned are actually captured in the 'other' option:

- **Technology and computer science support**—several youth mentioned the desire to have their coach help them in IT related tasks and coaching, but the coach was unable to do so;
- **Technical skills**—several youth wanted vocational specific training in agriculture, cosmetology, music etc. that the coach could not provide;

- **Communication**—15% of youth mentioned communication as something that coaches could not help them with. Several other students mentioned communication related issues like shyness and personal conflicts that the coach could not address.

Overall Coaching Experience

The majority of youth respondents said that SKYE coaching was very helpful. About 68% of youth rated their overall coaching experience as very helpful, 23% responded that it was somewhat helpful, and only 8.6% rated it not helpful.

Youth’s description of the level of support from their coaches ranged from ‘consistently the right amount’ to ‘not enough support’:

Male respondents rated the level of support more positively than female respondents.

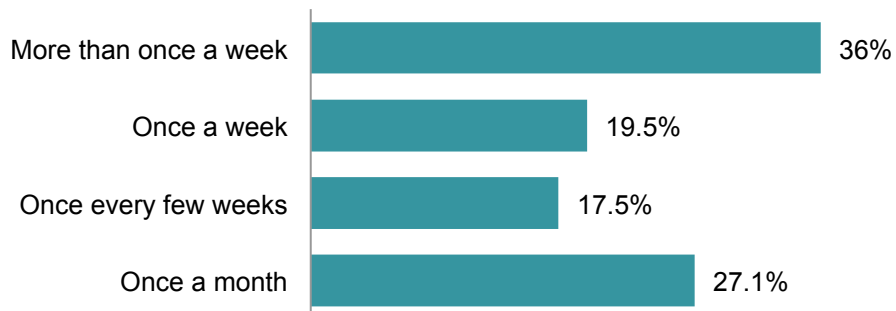
- **Consistently the right amount**—64%
- **Sometimes the right amount, but would have liked more**—21.8%
- **Not enough support**—14.2%

When broken down by gender, **young men rated the level of support higher than young women.** The difference between sexes is statistically significant at the $p < .025$ level.

The coaching experience of SKYE youth appears to vary greatly in time, consistency, and the coaches’ role. The time that youth interacted with their coach was on average less than 30 minutes per session. About 80% of youth said that the time spent with their coach was less than 30 minutes, and 17% reported between 30 minutes and 1 hour as the average session.

When asked about **how often they communicated with their coach**, the frequency of communication was quite varied from once a month to more than once a week on average. Most commonly, the coaches interacted with the youth more than once a week. But as seen in the comments section of the survey, much of this communication was not in person. Several youth asked for an increase in the in-person interactions apart from the coaches dropping in on training. The second most commonly cited frequency was ‘once a month’ with 27% of youth reporting that they interacted with their coach on average only about once a month.

Frequency of communication with a coach



Youth were asked about the top three most **useful aspects of the coaching experience**. They ranked their choices as 1st, 2nd and 3rd most useful. The three most commonly selected aspects of coaching that the youth found helpful were the following:

1. *Someone to talk to*
2. *Job advice and placement*
3. *Guidance about life planning and goal setting*

Youth responses are summarized in the following table:

The most useful part of having a coach (Percentage of youth that marked each option as one of their top three choices)	
Someone to talk to	89.9%
Job advice/placement	78.6%
Guidance about life planning/setting goals	75.7%
Handling personal issues	38.1%
Kept me from risky behavior	6.6%
Helped me with the probation officer	0.3%

Self-Confidence:

Mentorship is not a standalone concept, as it is linked to confidence building. Research demonstrates that personal attitude towards one’s work is important in developing a sense of employability. Increases in confidence can help youth acquire a new job and maintain a current job. With this in mind, youth were asked if coaching increased their level of self-confidence. **Over 81% of youth reported that they feel more self-confident from their coaching experience.** The remaining 19% of youth did not feel that coaching had made them more confident.

Young men reported improved self-confidence more frequently than female youth.

When broken down by gender, **young men reported improved self-confidence more frequently than female youth.** 85.5% of male respondents and 74.5% of females reported increased confidence. The difference between sexes is statistically significant at the p<.001 level.

Additionally, when broken down by region, youth in Region 3 reported increased confidence the most infrequently at only 68.4%. In contrast, 90% of Region 5 and Region 10 youth reported increased confidence. The difference between Region 3 and Regions 5 and 10 is statistically significant at the p<.01 level.

Percentage of youth that feel more self-confident from coaching (by region)



The youth that reported increased confidence from coaching were then asked to explain exactly how their coached helped them work on self-confidence. The most commonly cited response was that coaches “encouraged [youth] when facing a challenge.” For this question, there was no difference in responses between sexes or geographic regions. Youth responses are summarized in the following table:

How did your coach increase your confidence? (n=247)	
Encouraged me when facing a challenge	77.3%
Believed in me	54.3%
Told me about options I didn’t know about	46.6%
Helped me recognize my existing skills and qualities	41.7%

Interestingly enough, the majority of youth reported having a role model other than their coach. There was no statistical difference between sexes in the response. 85% of young men and 83.6% of young women said that they have another person in their life that they consider a role model.

The sex of the coaches:

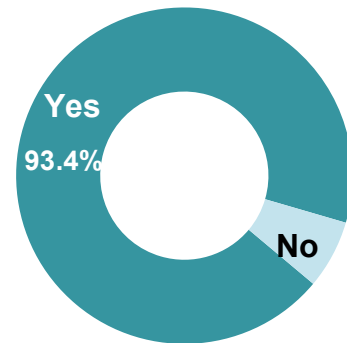
It was about a fifty-fifty split between youth that had a coach of the same sex and those that had a coach of the opposite sex. There is no difference between the female and male respondents in how many had coaches of the same sex despite having several youth mention in the comments section that the project should recruit more male coaches.

There was speculation that the sex of the coach would matter in building a relationship with youth. Having a coach of the opposite gender appears to be more of a concern for female participants. Over 37% of female respondents thought that the sex of the coach made a difference in how helpful or effective he/she was. In contrast, only 23% of male respondents believed so. The difference between sexes is statistically significant at the $p < .001$ level.

Having a coach of the opposite gender appears to be more of a concern for female participants.

Were there issues you could not discuss with your coach?

Almost all youth reported having issues that they couldn't discuss with their coaches. The majority mentioned relationships with family or significant others as being taboo. Interestingly, three youth cited "employment" as something they could not discuss with their coach (*In Regions 3 and 4*).



Final Comments from SKYE Youth

About one-third of youth provided optional comments at the end of the survey. **About 70% of these youth mentioned the need for more time, especially face-to-face interactions, with their coaches.** There should be "more individual attention needed from coach outside of the group meetings," suggested one youth. Another suggested, "Have coaches who are more actively involved with their youth and more accessible, not just a phone call here and there for a few minutes, but actually visit and mentor."

Additional comments fell into these categories:

1. **Maintain relationship after youth finish SKYE (8.4%)**—"Have regular check-ups even after the program. sometimes there's a need to talk with someone for advice, etc."
2. **Try not to change coaches on youth (4.2%)**—"Participants should have one coach for the duration of the training. When coaches are replaced, there is a break in relationship between both parties and it becomes confusing. In my case my coach proceeded on leave, and I was assigned another coach."
3. **Provide more assistance with finding employment (5.3%)**—"When jobs are promised, the coach should try their best to find job placement. Also they should recommend jobs in line with the youth skill set."
4. **Inform youth when they are done with the program (4.2%)**—"It would have been nice to know when I was taken off the project, because after the training I spoke with my coach 3 times, and I remember the same coach telling me they keep you on for about a year."
5. **Recruit more male coaches (3.2%)**—"My coach was great except you guys should hire more male coaches, because we could interact differently with a male role model, cause a lot of them ain't around."