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EQuALLS2 PROJECT
EDUCATION QUALITY AND ACCESS FOR LEARNING AND LIVELIHOOD SKILLS PROJECT

Workforce development initiatives for out-of-school youth –What works?

A participatory research with youth and communities in Southern Philippines

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A participatory research with youth and communities in Southern Philippines

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

ARMM	Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao
ALS	Alternative Learning System
EQuALLS	Education Quality and Access to Learning and Livelihood Skills
EQuALLS2	EQuALLS Phase 2
FGD	Focus group discussion
LGU	Local government unit
NC I	National Certificate I
NC II	National Certificate II
OSCY	Out-of-school children and youth
OSY	Out-of-school youth
TESDA	Technical Education and Skills Development Authority
WFD	Workforce Development

DEFINITION OF TERMS

Barangay or purok	Lowest unit of government in the Philippines, equivalent to a hamlet or village (in a rural setting, about 200–500 households)
Barangay facilitator	EQuALLS2 project staff assigned to coordinate activities at the barangay
Capital	Goods and cash that are accumulated and used in a business
City	An alternative designation of the middle tier of local government, composed of a set of barangays meeting a high level of urbanization according to official criteria
Developmental assets	The relationships, opportunities, and personal qualities that young people need to avoid risks and to thrive (http://www.search-institute.org/content/what-are-developmental-assets)
Fixed capital	Capital in the form of buildings and durable goods, including inventory
Life skills	A group of psycho-social and interpersonal skills that can help people make informed decisions, communicate effectively, and develop coping and self-management skills (http://www.unicef.org/ lifeskills/index_7308.html)
Municipal coordinator	EQuALLS2 project staff assigned to coordinate organizational activities at the town level
Municipality	A middle tier of local government, composed of a set of barangays, with its own elected executive and legislative officials
National Certificate I	The first level of qualification certified by TESDA; worker performs routine tasks that require no autonomous judgment
National Certificate II	The second level of qualification certified by TESDA; worker performs routine tasks that involve limited complexity and making choices among a defined set of options
Out-of-school youth	Persons aged15–24 years, not enrolled, not employed, and not a tertiary-level graduate (http://www.nscb.gov.ph/ru12/DEFINE/DEF-EDUC.HTM)
Out-of-school children and youth	Children aged 7–14 years who are not enrolled, along with OSY
Province	The highest tier of local government, composed of a set of municipalities and component cities, with its own elected executive and legislative officials
Subjective rating	An act by which a subject assigns a number, from an arbitrary scale, that best represents his or her opinion about the degree to which an effect or trait is being exhibited. A common example is a movie critic's numerical rating of the quality of a particular film.
Work readiness skills	An ideal skill set needed to prepare a new entrant to the workforce; composed of basic knowledge (such as reading comprehension) as well as applied skills (which are more behavioral and cognitive). These are transferable skills that apply to any work setting, including employment and self-employment, regardless of the nature of the work.
Working capital	Current assets net of current liabilities; more loosely, cash balances of the business for financing current expenditures
Year	Refers exclusively to a calendar year

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Overview

EQuALLS2 has undertaken a research initiative to examine the effect of EQuALLS2 Workforce Development (WFD) offerings on youth and their communities, with the goal of identifying factors contributing to the success of WFD programs. Data for this study were collected by field investigation covering youth, employers, parents of completers (i.e. out-of-school youth who have completed an EQuALLS2 workforce development training course) and community leaders in EQuALLS2 areas. Youth respondents were divided into those who had completed EQuALLS2 training, and a comparison or control group who had not been exposed to WFD programs. Interviews and structured FGDs were conducted to generate open discussion on the issues of demand for skilled workers, supply of skilled work (and related demand by OSY for skills training), training outcomes, and effectiveness of WFD programs.

This study is based on qualitative evidence grounded in field investigation, rather than quantitative or statistical survey data. Field investigation is limited to the areas in which the WFD trainings were conducted; the types of trainings conducted in these areas were short-term courses (two to four weeks), that is, sufficient for some types of National Competency (NC) I certification, but short of NC II certification. We hope that, despite these limitations, the study provides useful information for a better understanding of WFD programs and ways of improving other similar efforts in this field.

Findings

1. Demand for skilled workers (labor demand):

There is little evidence for unmet demand for skilled workers, whether directly from firms or indirectly through self-employment. With respect to wage employment: *Highly rated skills are related to general work readiness rather than narrow technical specialization*. The worker competency rated most important to business is having positive values, followed by work ethic. Work readiness skills are also rated most difficult to find among job candidates.

With respect to self-employment, *entrepreneurship is regarded by employers as a difficult and, initially, fragile source of livelihood*. Some of the critical success factors identified by the respondents are access to capital (both fixed and working), access to a relatively large market with limited competition, access to a network of customers, know-how in managing finances, and so on.

2. Supply of potential workforce:

Out-of-school youth, whether exposed to WFD programs or not, are willing to devote time and effort for short-term skills training. All our youth groups expressed their willingness to supply labor in response to labor demand, particularly for jobs requiring skilled work. This in turn leads to a strong expressed demand for the competencies that can be gained from WFD programs, and therefore investment in time and effort for participating in training. However, this observation holds for short-term courses (two weeks to one month), as well as courses that do not require cash spending (for fare, or board and lodging). Longer courses may be less attractive to potential learners; and for training venues that are too remote for OSY residences, external support may be required to sustain OSY participation (e.g., free board and lodging, transportation allowance).

3. Outcome of WFD programs:

WFD completers attest to favorable outcomes in terms of acquiring work readiness skills rather than in terms of improved employment and income. WFD completers who remain in their localities realize meager gains in terms of employment or income. Rather, training appears to have greater effect with respect to non-financial dimensions, such as inculcation of work ethic, and acquisition of developmental assets. Such work readiness skills are also deemed by learners as the most important ingredients for a successful life. Meanwhile, parents and community leaders also recognize the importance of work readiness skills, as well as the contribution of WFD training toward acquiring these skills. Both parents and community leaders tend to have an optimistic view of the economic benefits from training.

4. Factors that contribute to successful WFD programs:

Training more effectively translates into local employment when the skill being developed is more closely connected to local demand. At a very localized level (e.g., a village), employment gains are likely to be realized from household and community services or products, such as electrical wiring, massage, or baking. As the geographic scope of the labor market widens, the set of skills likely to translate into gainful employment also broadens—thus, OSY should be willing and able to commute or migrate, in order to realize these gains.

In case of employment generated by youth enterprises, necessary conditions for success are a cohesive organization and effective leadership. In addition to strong linkage to the local market, youth enterprises need to be sustained by appropriate organizational and leadership qualities; or else they would be prone to unraveling.

Offering more options in terms of longer training and a wider set of skills may improve the effectiveness of WFD programs. Learners and other stakeholders consistently point to the need for a wider menu of offerings. This includes longer-term courses (leading to NC II certification), which can be opened to some learners willing to make the investment in time and effort.

Effectiveness of training is highly dependent on post-training assistance. Post-training assistance refers to supplemental and purposeful activities that assist learners' transition from training and education to the world

of work. Successful instances of youth employment observed in the field received strong support from other stakeholders, most notably local governments. Assistance can cover capital support, as well as support to fulfill regulatory and institutional steps that may represent a barrier to employment.

Effective WFD programs integrate work readiness and technical skills training. Although inculcation of cross-cutting skills that lead to work readiness may have intangible benefits, these are regarded by learners and stakeholders as making the more important contribution to later success in life. Existing WFD programs are valued for the way they integrate technical training with inculcation of work readiness. In case of employment generated by youth enterprises, necessary conditions for success are a cohesive organization and effective leadership, which are examples of work readiness skills. In addition to strong linkage to the local market, youth enterprises need to be sustained by appropriate organizational and leadership qualities; else they would be prone to unraveling.

Implications

The first key implication is that **WFD programs that are truly demand-driven would consider downstream demand for services and skills of completers, along with expressed preferences of beneficiaries**. Although preferences of beneficiaries are an obvious criterion for what constitutes "demand-driven," this is far from sufficient. The criterion of downstream demand would certainly favor the category of household, community, and personal services (hairdressing, massage, motor vehicle repair, electrical wiring, catering, etc.), though cultural acceptability of some types of services should be double-checked (e.g., massage in some areas). Specialized types of skills required by enterprises (rather than households), such as welding and machine operation, should be offered as part of a broader strategy for WFD, rather than on a stand-alone basis.

Related to this is the second key implication: **WFD programs should have an explicit strategy of post-training assistance to ensure long-term effectiveness**. Training courses that were provided on a stand-alone basis, without further support for trainees, typically did not translate into significant livelihood improvement among completers. In the exceptional cases, there was strong post-training support from local governments and other stakeholders in the community.

The third key implication is that **WFD programs should explicitly aim for the inculcation of work readiness among OSY**. WFD programs should target acquisition of both technical as well as cross-cutting work readiness skills. This is not to imply that current WFD programs have omitted work readiness; on the contrary, similar types of skills are already being mainstreamed into technical-vocation education, as seen in standard TESDA curriculums. In practice, however, the emphasis still falls heavily on technical skills. WFD programs should integrate work readiness skills more intentionally, not just in the curriculum, but in the entire training process, such as in screening of trainers, instruction, testing, certification, monitoring and evaluation, and community advocacy.

1. RATIONALE AND BACKGROUND

The EQuALLS2 project aims to improve basic education in conflict-affected areas of Mindanao in southern Philippines, by empowering and tooling communities to support better education, building teachers' capacity and resources, and offering alternative learning and livelihood opportunities for OSCY. Its OSCY component provides a menu of offerings that includes alternative education in non-formal settings as well as livelihood and WFD skills training.

EQuALLS2 undertook a small research study to examine the effects of its WFD offerings on youth and their communities to identify key elements that contribute to successful WFD programming. This study incorporated innovative tools and methodologies that included documenting the data collection process with the use of video for further analysis and later dissemination of findings. Through a qualitative approach, this study examined the outcomes of WFD programs of EQuALLS2 on youth, their workplaces, and their communities. The output of the research study includes a written research report and a video. This written report describes in full

the research objectives, methodology, findings, limitations, and conclusions of this study. The video synthesizes the findings of the study, focusing on the key elements for successful WFD programs, for a broader audience.

2. RESEARCH OBJECTIVES AND METHODOLOGY

Objectives

The key objectives of the study are these:

i) Describe the reach and depth of EQuALLS2 WFD outcomes.
ii) Identify the key elements for successful WFD programs targeting OSY in selected regions in Mindanao.

Objectives were met through a field investigation involving FGDs and interviews with youth, community leaders, family members, and employers, an approach also known as *rapid appraisal* (World Bank, 2003). The study was based on the following principles:

- Researching and analyzing supply-and-demand effects
- A commitment to finding and studying representative and accurate information
- Tapping and cross-referencing existing EQuALLS2 research

Related literature

A few recent studies present findings characterizing OSY and WFD in Mindanao that are of direct relevance to this study. The supply-demand framework adopted here is closely related to that of the labor market assessment for Mindanao (EcoVentures, 2009). This assessment pinpoints areas of market potential as follows: aquaculture, mariculture, seaweed, rubber, banana, mango, coconut, rice, and construction. Competition from formal education graduates would be less intense in these sectors, making them promising sources of employment for OSY. The assessment also takes a more dynamic perspective of market development, identifying new livelihood opportunities through value-adding, in terms of materials supply, storing, bulking, trading, retailing, and similar activities linked to the abovementioned sectors.

A livelihood mapping study (Briones, 2009) confirms that the traditional livelihood activities of OSY in conflict-prone areas of Mindanao are predominantly agri-based (as are most of the key sectors identified in the labor market assessment). Traditional livelihoods are dominated by unpaid family labor. Opportunities for paid work are limited by thin labor markets at the local level, whereas self-employment opportunities face other constraints, such as lack of demand, capital, and entrepreneurial skills. Although technical skills dominate WFD offerings, the set of skills emphasized by learners as most relevant to their traditional activities are work readiness skills.

The mapping study recommends the promotion of self-employment activities in agriculture, but with greater emphasis on value-adding (consistent with the labor market assessment); provision of post-training assistance; establishment of partnerships for a more holistic approach to OSY employment; and a strong emphasis on cross-cutting skills related to behavior at work. These are skills not specific to a specialized expertise or activity, such as electrical wiring or baking, but are applicable to a wide span of occupations, such as ability to plan ahead, or ability to concentrate on a task for a sustained period.

Several terms have been used to refer to such cross-cutting skills (see Annex 1): *work readiness skills* are used in human resource management; *life skills* are used by United Nations agencies (most prominently by UNICEF, UNESCO and World Health Organization); the Search Institute (www.search-institute.org) addresses such generic skills through its 40 *developmental assets*. We adopt the term "work readiness," which includes personal development and self-knowledge, health and general well-being, financial literacy, interpersonal communication skills, and positive values. We do also apply (for the most part) the classification scheme of the developmental assets list, which is divided into *external* and *internal*. The more relevant to our study are the internal assets, composed of the following:

- Commitment to learning: covers achievement motivation in school, school engagement, routine homework, bonding to school, and reading for pleasure
- Positive values: covers caring, honesty, social justice, integrity, responsibility, and restraint
- Social competencies: covers planning and decision-making, interpersonal competence, cultural competence, resistance skills, and peaceful conflict resolution
- Personal identity: covers personal power, self-esteem, sense of purpose, and positive view of personal future

A recent study in EQuALLS2 (EDC, n.d.) builds upon the Developmental Assets Profile (DAP) using a DAP survey administered at the beginning and end of EQuALLS2 program interventions (of at least three months of duration). The profile organizes assets into five context areas: personal, social, family, school, and community (See Annex 1 for details). Youth are rated on the degree of asset development according to the scale *low*, *fair, good,* and *excellent,* which informs whether a certain context area is *limited* or *abundant*. Findings are presented by location (i.e., whether OSCY participants reside in mainland Mindanao or in an island province). Results show that at the beginning of the program, island OSY participants scored only *fair* across all categories; the best rating that the mainland OSY achieved was *good* for the school category. By the end of the program, OSY improved their profiles, with island OSY showing the most striking improvement: moving from *fair* to *good*, with moderate to large changes in rating, in nearly all five context areas.

Lastly, the impact of WFD programs was evaluated by a livelihood outcomes study (Advance Synergy, 2009). It conducts a tracer survey of OSY completers under Phase 1 of the EQuALLS project and compares completers with a control group of OSY who have not undergone EQuALLS WFD training. It finds that EQuALLS Phase 1 completers experience higher employment rate, and greater job satisfaction, than youth in the control group. Nearly 80% of the sample completers are in jobs related to the WFD courses taken. Completers also report improved sense of self-confidence, optimism, and hope for the future after taking their respective courses.

One noteworthy experience of this study is the sampling: The researchers began with a random draw from a list of EQuALLS Phase 1 completers. When they attempted to trace this initial sample, they found that as many as 61% of those initially selected youth could no longer be located, just two years after the end of the program. It is possible that some of the missing youth migrated for better jobs elsewhere.

Hypotheses of the study

The video research is intended to support an overarching narrative (Goldman, Erickson, Lemke, & Derry, 2007), framed in terms of hypotheses. This written report tries to substantiate this narrative, despite having few cases from which to generalize. Evidence to be collected for or against the following hypotheses would be primarily qualitative.

Hypothesis 1 (Labor Demand): *There is a significant unmet demand for:*

- Workers with technical skills under wage employment
- *Specialized products or services from micro-enterprises or service providers*
- *Workers and entrepreneurs with work readiness skills*

Hypothesis 2 (Labor Supply): *OSY are willing to invest in workforce training to realize better income-generating opportunities*.

Hypothesis 3 (Outcome): *WFD programs have a significant positive outcome by enabling OSY to improve their family and individual livelihoods (including, but not limited to, increased income)*.

Hypothesis 4 (Effectiveness): *WFD offerings are effective in that they suit the needs of the labor or product markets and respond to OSY's needs, context, and willingness to invest in the training.*

Hypothesis 1 conjectures a market potential for workers with technical skills, either directly in the case of wage employment, or indirectly, through the goods and services produced by self-employed labor. However, that market potential may require a sufficiently wide geographic scope of the market, as well as a time horizon sufficiently long to allow labor to migrate.

With respect to Hypothesis 2, an implicit premise is that skilled work leads to better livelihoods than unskilled work, which is characteristic of traditional OSY livelihoods. This motivates OSY to invest in acquiring and strengthening their technical and work readiness skills. Such willingness, though, must be qualified by the cost of acquiring these skills, (i.e., transportation cost to and from the training venue, opportunity cost of time spent in training, etc.).

Hypothesis 3 suggests that outcome of training is felt mostly through enabling youth to realize improved livelihoods. This in turn is based on enabling a latent demand to be met by additional supply for labor with technical skills. The challenge, however, is to arrive at some indicator of improved livelihood, and to relate this improvement to WFD training.

Finally, Hypothesis 4 simply follows the logic of the previous hypotheses, conjecturing that effectiveness (gauged by the magnitude and sustainability of the outcomes) depends on how well the WFD program accounts for constraints of supply and conditions of demand.

Methodology of field investigation

Field investigation was led by an external lead researcher, Dr. Roehlano Briones, a socio-economist, and a team composed of staff from Education Development Center, Inc. (EDC), Save the Children, and Probe Media Foundation. Field work was held in January 2010 and covered the following participant groups: a) youth; b) employers; c) parents and family members of completers; and d) community leaders.

Geographical scope of the field work covered EQuALLS2 areas in Zamboanga Peninsula, where the implementing partner for EQuALLS2 is Save the Children. This location was selected because it (a) is a relatively safe area (compared to other project sites) that allowed a team of researchers to openly consult stakeholders and videotape discussions; (b) had ongoing WFD trainings as well as examples of post-training support; (c) gave continuity to the livelihood mapping study that covered some of the same sites, allowing the researchers to compare or complement information; and (d) provided easy access to three different locations that represent rural and urban settings.

Field investigation was conducted in the following cities/municipalities: Zamboanga City, Alicia, and Dinas. Zamboanga City was selected to provide an urban component to the field investigation; Alicia and Dinas represent rural settings and each had instances of youth guilds for self-employment, and therefore were purposively selected. *Barangays* were chosen based on how quickly the municipal coordinators and *barangay* facilitators of the project could identify a reasonably representative sample of youth who had completed WFD courses.

The study sought completers over a wide variety of dates of course completion, from as early as the second quarter of 2008, to the last quarter of 2009 (i.e., OSY who completed the program between 2–12 months prior to the study). This would presumably have allowed completers to more fully explore labor market opportunities and find employment related to their training. For each focus group of completers, the study team attempted to interview a *control group*, consisting of OSY of similar profile as the completers, but who had not undergone WFD training. The team also interviewed parents of completers and *barangay* leaders within each selected *barangay*. Lastly the team interviewed employers of youth in each city/municipality, which represented the common type of business in each community. Such businesses tended to be small-scale and limited to the local market. (The youth employed in these businesses were not necessarily EQuALLS2 completers.)

Each participant group was expected to contribute information based on the four hypotheses, as shown in Table 1. An "XX" mark denotes a highly suitable source of information; an "X" a less suitable source; and no mark implies that the sector is not expected to supply information on that particular hypothesis. Hence, for example, the business sector should be an excellent source of information on labor demand, outcomes (e.g., the wage premium paid to skilled workers), and effectiveness (i.e., whether workers undergoing skills training exhibited skills useful to the business). Youth completers meanwhile provide information on supply of skilled labor (and implicitly, demand for WFD training), outcome of the training, and factors determining the effectiveness of training. The control group likewise provides information on demand for WFD training; together with the outcomes for the completers (the *treatment* group), the study moves closer to the ideal of isolating outcomes caused by the training, as opposed to mere before-after comparison based on interviews only of completers.

Table 1: Participant groups and type of information provided for field investigation

Participant Group	Labor Demand	Labor Supply	Outcome	Effectiveness
Business	XX		XX	XX
Youth – completers	X	XX	XX	XX
Youth – control		XX	XX	
Parents		XX	XX	X
Community leaders	X	X	XX	XX

Legend
XX = Direct source of information
X = Less direct source of information
No mark = Participant group is not expected to provide information on that hypothesis

Parents are also sources of information on supply (considering that choice of labor supply decisions by youth is often decided at the household level), outcomes (based on secondhand observation, as well as household livelihood effects), and to a lesser extent, effectiveness of the training. Lastly, community leaders offer a community-level perspective on demand and supply, development outcomes, and effectiveness of WFD as assistance to poor OSY. The set of interviews and FGDs covered in the field investigation are summarized in Tables 2 and 3.

Elicitation tools

All interviews and FGDs were facilitated by the study team to generate open discussion on the issues of demand, supply, outcomes, and effectiveness. A variety of elicitation tools were used to more systematically gather information regarding these issues. In many cases the study relied heavily on participants' *subjective rating* and similar techniques, to derive some quantitative basis for qualitative findings.[1] All scores were converted to a scale of 1 to 3 (roughly equivalent to low, medium, and high, respectively). For youth completers the study team administered the following tools:

- Lifeline: Participants were asked to graph a line representing trends in their standard of living over the past three years, and projecting to the future. It reveals respondents' perceptions about trends and prospects in their material standard of living. The aforementioned "reference point" pertains to the present period in the case of the control group; for the EQuALLS2 completers, the reference point is their completion of the EQuALLS2 course.
- Focus group protocols: Within the context of FGDs, youth participants were asked to perform various tasks, namely these:
  - Identification of factors determining individual/personal success in life; these are called *life success factors* (e.g., completing a tertiary degree, forming meaningful relationships). The list of factors was open-ended and generated by youth in a participatory manner. When encoded by the researcher, the lists were consolidated under groups that were consistent with the Developmental Assets categories (Annex 1).
  - Ranking of these life success factors in order of importance.
  - Rating the training in terms of degree to which it helped the participant to realize improvements in each of the identified life success factors.
  - Self-rating of personal improvement in terms of these life success factors, over the past year.
  - For some of the participants, the study team elicited ratings of some types of expected training outcomes (also identified by participants), as well as recommendations for improving WFD programs.

1 Subjective rating is a widely used tool in education and the social sciences. See http://measuringuserexperience.com/RatingsBibliography.htm (accessed 3 August 2010) for an annotated bibliography of the relevant literature.

Table 2: Profile and sample size of respondents covered in the field investigation

Location	Type of Participant Group	Number of respondents
Sta. Maria, Zamboanga City	Community leaders	8
	Youth completers	9
	Youth control group	18
	Parents	6
	Business[a]	2
Tulungatong, Zamboanga City	Community leaders	6
	Youth completers	10
	Youth control group	10
	Parents	11
Poblacion, Alicia	Youth completers	3
	Community leader	1
	Business[b]	1
Kawayan, Alicia	Youth completers	7
Lutiman, Alicia	Youth completers	4
Poblacion, Dinas	Youth completers	4
	Youth completers (	6
	Business[c]	2
Nangka, Dinas	Community leaders	9
	Youth completers	9
West Migpulao, Dinas	Community leaders	9
	Youth completers	7
	Parents	10
Locuban, Dinas	Youth control group	9
Ignacio Agarrata, Dinas	Youth control group	9

a Bakery and hollow-block factory
b Fish wholesale trading
c Bakery and automotive shop

Table 3: Summary: Number of people in each participant group

Youth completers of EQuALLS2	59
Youth in control group	46
Community leaders	33
Parents	27
Businesses	5
Total sample in the study	170

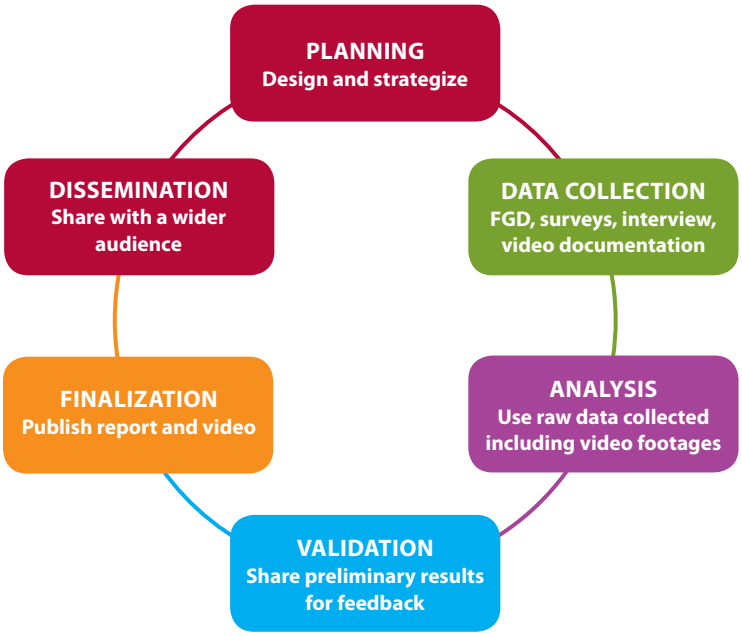
For youth in the control groups, the study team administered Lifeline, and a modified version of Success factors focus groups (i.e., referring not to past training, but to anticipated benefits of WFD training). The team also administered self-rating based on the identified Success factors.

Lastly, for the parents, community leaders, and employers, the team administered variations of the above elicitation tools, modified based on the type of information that these groups can provide (as in Table 1).

Video recording during the field investigation was utilized to capture additional information. A video makes available a verbatim transcript for confirming an informant's exact statements. Furthermore other types of useful information not typically available from a written report can be recorded (i.e., the setting of the field work as well as verbal and nonverbal cues of both respondent and facilitator or interviewer). The video will also be used to disseminate findings in ways that are probably more effective, compared to a traditional written report.

The research underwent some validation exercises. A solid draft of the video highlighting the key elements for successful WFD programs was screened at a roundtable discussion involving key EQuALLS2 stakeholders in Zamboanga City (completers, parents, local officials, and educators). Feedback on the findings and the video itself were elicited. Meanwhile this written report was presented to project staff in Manila prior to finalization. It was also reviewed by international youth development practitioners outside the EQuALLS2 project. Comments made by project staff, completers, educators, families, local officials, field practitioners, and other stakeholders have been incorporated into this report.

The following graphic illustrates the Research cycle followed in this study, starting with a planning stage, continuing with data collection, analysis, and validation, and closing the cycle with finalization and dissemination.



3. LIMITATIONS AND SCOPE

As discussed in Section 2, the aim of this research is not to serve as a quantitative, statistical demonstration or refutation of each of the hypotheses, but rather to generate qualitative evidence based on field investigation. Caution should be exercised in forming generalizations based on the cases covered here.

In particular with respect to attribution of causal relations, several important limitations should be highlighted. First is that the control groups may not offer a rigorous counter-factual for the EQuALLS2 groups, despite the purposive selection of control groups in terms of their similarity to the EQuALLS2 groups (i.e., sharing the same village and socio-economic standing). Furthermore, control groups could not be gathered in all locations. Nevertheless, comparisons based on EQuALLS2 and control groups are still better for gauging causal relations than relying only on before-after comparisons for only a treatment group.

Second is that the field investigation is limited to the areas in which the WFD trainings were conducted, limiting its ability to assess employment outcomes among participating youth who may have migrated to other locations (given high rates of migration in project sites). During field research, it was evident that many of the young people who had undergone EQuALLS2 workforce training moved to other areas, perhaps in search of jobs. The difficulty encountered by the study team in finding learners from the earliest cycles of training confirms the high degree of mobility of youth in the study areas. This is consistent with the experience of the tracer survey conducted in the livelihood outcomes study (reviewed in Section 2 of this report). It is likewise consistent with the finding of the livelihood mapping study, in which some youth reported that their existing livelihood activities would take them outside their *barangay*, and for some even outside their municipality/city. Hence, failure to substantiate employment outcomes may simply be because of the limited scope of our field work, which was limited to the EQuALLS2 *barangays* (and some neighboring communities), in Zamboanga Peninsula; it did not include places to which youth may have migrated.

Third, our coverage of project areas is limited to those in which completers had finished short-term courses, lasting two weeks to one month. Many WFD courses include those lasting three months or more, a duration that is sufficient to enable learners to achieve higher levels of technical competency. Hence, outcomes of WFD programs were muted by the abbreviated time spent by our completers in their respective training.

Fourth, information on youth (completers or control) was collected mostly from focus groups, with supplementary background from *ad hoc* individual interviews. Hence it would not be possible to disaggregate data collected based on individual characteristics, say age or gender. Future research should examine more closely the role of gender and other individual characteristics in examining outcomes and success factors associated with WFD programs.

Despite these limitations, given the combination of desk review and field work in our study, we hope to offer significant and relevant findings that identify key elements for promising WFD programming, and suggest directions for future research.

4. RESEARCH FINDINGS

This section presents the research findings based on the hypotheses of Section 2.

Hypothesis 1: Labor Demand – *Contrary to Hypothesis 1, there is little evidence for unmet demand for workers with technical skills, whether directly from firms, or indirectly, through self-employment. However, demand for workers with strong work readiness skills seems more prominent.*

The interviewed business leaders drew up a detailed list of desired competencies among their workers, compiled under the categories listed in Table 4. Technical skills are those related to their specific area of business; these include ability to bake, repair machines, and basic bookkeeping, among others. Competencies related to work ethic refer to initiative, diligence, perseverance, and time discipline (e.g., punctuality). Positive values pertain to traits such as honesty, integrity, and trustworthiness. Positive identity includes self-esteem and self-confidence. Such traits as ability to plan ahead, as well as conduct smooth interpersonal relations, are classified under social skills.

Work ethic and social skills were cited by the employers as important traits of workers. Three out of five employers did identify technical skills and positive values as important; the one employer who rated technical skills as unimportant was the hollow-block making shop, which required only unskilled labor. Having a positive identity (self-confidence) was only mentioned in one interview. Having technical skills was rated the second-easiest type of competency to find among workers (after social skills). According to the interviewees, technical skills can be easily found in the labor market, or otherwise inculcated in the workers by on-the-job training or informal apprenticeship. In short, **the competency rated most important to business leaders was having**

Table 4: Average scores of desired worker competencies based on employers' rating

Competency Categories	Number of businesses identifying these competencies as most important	Degree of importance to business (1–3)	Difficulty of finding worker with the competency (1–3)
Technical skills	3 out of 5	2.0	1.7
Work ethic	4 out of 5	2.5	2.8
Positive values	3 out of 5	3.0	3.0
Social skills	4 out of 5	2.0	1.2
Positive identity	1 out of 5	2.0	2.0

Note: Rating is from 1 to 3; under Importance to Business, a score of 3 means "most important"; under Difficulty of Finding Worker, a score of 3 means "most difficult."

positive values, which was followed by work ethic. Technical skills were rated lower. The values rated by business leaders as most important were also rated as most difficult to find.

These observations are illustrated by the case of a hollow-block making shop in Zamboanga City (Box 1).

Is there a rising demand for workers with technical skills? Note that even if demand for formally trained workers is limited, if businesses are expanding (i.e., increasing output and investment), there may be a prospect for increasing demand for trained workers. Three of the entrepreneurs interviewed did mention expansion plans, though limited currently by lack of capital (none mentioned availability of skilled labor as a constraint). However, even those that are expanding do not plan to add more workers, let alone skilled workers. Given that

Box 1: An employer's perspective

Mildred operates a hollow-block making shop in Zamboanga City. She has two workers, one of whom is an Alternative Learning Systems (ALS) completer. The qualities she looks for in an employee are these: hard-working, disciplined in terms of time (e.g., punctual), trustworthy (i.e., able to continue working even in the absence of supervision), and able to relate well with customers. The most important qualities for Mildred are being trustworthy and hard-working; workers with these qualities are also the most difficult to find. Having some technical skill may be useful but is not necessary or not as important; in any case the technical skill requirements of the business are modest. The ALS completer, though, is helpful in her business as he is able to serve a walk-in customer and make simple calculations about hollow-block orders.

Currently they are not planning to expand her business, or the number of her workers. She had a hard time initially starting the shop, despite the fact that she has other businesses and commercial properties (hence finding shop space and a truck were not a problem). She had to come up with capital (about PhP200,000) to purchase the block-making machine and the initial batch of materials. In the beginning she experienced some quality problems but was able to resolve them early on. She has finally developed a customer base through her network among procurement officers in various construction companies, though by now her reputation is well-established, generating about a fifth of her sales from walk-in customers.

the respondents were all small businesses, the entrepreneur himself or herself is perfectly capable of supplying the additional labor requirement.

If wage employment does not provide the additional demand, then perhaps self-employment would pick up the slack. However, according to the business leaders, ***entrepreneurship is a difficult and initially, fragile source of livelihood***. Therefore, sustainability of micro-enterprises, such as those established by OSY, cannot be taken for granted. Some of the critical success factors identified by the respondents are access to both fixed and working capital, access to a relatively large market with limited competition, access to a network of customers, having know-how in managing finances, and so on.

Entrepreneurs mention that, due to the complexities of establishing a business, developmental assets related to perseverance, diligence (i.e., willingness to put in long hours), and ability to relate with people, were more important for entrepreneurial success than understanding the technical details of the business. This mirrors the expectations from their workers.

Finally, the lack of preference for labor with technical skills (as opposed to labor with work readiness skills, which is in higher demand) is evident not just from entrepreneurs, but also from OSY reporting episodes of paid work. These OSY noted that whatever paid work was available did not require technical skills. A prominent example is employment in fish canneries, which is a significant source of labor demand in Zamboanga City. The canneries offer only short-term employment and impose no special skill qualifications.

Thus, Hypothesis 1 was only partially confirmed. Whereas the hypothesis was not confirmed when it comes to purely technical skills (which appear in low demand among businesses), it was confirmed when it comes to work readiness skills, which are highly valued and difficult to find according to businesses and entrepreneurs.

Hypothesis 2: Labor Supply – *Out-of-school youth, whether exposed to WFD programs or not, are willing to devote time and effort for short-term skills training.*

Our field investigation confirms Hypothesis 2. All youth groups in this study expressed strong demand for skills training, in order to eventually supply labor to realize opportunities for skilled employment. The EQuALLS2 youth groups generally request additional skills training and recommend others to participate in WFD. This is endorsed by the parents of OSY, who are enthusiastic and supportive about having their children undergo further training. Community leaders also generally welcomed the EQuALLS2 project in their *barangay*s, and they consider it easy to help the *barangay* facilitators identify and recruit OSY to enroll in these courses.

Likewise, the control group expressed their willingness to enroll in WFD trainings. Control groups in Locuban and Ignacio Agarrata were asked to generate a list of factors conducive to individual success (Figure 1a and 1b). These factors are aggregated into economic gains, types of internal developmental assets, and support

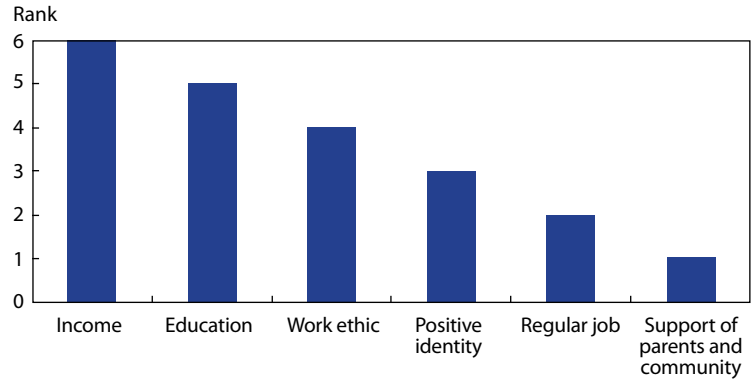


Figure 1. Ranking of likelihood that training would lead to an improvement in life success factor, as rated by youth control group: Ignacio Agarrata (scale of 1–6; 1 = least likely, 6 = most likely)

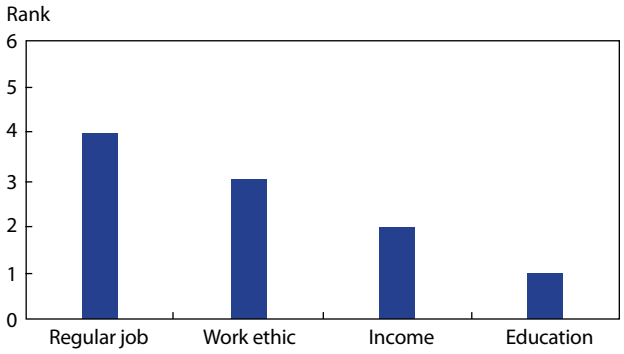


Figure 1b. Ranking of likelihood that training would lead to an improvement in life success factor, as rated by youth control group: Locuban (scale of 1–6; 1 = least likely, 6 = most likely)

of parents and community, which is a type of external developmental asset. (Note that positive identity and external support appeared only in the list of Ignacio Agarrata.)

They were then asked to rank these factors in order of the likelihood of these being an outcome of the training (with 1 being least likely and 6, most likely). For factors listed by both groups, the likelihood of earning income (Ignacio Agarrata youth) or getting a regular job (Locuban youth) were ranked highest. There is therefore an expectation among youth that participating in WFD translates ultimately to economic gain. After earning income or having a regular job, non-EQuALLS2 youth expect that the training would also lead to improvements in other developmental assets, most notably having better education (in the case of Ignacio Agarrata) or improving their work ethic (in the case of Locuban)..[2]

Allocating time for training is not considered a problem by youth or their parents, given the short duration of the courses in which research participants were enrolled. There is only one difficulty identified in attending some of the trainings, and that is location. The training venue is typically located in the more accessible, central areas of the target village or municipality; in this case, youth residing in more remote *purok*s or *barangay*s find it difficult to maintain consistent attendance given the cost of travel (financial outlays and time spent). For example, in Barangay Locuban in Dinas, OSY are concentrated along the coastal *purok*s. In other cases, the LGUs needed to make further adjustment to ensure consistent attendance; in one course held in the *poblacion* in Dinas, the mayor supported board and lodging of attendees from an island *barangay*. In another village (West Migpulao), the *barangay* officials offered free housing for the instructional manager, to allow the training to be held in the *barangay* hall, which is far from the *poblacion*.

To synthesize, OSCY are willing and interested in devoting time and effort for short-term skills training. Their motivating factors seem to be a combination of expectations related to economic gains, such as acquiring a regular job (Locuban) and earning income (Ignacio Agarrato), as well as educational growth (Ignacio Agarrato) and work readiness skills gains, such as work ethics (Locuban).

Hypothesis 3: Training outcomes

Perspective of youth on training outcomes: *WFD completers more readily attest to favorable training outcomes in terms of acquiring work readiness skills, rather than in terms of improved income.*

With few exceptions, we find that, contrary to Hypothesis 3, WFD training does not lead to a significant improvement in monetary gains. This is consistent with failure to confirm Hypothesis 1. Indicators derived

2 Other non-EQuALLS2 youth groups (Sta. Maria and Tulungatong) were posed a different question: "What are the conditions under which you would be able to achieve an ideal improvement in living standard?" Their answers uniformly identified *completion of studies* as well as *striving and perseverance* as the most important conditions. These are followed by external factors, such as stable employment of household head, unity of the family, low prices, etc.

from the Lifelines are shown in Table 5. The columns on "improvement over present" refer to the percentage of respondents who project a future improvement in living standard compared to the present. The columns on "improvement over trend" refer to the percentage of respondents who project that the *growth* in living standard would be better in the future than in the past; for example, an upward trend that is continuous from the past into the future indicates no difference in trend. For either indicator, youth in the EQuALLS2 and control groups give similarly optimistic projections; hence, OSY in general, whether or not they had participated in WFD, may have a favorable impression about their past improvements and future prospects. There is no clear pattern to suggest that youth completers expect bigger improvements in living standards, compared to the control group.

Table 5: Projected improvements in living standards and in the growth of living standards, by type of focus group (in percentages)

	EQuALLS2 youth		Control	
Focus group	**Improvement over present** (% of respondents projecting future improvement in living standards compared to present)	**Improvement over trend** (% of respondents projecting better "growth" in living standards in the future than in the past)	Improvement over present	Improvement over trend
Sta. Maria	88.7	77.7	75.0	68.8
Tulungatong	88.7	88.7	100.0	100.0
Alicia	66.7	66.7		

This is supported by the subsequent-employment indicator displayed in Table 6. The column to the extreme right explains the type of employment the completers obtained after the training. In almost all cases, the completers at best engage in the training-related work sporadically, for relatives and neighbors, and not always for a financial remuneration. This is typically the case for beauty care, wiring, massage, and baking, which are based on provision of household and personal services. In a few cases, there was no new employment related to the training (e.g., the abaca weaving guild) at the time of the study. However, while this report was being produced, there were reports of some of the guilds included in this field study starting operations with more regular orders.

Although findings suggest that monetary gain was not the main outcome among WFD completers, there are some exceptions in which participation in the program translated directly into financial gains: One individual in Zamboanga city experienced a dramatic improvement in income as a direct result of the training (Box 2).

Another successful case is the bakery guild in Nangka. Completers in the bakery guild found work

Table 6: Training and subsequent related employment of WFD completers

Group	Training	Date completed	Nature of subsequent, related employment
Sta. Maria	Baking, wiring, massage	Sep 2009	Occasional jobs (often unpaid)
Tulungatong	Baking, wiring	Sep 2009	Occasional jobs (often unpaid)
Poblacion, Alicia	Abaca weaving	Mar 2009	None after training
Kawayan	Wiring	4Q 2008	Occasional jobs (possibly unpaid)
Lutiman	Massage	4Q 2008	None after training
Poblacion, Dinas	Bag-making Beauty care Baking	Sep 2009 Dec 2009 Apr 2008	None after training Occasional jobs (possibly unpaid) Occasional jobs (possibly unpaid)
Poblacion, Dinas	Bag-making	4Q 2008	None after training
Nangka	Baking	Sep 2009	Frequently at work
West Migpulao	Beauty care	Apr 2008	Occasional jobs (possibly unpaid)

Box 2: A case of significant livelihood impact from WFD training

Gari, 21, of Zamboanga City, is a completer of EQuALLS2 training in massage therapy. The fourth of eight children, she had been studying nursing on scholarship, but was forced to stop due to her family's financial difficulties. She learned of the training by word of mouth and thought it was a good opportunity, as demand for massage can come even from neighbors and friends. When asked what she learned from the training aside from massage skills, she answered: "I learned a lot. I learned how to earn money. I also learned how to talk to people and not be shy; otherwise I would not have customers." She also experienced how to finance and manage household expenses: "My parents were surprised after I started working, they were no longer paying the power bill and the water bill; instead I volunteered to pay for those. I also bought rice, food, and so on. So whatever my parents earn could be used for my siblings' education." She now plans to set up her own spa and someday complete her studies.

consistently after training, owing to a continual stream of orders. Their products are well-accepted in the community, and their business has a niche, as there is no other bakery within the *barangay* (prior to the guild being set up, villagers needed to travel to the town center to purchase bakery products). As an additional update (reported by field staff of EQuALLS2 during the presentation of findings), while this report was being finalized, the bag-making guild in Dinas had resumed activity because it had recently gotten a sizable purchase order, and in fact had utilized its cash earnings to extend financial assistance to the bakery guild.

For four groups of youth interviewed, however, there was no training-related work after the course; three of these pertain to bag-making and abaca weaving courses, which are aimed at producing goods for sale (hence are not linked directly to household demand but must first find a suitable market). The other group was trained in massage but did not practice the skill, as there was no demand for massage service in their locality.[3] The supply of skilled labor (Hypothesis 2) is not translated into formal employment and income generation, due to the lack of demand (Hypothesis 1).

One factor accounting for weak observed gains in formal employment and increased income is location and local context. OSY in our focus groups did not take advantage of employment opportunities that require a costly commute or migration, for sample selection reasons[4] discussed earlier. Likewise, location also limits the potential for gainful self-employment. Either the destination market is too distant from the nascent micro-enterprises (e.g., in the case of abaca weaving), or too dependent on local demand (e.g., massage or building wiring), which generates only a low market potential due to low population density and purchasing power of most households.

It is worth noting that the column to the extreme right in Table 6 above refers to "formal employment," recognizing that much of these WFD training completers are engaged in livelihood activities that may not be characterized as "formal employment," such as family-based businesses, on-call services (occasional), or other kinds. These may be paid or may be remunerated differently (i.e., in kind, such as goods in exchange of services, raw materials, etc.), contributing to the household's livelihoods in one or another form.

Perspective of youth on the significance of training outcomes: *Training appears to have more significant outcome with respect to non-financial dimensions, such as inculcation of work ethic, and acquisition of developmental assets.*

3 Lutiman is a poor *barangay* with a large Muslim population. Both purchasing power of the average household and cultural acceptability of massage service are low.

4 This reflects a pattern in the sample selected as discussed in Section 3: Youth who are willing and able to relocate had already left and are no longer available for interview.

Figure 2 summarizes the degree of the outcome of the program by qualitative rating (where "1" is low, and "3" is high). The outcomes are grouped by the researcher into categories that include the same set of developmental assets named earlier by business leaders (under Hypothesis 1), to which was added: *commitment to learning* (i.e., if the training motivated the learner to pursue further education or acquisition of knowledge), *economic gains* (covering financial and employment benefits), and *support of parents and community* (one of the external assets). Highest ratings belong to positive identity, work ethic, and commitment to learning, , showing that these were the main gains perceived by youth; economic gains score third to last, before social competency.

Figure 3 presents a related measure, which is a subjective rating of *personal improvement over the past year*, based on the types of outcomes, comparing the treatment (EQuALLS2) and control groups. The two groups display similar ratings of their economic gain over the past year. Consistent with the previous discussion, this suggests that trends in living standards of EQuALLS2 and control youth are the same. The control group in fact rates their experience of improvement in terms of support of parents and community higher than the EQuALLS2 group. However, EQuALLS2 youth show a better rating of improvement in terms of internal developmental assets, such as commitment to learning, positive identity, and to some extent work ethic. Other internal assets such as positive values and social competency are not mentioned by the control groups.

Note that this comparison controls for selection bias; assuming that the treatment and control groups are truly similar, then differences between them may be attributed to the training itself rather than an extraneous factor.[5]

Favorable outcomes with respect to work readiness are highly consistent with some studies cited earlier, namely the livelihood mapping study and the DAP study. Meanwhile the weak evidence for economic gains due

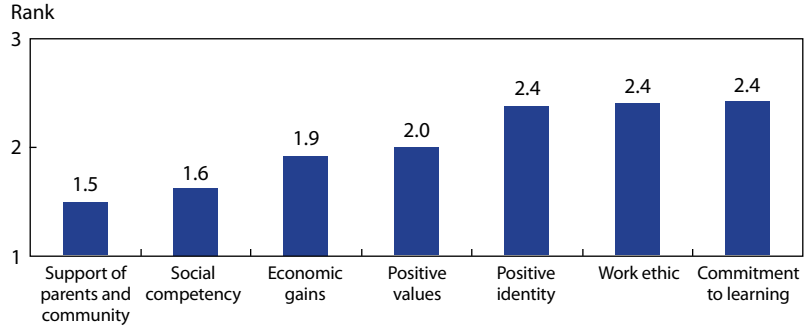


Figure 2: Rating of the degree of outcome of the program, as perceived by EQuALLS2 youth (scale of 1–3; 1 = low, 3 = high)

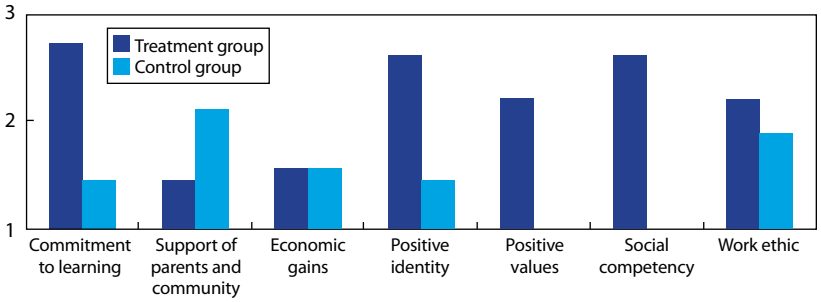


Figure 3: Average rating of personal improvement, by life success factor (scale of 1–3; 1 = low, 3 = high)

5 An example of selection bias is that EQuALLS2 completers may exhibit high commitment to learning independent of the training course; in fact it may be this commitment that motivated them to enroll in the training in the first place.

to WFD training is consistent with the previous findings related to weak local demand for skilled work, and the obstacles confronting workers in migrating to the main centers with greater labor demand.

Perspective of youth on critical life success factors: *The more critical life success factors are developmental assets, work ethic, and other non-financial factors.*

Figure 4 presents the ranking of life success factors (again with "1" assigned the lowest rank). The highest-ranking factors are work ethic, followed by commitment to learning (particularly completed schooling), then positive identity. Economic gains rank about third from the bottom, on average. Note, however, that economic gains are ranked more highly by youth in the control group. It is possible that the WFD training also contributes to raising the awareness of OSY regarding the importance of non-financial factors to life success.

It is important to note that the WFD trainings were aimed at technical skills development, rather than stand-alone courses aimed at inculcating "life skills," developmental assets, and the like. Nevertheless, completers themselves articulated the importance and effect of the training in terms of general work readiness skills, in addition to the acquisition of specialized technical skills.

Perspective of parents and community leaders on training outcomes: Parents and community leaders also recognize the importance of developmental assets, as well as the contribution of the training to these assets. Compared to youth, they tend to have greater expectations of the economic benefits from training.

According to parents, the most important life success factor is commitment to learning; the other factors (except external assets) are ranked nearly similarly in importance (Figure 5). The impact of training is deemed highest with respect to earning income and being employed. This is followed by development of work ethic (particularly the quality of diligence and perseverance) and commitment to learning.

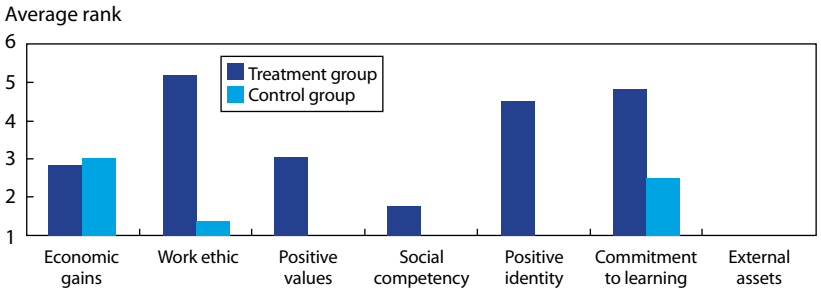


Figure 4: Youth ranking of life success factors, by order of importance (scale of 1–5; 1 = least important, 5 = most important)

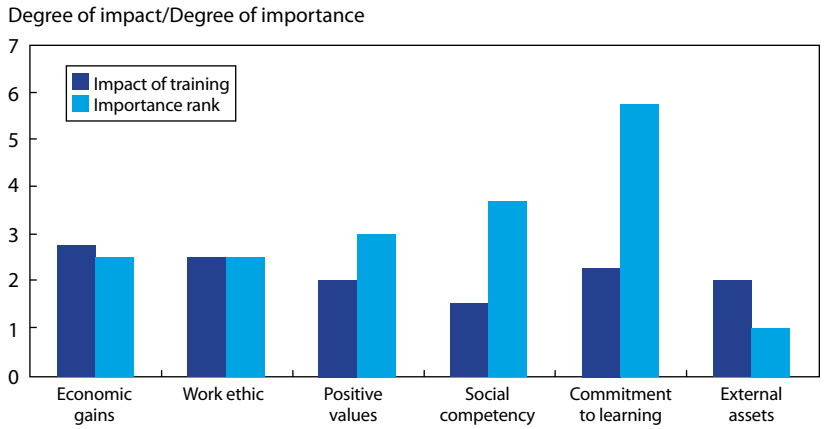


Figure 5: Life success factor as a result of training, and by degree of importance, according to parents (scale of 1–6; 1 = lowest, 6 = highest)

Parents and youth observe the same phenomenon—occasional episodes of work subsequent to training—but the former assign it a greater significance. This owes in part to the sharp difference in expectations—youth may be expecting regular employment (and are disappointed), whereas parents are impressed with any improvement in their children's (previously perceived) status as "unproductive" members of the household.[6] It is also possible that parents are taking a longer-term view and a geographically wider perspective on the value of skills training (Box 3).

Box 3: A parent's perspective on the value of skills training

Marilyn is the mother of Ruel, 21, a completer of EQuALLS2 training on abaca weaving in Alicia. Ruel had dropped out of high school when his father got sick and his parents could no longer afford schooling. They used to operate a fishpond, but they had to pawn their ponds to pay for the father's hospitalization. Ruel was able to take a job as a caretaker of a private fishpond near his home. Marilyn is thankful for training given by EQuALLS2 on abaca weaving. She believes firmly that such trainings would be the "hope for the future" for Ruel, and she notes that he shows initiative in his work and genuinely enjoys himself doing it. On the other hand, she acknowledges that so far abaca weaving has not led to much employment and income gains for Ruel; this is attributed to the lack of capital—if financial support were present (say from the local government), then the trained OSY would be able to sustain the activity. In the absence of such support, she thinks Ruel should acquire skills for wage employment outside the locality (e.g., welding). Her family (some based in Zamboanga City) is ready to support his search for a job in a big city, once he gets the requisite training.

Meanwhile, Figure 6 presents the training impact based on the opinion of *barangay* leaders, providing a community-level perspective on the issue. Leaders more commonly characterize the WFD program as having a "big" impact, but over a very limited number of families in the *barangay*. This is because only few families have had an opportunity to enroll their children in WFD courses.

Here "impact" is interpreted in relation to addressing the major problems associated with the prevalence of OSY in their communities—first is lack of opportunity to escape their traditional, poverty-stricken livelihoods; typically based on farming or fishing. Second is idleness, and therefore proneness to undesirable influences and anti-social behavior (e.g., substance abuse and even violence).

Note that in just two *barangay* leaders' FGDs, the "big" impact is qualified as being over "many" (but not most) families. One set of leaders in fact characterizes WFD as having a small impact on many families; interestingly this takes the perspective of demand, that is, *barangay* residents can now avail themselves of wiring and baking services from completers from within the village.

Youth, parents, and community leaders see the need for more training to increase impact of WFD, in terms of duration, range of technical skills covered, and number of OSY trainees.

In some cases a major gap could simply be that the current training provided is just too narrow. There is a need for more training for more OSY; this is consistent with the finding that the majority of *barangay* leaders view WFD as having significant impact but only for a few households whose youth members managed to participate in WFD training. OSY should also be trained over a wider set of technical skills; for instance, in

6 Interestingly, when asked point blank about the likelihood of obtaining gainful employment in the short term (i.e., one year), parents may give a more circumspect response. For one FGD in which this question was posed, only 2 out of 11 parents gave an estimate of "high likelihood," 3 opined "some likelihood," and the rest were unable to assign any likelihood.

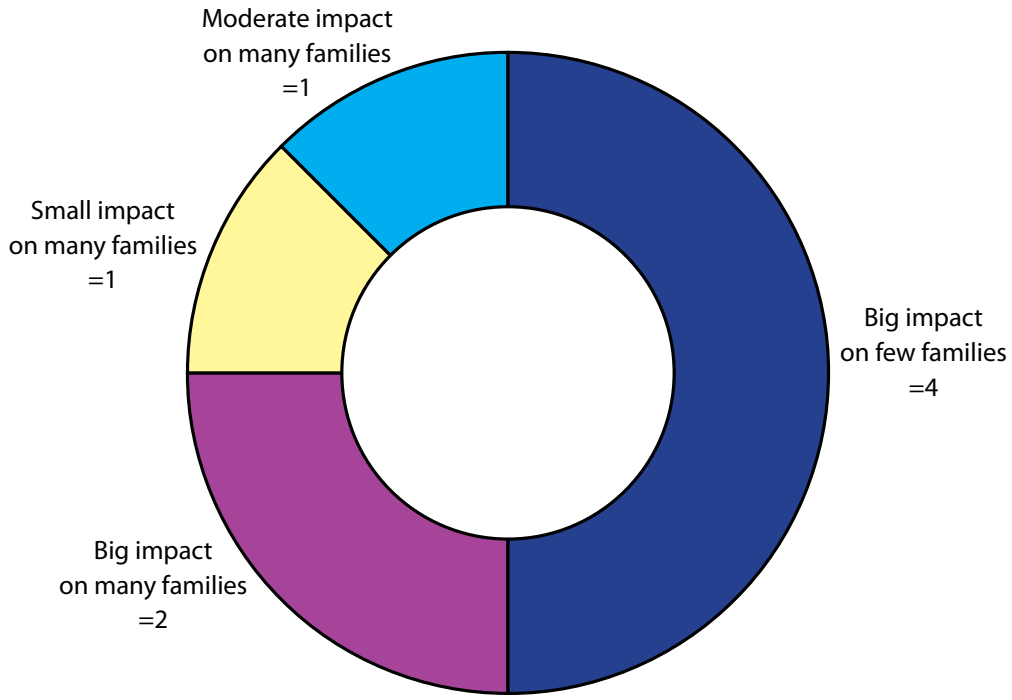


Figure 6: Size and extent of community-level impact of WFD based on *barangay* leaders' classification, by number of FGDs (Total = 6 FGDs)

*barangay*s where training in professional driving was held, integration of automotive maintenance into the course was deemed necessary to increase employability of trainees. Lastly, the WFD program should also offer greater depth in the same technical skills. Many youth completers, parents, and community leaders favored WFD programs leading to higher levels of TESDA certification compared to what were currently being offered.[7]

In summary, the study reveals that perceptions by youth (treatment and control), parents, and community on training outcomes are not limited to monetary gains. Although some groups expect and assess training based more on a basis of monetary gain, all participants in the study mentioned gains regarding developmental assets and work readiness skills that in one way or another contribute to the further improvement of youth in their life of work.

Hypothesis 4: Factors that contribute to successful WFD programs

Training can better translate into gainful employment when the skill being developed is more closely connected to local demand.

The successful case of gainful employment displayed by the baking guild in Nangka exhibited strong links to local demand. It found a convenient niche in supplying pastries for households in the village, thriving in the absence of competition from within the village. The partially successful cases, mainly for training in household and personal services (e.g., electrical wiring and beauty care), also showed the importance of household demand within the village. However, potential gains in employment were limited by the presence of other competing

7 The NC levels are part of the certification system of TESDA. Current WFD programs tended to focus on NC I certification, whereas NC II is preferred by many stakeholders, as it is the standard industry requirement for employment, including employment overseas. It is noteworthy, though, that acquiring NC II certification requires considerably more training hours and greater qualifications from trainees (such as a secondary education degree), which may in practice constrain the demand for such courses.

service providers, limited population in the communities, low purchasing power, and in one case, cultural acceptability (i.e., massage services in Lutiman).[8]

Post-training assistance greatly increases the effectiveness of training.
Although lack of technical skills is a crucial gap in generating decent work among youth, this is by no means the only gap. One cannot expect that providing training alone automatically leads to wage- or self-employment of OSY as skilled workers. Also essential is post-training support, which refers to supplementary and purposeful activities that assist learners' transition from training and education to the world of work, such as, going from training to job counseling, orientation on job search and job application, and going from entrepreneurship training to applying technical skills and setting up a small business, among other examples.

Support at the local level is another critical factor in effective WFD interventions.
Even when the intervention is demand-driven and post-training assistance is provided to participants, strong or lack of local support can critically influence the ultimate outcome of the intervention. For some cases the remaining gaps are economic: For example, the manufacture of goods for sale would entail some advance working capital and investment in equipment, which many OSY may not have.

In the case of the Nangka guild, the economic requirements were filled by other key actors in the community. First, the *barangay* government offered *barangay* property as shop space and mobilized local funds for building a bakeshop. Out of the training budget, EQuALLS2 provided baking equipment (the biggest item of which is an oven). The EQuALLS2 *barangay* facilitator provided initial working capital to the guild for the purchase of materials. The need for additional capital support is underscored by community leaders and parents in other villages, which mentioned the lack of capital as the crucial gap in establishing and sustaining self-employment among youth learners.

In other cases the gap may be regulatory or institutional. In the case of electrical wiring completers in one project site, the local electrical cooperative would refuse to recognize the work of WFD completers in the absence of certification by the official *barangay* electrician, thus, the cooperative would not connect to homes whose wiring was done by WFD completers. The LGU reportedly provided little or no assistance in facilitating certification. In contrast, the Dinas LGU reported its full support in providing such certification, and in fact initiated completers in wiring and carpentry into the world of formal construction work, by providing them their first set of job orders.

Effective WFD programs integrate work readiness and technical skills training.
Although inculcation of cross-cutting skills that lead to work readiness appears to have less tangible benefits, such skills are regarded by learners and stakeholders as making the more important contribution to later success in life. Existing WFD programs are valued for the way they integrate technical training with inculcation of work readiness. The value of work readiness skills combined with technical skills comes from recognition among respondents that work readiness skills prepare youth not only for that particular technical area (training subject), but prepares them with skills to perform well in other work settings.

A clear example of work readiness skills is leadership. In case of employment generated by youth-based enterprises, necessary conditions for success are a cohesive organization and effective leadership.

The observation is fairly obvious but bears mention. Unlike household and personal services, manufacturing activities typically require collective effort (to realize gains from specialization, and sharing of lumpy assets). Successful work in teams appears to require the following elements

- The group agrees on common goals.

8 Connectedness to demand extends not only to the choice of the training course, but also to some extent, to training content. One completer of an electronics repair course spent an inordinate amount of time learning radio repair, when in fact homeowners usually opt to replace broken radios rather than have them repaired.

Box 4: Barangay leaders' views on OSY problems and solutions

According to barangay leaders, the biggest problem of OSY is the lack of alternative livelihoods. Due to the absence of marketable skills, youth are generally trapped in traditional livelihoods related to farming and fishing; which are generally not viewed as gainful employment. The more urbanized barangays of Dinas (Nangka) and Zamboanga (Tulungatong and Sta. Maria) mentioned that some OSY may, due to idleness, be prone to "vices" such as alcohol and drug abuse, and occasionally violence. This social dimension of OSY was however secondary to the problem of poverty and poor outlook for gainful employment.

Upon completion of a WFD program, the barangay leaders were quite circumspect about business prospects of trainees. The barangay captain of Sta. Maria noted that trainees of a training in food preparation may not be able to set up a viable business because they "don't have capital to buy the ingredient of the food they want to sell." Another official suggests setting up a small workshop where trainees can conduct their business activities. However, they looked to the external project to provide funds to construct such a workshop and provide initial materials and equipment (such as cooking utensils in the case of baking, and sewing machines in the case of dressmaking).

The barangay leaders of Nangka, together with counterpart from the municipality, on the other hand used their own resources to build the workshop themselves on barangay premises. They justified their support by saying that, if the trainees could not follow through and establish a business, their initial support for their training would have been "useless." On the other hand, their vision for employing OSY is not limited to community-based enterprises; they also seek training in skills such as welding and other trades, for which job opportunities must be sought outside the barangay. When asked what type of training they would prioritize their support, they said both; one leader pointed out that training for outside employment would likely favour male OSY. Hence in their view, common types of community-based enterprises may tend to favour employment of female OSY (such as in baking, bag-making, dress-making, and so forth). Hence support for local enterprise formation and skills training for outside employment are regarded as complementary approaches for assisting OSY.

- The group meets consistently.
- Tasks are assigned and members comply.
- There is an effective leader unanimously recognized by the group.

Of these, perhaps the most critical element is the presence of an effective leader, as this is the focal person who can facilitate the other elements to fall in place (i.e., by motivating and persuading members to reach a consensus, assigning tasks, and enforcing compliance). An excellent example of these conditions is in Nangka. And other examples that support this conclusion include bag-making in Dinas and abaca weaving in Alicia that demonstrated the importance of a solid group with strong leadership that when absent, can lead to the quick disintegration of the guild.

Box 4: Leadership and teamwork in action

The field investigation allowed the study team to observe first-hand the importance of youth leadership in action. Jes, the Nangka baking guild leader, displayed her strong leadership skills during youth consultations and focus group discussions included in this study. She generally led the focus group discussion during times of independent group work. She was articulate and forceful in bringing her group to a consensus, while giving a wide berth for other group members to actively participate. While one may argue that cases such as the Nangka baking guild are far from the norm, it may be worthwhile to attempt to develop such groups by incorporating training in leadership and teamwork skills, together with technical skills training.

5. CONCLUSION AND IMPLICATIONS

Generating productive employment for OSY is a protracted process over a large span of the labor market. Acquisition of technical skills is just one element of this process.

As argued earlier, improving work outcomes for OSY, whether for wage- or self-employment, involves a complex interplay of constraints faced and choices made by enterprises and workers (e.g., decisions to hire, work, search for work, migrate) over a prolonged period and over a wide geographic area. This should temper expectations about the rapidity of deployment of completers in a training-related job or enterprise, or the prospects of decent work in the immediate vicinity. This was further reinforced during a roundtable discussion to share preliminary results with participants of the study and other stakeholder, in which participants noted that demand for skilled labor may originate from neighboring cities or even abroad; demand can also be "created".[9]

The principle furthermore underscores the need to more deliberately monitor and evaluate completers *after* the training. This need not entail actual follow-up and enumeration of *every* completer in a WFD program—which may be very costly for large-scale programs such as EQuALLS2. A more practical option that future similar projects or WFD interventions may consider, could be to identify a baseline sample of households that can be periodically tracked (say, every six months) through key informants, such as parents or close relatives, using very succinct survey instruments (e.g., limited to questions about whether the OSY completer is formally employed/unemployed, studying, or working in some other form [informal sector, family-based business, etc.]; and if working, the nature of the job, and its location).

WFD programs that are truly demand-driven would consider both preferences of beneficiaries as well as downstream demand for services and skills of completers.

WFD programs generally succeed in consulting extensively with community leaders, parents, and OSY to identify a demand-driven menu of offerings. Beneficiary preferences are an obvious criterion for what constitutes "demand-driven." This criterion, while necessary, is far from sufficient, as free training opportunities would tend to be over-subscribed, and as learners, parents, and community leaders treat the latent skills as assets for (indefinite) future deployment. There is therefore a need to go further and inquire about the downstream demand for the services and skills of completers.

This criterion of downstream demand would certainly favor the category of household, community, and personal services (hairdressing, massage, automotive repair, electrical works, catering, etc.), though cultural

9 That is, demand for a product or service is already latent, but finds expression only when that product or service is actually offered. An example is the opening of a motor vehicle repair shop in a village where none existed previously.

acceptability of some types of services should be double-checked. Specialized types of skills required by enterprises (rather than households), such as welding and machine operation, should therefore be offered on a more strategic basis (see discussion below on post-training assistance).

Manufacturing activities may also be covered, provided that a clear plan is in place for post-training production and sale. That is, market prospects should be specific; there must be a clear strategy for raising working capital (whether as a grant, or financed at least in part by learners); workers should be organized; and there should be clear provision for learners to gain access to equipment. If one or more requisites are missing, then these training activities need not be included in a WFD program.

Finally, analysis based on demand should consider carefully the role of traditional livelihoods, which are already familiar to most of the OSY. A promising WFD program should explore links with initiatives that promote value-adding activities that are closely linked to traditional farming and related livelihoods, such as processing and marketing, etc. Such linkages are discussed in passing by Briones (2009) and at length by EcoVentures (2009). Of course, skills training in these areas should follow the aforementioned *caveats* on first ensuring demand, stable material supply, financing, access to equipment, and other support through local partners (see below).

Partnerships and collaboration at the local level are powerful because they have the power to make the outcomes of a given WFD intervention last and thus succeed, whereas the absence of local-level support can make the same outcomes vanish with time.

Partnerships and collaboration are prominent features in the EQuALLS2 strategy and have been successful in many sites—a model that can be used in future WFD programs. In communities and towns where awareness of and support for WFD is weak, WFD programs should invest time and resources to actively campaign for recognition and partnership with local officials and other stakeholders. This implication reinforces the recommendations made in Briones (2009), Advanced Synergy (2009), and the initiatives described in EEA (2008). Youth participants, in the roundtable discussion held with participants of the study and other stakeholders to discuss preliminary findings, further highlighted the importance of community support, access to start-up capital for small business, and coaching, to provide guidance for their careers and business start-ups.

WFD programs should explicitly target the inculcation of work readiness skills.

Previous discussion has established that completers, parents, and community leaders value highly the work readiness skills learned from the WFD courses. In fact for most, this was the primary benefit from their participation, with economic gains on the whole being (thus far) a minor benefit. This reinforces the findings of Briones (2009) regarding the types of skills learners found most useful in their current livelihood activities. Youth participants in the roundtable discussion to discuss preliminary findings confirmed this, expressing their desire as follows: "equip us with technical skills and good values to perform our best in the workplace."

WFD programs, particularly those aimed to serve OSY, would do well to explicitly target the inculcation of "cross-cutting work readiness skills and attributes" as well as offer a wider range of "personal development opportunities that are closely linked to the development of critical soft-skills and attributes" (James-Wilson, Conklin, & Kamilova, 2008, p. 16). Finally, this emphasis is also consistent with the principle of offering demand-driven WFD programs, given the preferences of and obstacles faced by business firms in finding workers with strong workplace skills. In the long run this would probably contribute most to expanding the employment prospects of youth.

This is not to imply that current WFD programs have omitted work readiness skills. In fact work readiness is already incorporated in the technical skills programs covered by the study.[10] Work readiness skills are already mainstreamed into technical-vocation education, as exemplified in the TESDA curriculum. In practice (delivery of training), however, the emphasis still falls heavily on technical skills. Thus, WFD programs should integrate work readiness skill formation closely, not just in the curriculum, but also into the rest of the training process, such as in screening of trainers, instruction, testing, certification, monitoring and evaluation, certification or accreditation, and community advocacy.

10 The study did not cover stand-alone trainings aimed at inculcating workplace skills, "life skills," "developmental assets," and the like, and makes no recommendations about such programs.

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ANNEX 1: DEVELOPMENTAL ASSETS, WORK READINESS, AND LIFE SKILLS

Developmental Assets (Search Institute)

The following list is from http://www.search-institute.org/developmental-assets/lists. Accessed 04 August 2010.

External Assets

SUPPORT

1. **Family Support:** Family life provides high levels of love and support.
2. **Positive Family Communication**: Young person and his or her parent(s) communicate positively, and young person is willing to seek advice and counsel from parents.
3. **Other Adult Relationships**: Young person receives support from three or more nonparent adults.
4. **Caring Neighborhood**: Young person experiences caring neighbors.
5. **Caring School Climate**: School provides a caring, encouraging environment.
6. **Parent Involvement in Schooling**: Parent(s) are actively involved in helping the child succeed in school.

EMPOWERMENT

7. Community Values Youth: Young person perceives that adults in the community value youth.
8. Youth as Resources: Young people are given useful roles in the community.
9. Service to Others: Young person serves in the community one hour or more per week.
10. Safety: Young person feels safe at home, school, and in the neighborhood.

BOUNDARIES AND EXPECTATIONS

11. Family Boundaries: Family has clear rules and consequences and monitors the young person's whereabouts.
12. School Boundaries: School provides clear rules and consequences.
13. Neighborhood Boundaries: Neighbors take responsibility for monitoring young people's behavior.
14. Adult Role Models: Parent(s) and other adults model positive, responsible behavior.
15. Positive Peer Influence: Young person's best friends model responsible behavior.
16. High Expectations: Both parent(s) and teachers encourage the young person to do well.

CONSTRUCTIVE USE OF TIME

17. Creative Activities: Young person spends three or more hours per week in lessons or practice in music, theater, or other arts.
18. Youth Programs: Young person spends three or more hours per week in sports, clubs, or organizations at school and/or in community organizations.
19. Religious Community: Young person spends one hour or more per week in activities in a religious institution.
20. Time at Home: Young person is out with friends "with nothing special to do" two or fewer nights per week.

Internal Assets

COMMITMENT TO LEARNING

21. Achievement Motivation: Young person is motivated to do well in school.
22. School Engagement: Young person is actively engaged in learning.
23. Homework: Young person reports doing at least one hour of homework every school day.
24. Bonding to School: Young person cares about his or her school.
25. Reading for Pleasure: Young person reads for pleasure three or more hours per week.

POSITIVE VALUES

26. Caring: Young Person places high value on helping other people.
27. Equality and Social Justice: Young person places high value on promoting equality and reducing hunger and poverty.
28. Integrity: Young person acts on convictions and stands up for his or her beliefs.
29. Honesty: Young person "tells the truth even when it is not easy."
30. Responsibility: Young person accepts and takes personal responsibility.
31. Restraint: Young person believes it is important not to be sexually active or to use alcohol or other drugs.

SOCIAL COMPETENCIES

32. Planning and Decision Making: Young person knows how to plan ahead and make choices.
33. Interpersonal Competence: Young person has empathy, sensitivity, and friendship skills.
34. Cultural Competence: Young person has knowledge of and comfort with people of different cultural/racial/ethnic backgrounds.
35. Resistance Skills: Young person can resist negative peer pressure and dangerous situations.
36. Peaceful Conflict Resolution: Young person seeks to resolve conflict nonviolently.

POSITIVE IDENTITY

37. Personal Power: Young person feels he or she has control over "things that happen to me."
38. Self-Esteem: Young person reports having a high self-esteem.
39. Sense of Purpose: Young person reports that "my life has a purpose."
40. Positive View of Personal Future: Young person is optimistic about his or her personal future.

A similar list is used in the Developmental Assets Profile (DAP), although with some rearrangement of headings:

Personal: stands up for beliefs, feels in control, has positive self-esteem, enjoys reading, avoids alcohol, has a positive view of the future, manages frustration, plans ahead, takes responsibility, values honesty, has a sense of purpose, has healthy habits and avoids unhealthy ones

Social: builds friendships, expresses feelings, overcomes challenges, values helping others, resists negative pressure, resolves conflicts, feels valued, has adult support, etc.

Family: takes advice from parents, feels safe at home, spends time at home, has a family with clear rules, etc.

School: cares about school, does homework, enjoys learning, feels safe at school, is motivated to learn, attends a school with clear rules, etc.

Community: accepts others, helps the community, engages in religious activity, is part of a sports club or group, helps solve community problems, etc.

Life Skills (UNICEF)

The following reproduces UNICEF's list of life skills (http://www.unicef.org/lifeskills/ index_whichskills.html):

COMMUNICATION AND INTERPERSONAL SKILLS

Interpersonal communication skills

Verbal/nonverbal communication
Active listening
Expressing feelings; giving feedback (without blaming) and receiving feedback

Negotiation/refusal skills
Negotiation and conflict management

Assertiveness skills
Refusal skills
Empathy
Ability to listen and understand another's needs and circumstances and express that understanding

Cooperation and teamwork skills
Expressing respect for others' contributions and different styles
Assessing one's own abilities and contributing to the group

Advocacy skills
Influencing skills and persuasion
Networking and motivation skills

DECISION-MAKING AND CRITICAL THINKING SKILLS
Decision-making/problem-solving skills
Information-gathering skills
Evaluating future consequences of present actions for self and others
Determining alternative solutions to problems
Analysis skills regarding the influence of values and attitudes of self and others on motivation

Critical thinking skills
Analyzing peer and media influences
Analyzing attitudes, values, social norms and beliefs, and factors affecting these
Identifying relevant information and information sources

COPING AND SELF-MANAGEMENT SKILLS
Skills for increasing internal locus of control
Self-esteem/confidence-building skills
Self-awareness skills including awareness of rights, influences, values, attitudes, strengths, and weaknesses
Goal-setting skills
Self-evaluation /self-assessment/self-monitoring skills

Skills for managing feelings
Anger management
Dealing with grief and anxiety
Coping skills for dealing with loss, abuse, trauma

Skills for managing stress
Time management
Positive thinking
Relaxation techniques

Work Readiness Skills

Adapted from the Workforce Readiness Report Card (2006) (http://www.p21.org/documents/ FINAL_REPORT_ PDF09-29-06.pdf; accessed 01 August 201).

Basic knowledge/skills

- Reading comprehension
- Writing
- Mathematics
- Science
- Government/economics
- Humanities/arts
- Foreign language
- History/geography

Applied skills

- Critical thinking/problem solving
- Oral communication
- Written communication
- Teamwork/collaboration
- Diversity
- Information technology application
- Leadership
- Creativity/innovation
- Lifelong learning/self-direction
- Professionalism/work ethic
- Ethics/social responsibility

Note these lists, while not identical, overlap considerably.

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