USAID/HONDURAS DEVELOPMENT OBJECTIVE 2 YOUTH ASSESSMENT SITUATIONAL ANALYSIS

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Acronyms and Abbreviations

BANHPROVI	Honduran Bank for Production and Housing
COHEP	Honduran Commission on Private Enterprise
CONEANFO	National Commission for non-Formal Alternative Education
CDCS	Country Development Cooperation Strategy
CDE-MIPYME	Small and Medium Enterprise Business Development Centers
CDE	Business Development Centers
CICIG	International Commission Against Impunity
COSUDE	Swiss Cooperation Agency
CPI	Corruption Perceptions Index
DHS	Demographic and Health Service
DO2	Development Objective Two
DO2YA	Development Objective Two Youth Assessment
ESCAFE	Escuela Superior del Café
FAO	Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations
FHED	Honduran Foundation for Development Studies
GEF	Global Environment Facility
GEMA	Governance in Ecosystems, Livelihoods, and Water Activity
GNI	Gross National Income
GOH	Government of Honduras
HLG	Honduras Local Governance
ICT	Community Technical Institutions
IFAD	International Fund for Agricultural Development
IHCAFE	Honduran Coffee Institute
ILO	International Labour Organization
IOM	International Organization for Migration
INFOP	National Vocational Training Institute
INJ	National Youth Institute
KII	Key Informant Interview
LAC	Latin America and the Caribbean
LGBT	Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer, and Intersex
LI	Honduran Lempira
MACCIH	Mission to Support the Fight Against Corruption and Impunity in Honduras
MIS	Management Information Systems
MFI	Microfinance Institution
MSME	Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises
NGO	Non-Governmental Organization
PGD	Peer Group Discussion
PROLEMPA	Promoting Rural Economic Development for Women and Youth in Lempa Region
PYD	Positive Youth Development
REDMICROH	Microfinance Network of Honduras
SOW	Scope of Work
UN	United Nations
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
USAID	United States Agency for International Development
USD	United States Dollar
USDA	United States Department of Agriculture
YCC	Youth Conservation Corps
ZOI	Zone of Influence

Executive Summary

Honduras is one of the poorest nations in the Americas, with a per capita income that lags far behind the regional average.[1] The country has a significant youth bulge, with approximately 65 percent of the population below the age of 29, and 42 percent between the ages of 10-29.[2] Much has been written about the effects of the country's poverty, violence and migration on youth, especially in Honduras' central and northern regions where the largest cities (Tegucigalpa and San Pedro Sula) are located.[3,4,5] However, there is less systematic and comprehensive documentation regarding the reality of youth in the departments of Copán, Santa Bárbara, Intibucá, La Paz, Lempira, and Ocotepeque in western Honduras. As USAID prepares to update its Country Development Cooperation Strategy (CDCS) for Honduras, additional information is required to ensure that investments in the western region – where the agency concentrates its work under Development Objective 2 (DO2) of its current strategy – is targeted to effectively address youth needs.

Therefore, to improve understanding of the status and aspirations of youth in western Honduras and facilitate its own strategic decision-making, USAID commissioned YouthPower Learning to conduct a Youth Assessment in the region using a Positive Youth Development (PYD) lens.

PYD is both a philosophy and an approach to youth development that "engages youth along with their families, communities, and/or governments to empower them to reach their full potential. PYD builds skills, assets, and competencies; fosters healthy relationships; strengthens the enabling environment; and transform systems."[6] The assessment team analyzed barriers and opportunities for youth based on these essential features of the PYD framework using a set of six guiding research questions and approximately 25 secondary questions. The team conducted 31 peer group discussions (PGDs) with a total of 242 young people living in the six regions of western Honduras: Copán, Ocotepeque, Lempira, Santa Bárbara, Intibucá and La Paz. The team spoke with 46 key informants, prioritizing USAID/Honduras technical offices and implementing partners, Government of Honduras (GOH) officials, donors, non-governmental organizations (NGOs), community-based organizations (CBOs), private-sector actors, and schools. The team also conducted an extensive literature review to supplement findings from the field.

Figure 1. PYD Framework

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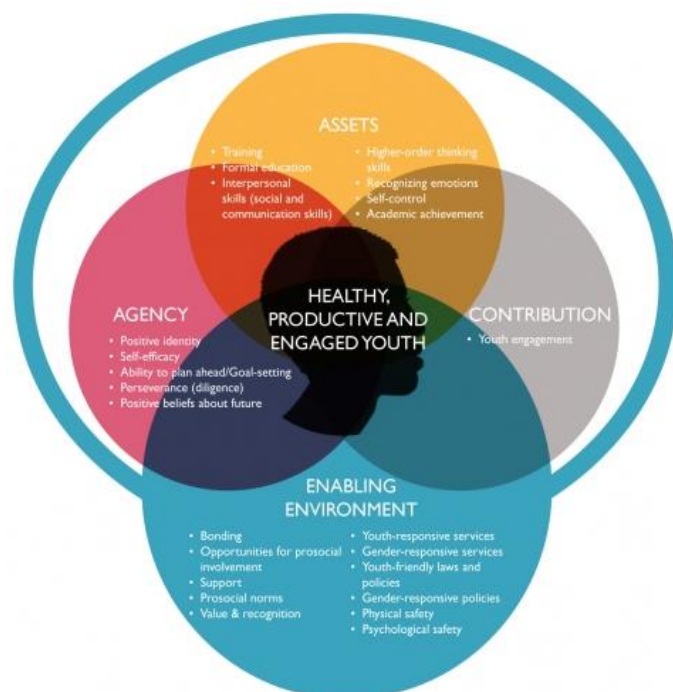
[1] World Bank Country Data 2016.
[2] 2013 National Population and Housing Survey, Government of Honduras, National Statistics Institute
[3] Berg, Louis-Alexandre and Carranza, Marlon, *Crime, Violence, and Community-Based Prevention in Honduras*, International Bank for Reconstruction and Development / The World Bank, Washington, DC 2015.
[4] Honduras Cross-Sectoral Youth Violence Prevention Assessment, USAID and Proyecto Metas. November 2013.
[5] Youth Violence and Citizen Security in Central America's Northern Triangle, innovATE; Feed the Future; USAID. August 2016.
[6] Hinson, L., Kapungu, C., Jessee, C., Skinner, M., Bardini, M. & Evans-Whipp, T. (2016). Measuring Positive Youth Development Toolkit: A Guide for Implementers of Youth Programs. Washington, DC: YouthPower Learning, Making Cents International.

<u>Key Findings</u>

Across all departments and PGDs included in the assessment, the ***lack of reliable employment*** represented the primary youth concern. Unemployment and underemployment are high in the region regardless of educational status, with young women facing the biggest challenges stemming from sex-based exclusion. The majority of economically active youth work informally and are often underpaid. Private-sector investment is limited; youth in the agricultural sector face land access, technology, climate and market barriers; and the coffee sector is undependable due to fluctuations in global commodity prices exacerbated by climate change. Cumbersome registration, tax and capital requirements limit youth entrepreneurship.

The second most significant source of frustration for youth in western Honduras is the ***inadequate education, training and skill-building opportunities*** available to them. Although the majority of assessment respondents completed sixth grade, only around 50 percent completed secondary school as a result of high costs, poor quality, and limited access. While the secondary completion rate among PGD respondents is higher than the national average, it nonetheless demonstrates that educational attainment plummets after primary school. The limited prospects for employment in the region also lead some youth to question the utility of secondary education. Women have higher school completion rates at every level of education but often face barriers that their male counterparts do not due to entrenched ideas regarding women's social and economic roles. Vocational-technical training programs are often inaccessible, costly, and poorly aligned with labor market needs.

Western Honduras still enjoys relative peace compared with the most troubled parts of the country; however, ***crime and violence*** are well-known themes across the region. Petty crime such as theft is common. More serious crimes – including murder, assault, rape, and extortion – occur with relative frequency. Recent regional homicide statistics show that at least 50 municipalities in western Honduras have homicide rates comparable to those of the deadliest cities in the world. Anecdotes from PGD respondents suggest a high degree of normalization of extra-judicial killing in some locations.

Social and political exclusion is also a key source of youth dissatisfaction. Political polarization runs deep, leading to exclusion from work, civic activities, and local services. A perception of entrenched corruption has resulted in a high level of distrust in local institutions. Additionally, many youths feel shut out of local participation and decision-making spaces. A plurality of respondents identified gender inequality as a problem – a stronger concern among young women than young men. Parents and male partners/husbands often control women's decisions around education and civic and labor participation, and teenage pregnancy is common. Sadly, violence against women is highly normalized. Members of the Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender (LGBT) community struggle with acceptance, confront discrimination and often fear for their security and safety. Violence against the LGBT community regularly goes unnoticed and rarely gets prosecuted.

Against the backdrop of limited education, poor employment prospects and a dearth of opportunities for meaningful engagement, alcohol and drug consumption is common, and many youth see migration as one of the only viable means to progress. Several PGD respondents shared their own plans to migrate despite the known risks, believing the potential positive outcomes outweigh the observable negative consequences.

Despite these challenges, ***there are bright spots***. Young people throughout the region are dynamic and energetic, and they have hope for their futures. They continue to aspire to education, gainful employment and better lives for themselves and their families, providing an important platform for positive youth development efforts in the region. The GOH, the private sector and donor-funded programs have placed high priority on employment and relevant training.

<u>Promising GOH Policies</u>
The GOH National Vision and National Plan emphasize economic growth and job creation, providing an overarching and long-term platform for planning and coordination. The Secretariat of Labor is working on legal reforms to facilitate entrepreneurship and access to credit; is promoting Micro, Small and Medium Enterprise Business Development Centers (CDE-MIPYMES) as local small business incubators; and is supporting the establishment and institutionalization of employment offices offering a range of services to job-seekers throughout the country, including in western Honduras. The National Youth Institute (INJ) is currently updating the National Youth Policy, prioritizing the obligatory assignation of 4 percent of municipal budgets for youth initiatives and increased youth inclusion in decision-making.

<u>Promising Platforms and Networks</u>
The Inter-Institutional Roundtable for Rural Youth Employability and Social Protection in Honduras provides an important platform for joint analysis, planning, and coordination around youth development. The Network of Community Technical Institutes (ITC) is an innovative education model focused on entrepreneurship, biodiversity and innovation that could be strengthened and supported to promote local employment and limit brain drain. The CDE-MIPYMEs provide technical assistance and training for micro, small and medium enterprises (MSME) and offer significant potential to channel support to young entrepreneurs. The private sector is coordinating closely with the government through the Plan Honduras 20/20, which seeks to create 600,000 jobs in priority sectors of the economy- an effort that would be limited only by public and private sector capacity to build the skills required for these new jobs. The Honduran Commission on Private Enterprise (COHEP) is pushing for regulatory reform to improve the investment climate for MSMEs and improve market-based vocational and technical training.

<u>Promising Partners, Programs and Practices</u>
Key donors, including the EU, Canada, and USAID, are making significant investments in employment growth, including policy and technical support for improved systems and institutions at the national level as well as providing direct technical assistance within western Honduras. USAID currently supports the National Vocational Training Institute (INFOP) to align professional training with market needs through Empleando Futuros, a workforce development activity focused on youth in the most at-risk municipalities in the country. The EU's Euro+Labor program supports the Secretariat of Labor's efforts to institutionalize employment offices and update management information systems (MIS) to improve real-time labor statistics. Canada's ProLempa program, implemented by CARE, supports employment creation and financial and social inclusion for women, youth, and indigenous groups in Lempira, Intibucá, and La Paz. USAID's GEMA, ACCESS to Markets and Alliance for the Dry Corridor (ACS) activities all promote improved use of technologies and market access for high-value crops and services. The Youth Conservation Corps, funded by USAID and implemented by the U.S. Forest Service, builds youth life skills through training and volunteer service. USAID's Honduras Local Governance (HLG) activity strengthens the transparency and accountability of municipal governments and services to ensure improved access and quality.

Many NGOs in the region implement innovative youth programs. With a focus on employability and life skills, local NGO COCEPRADII implements Jóvenes Constructores in Intibucá, with financing and technical support from CRS, while Swiss Contact implements ProJoven II with funding from COSUDE. Other NGOs, including CARE, Save the Children, and World Vision, support the development of youth leadership and life skills through youth outreach and municipal youth networks that provide opportunities for positive youth engagement and decision-making that can act as a springboard for continued civic participation.

Western Honduras has many challenges. But there is also significant existing investment, momentum, energy and interest in improving the reality across the region. Moving forward the region needs a clear and comprehensive youth employment strategy that aligns with the local context and current and projected labor market needs. Additional investment in proven strategies, practices, systems and programs-- as well as new investment focused on the development, piloting, measurement, and scale up of new approaches and practices-- will be required. Appropriate, well-targeted and well-coordinated investment will help build the necessary enabling environment to foster inclusive development and provide Honduran youth with the skills to strengthen the economy and transform the country for the 21st century.

I. INTRODUCTION

Honduras is one of the poorest nations in the Americas. The country's per capita gross national income (GNI, Atlas Method, 2016) of $2,150 lags far behind the average of $8,260 for the Latin America and Caribbean (LAC) region, and, likewise, behind its Central American neighbors of El Salvador and Guatemala ($3,920 and $3,790 GNI per capita in 2016, respectively.)[7]

Honduras' population is dominated by youth. According to the most recent census conducted in 2013, approximately 65 percent of the population was below the age of 29, and 42 percent (3.5 million out of 8.3 million) were youth between the ages of 10 and 29. Newer data from 2017 show the Honduran population has grown to nearly 8.9 million, of which 29 percent – 2.6 million – are between 15 and 29 years of age.[8] At the time of the census, almost half of the total population lived in rural areas, and of the working population in rural areas, nearly three quarters were employed in agriculture.

Youth in Honduras face numerous challenges that keep them from reaching their full potential. Although Honduras has a high literacy rate (88 percent) and high primary school enrollment (92 percent) for children 6-11 years old, there is a precipitous decline in enrollment in the mid-teen years, with only 28 percent of 15- to 17-year-olds remaining in school.[9] There is also a disparity between urban and rural areas in the levels of education completed.

The poor quality of education, coupled with limited opportunities for skill-building and training, means young people do not have the necessary skills to be employable in sectors of job growth. According to the most recent national household survey, those younger than 25 years of age made up 58.9 percent of the unemployed population in Honduras.[10] Of youth between 12 and 30 years of age in rural areas, 53 percent were working, 17 percent were studying, and 30 percent were neither working nor studying.[11] The average wage for this population was approximately $128 per month.[12]

Lack of economic opportunities contributes to high levels of out-migration from Honduras. In fact, 90 percent of all migrants returned to Honduras cite "economic reasons" as a motive for migrating. Reduced agricultural productivity and adverse climatic events (such as droughts) are related causes of irregular migration from Honduras to the United States and elsewhere, with low rainfall and drought shown to be associated with higher levels of migration, especially for young males (15-25 years old).[13]

THE SITUATION OF HONDURAN YOUNG PEOPLE

This section provides a brief demographic overview of Honduran youth in terms of growth estimates, educational attainment, employment status, and health and wellbeing.

Youth Population Size

Out of the total population of 8.9 million, approximately 2.6 million Hondurans are aged 15-29.[14] Nearly 65 percent of the population is below age 29, with a median age of 23.[15] The youth population is split relatively even between males and females. Overall, population growth is slowing, estimated to be 1.6

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[7] World Bank Country Data 2016.

[8] Labor Market Study. Empleando Futuros. Banyan Global. 2016.

[9] Encuesta Permanente de Hogares de Propósitos Múltiples. June 2017.

[10] Ibid.

[11] Ibid.

[12] Ibid.

[13] Javier Baez, German Caruso, Valerie Mueller, and Chiyu Niu (2017). "Droughts augment youth migration in Northern Latin America and the Caribbean." Climatic Change, 140:423-235

[14] Labor Market Study. Empleando Futuros. Banyan Global. 2016.

[15] United States Census Bureau. International Data Base. 2018.

percent in 2017 compared to 2.2 percent in 2007.[16] The birth rate has declined from 3.3 births per woman in 2006 to 2.5 in 2016. Additionally, Honduras had a net migration rate of 1 migrant per 1,000 people in 2018, contributing slightly to the slowing of population growth.[17] Demographic factors such as low population growth and the decline in the dependency ratio could support economic growth; however, poor employment, health, and educational outcomes for young people will likely offset any growth potential.[18]

Educational Attainment.
Investment in the education sector has declined from 25 percent of total government expenditure in 2015 to 22 percent in 2017.[19] Enrollment, completion, and progression rates have declined over the last decade. There is a significant disparity in access to education between rural and urban populations. For example, in urban areas, 86 percent of women and 85 percent of men completed primary education compared to 66 percent of women and 63 percent of men in rural areas.[20]

The formal education system in Honduras uses a 3-6-3-2 structure – three years of pre-primary schooling, six of primary, three of lower secondary, and two of upper secondary.[21] Children can enter pre-primary school as early as age three; however, compulsory education begins at age six. In principle, three years of pre-primary, six years of primary, and five years of secondary school (divided between lower and upper secondary as described above) are free and compulsory. Primary school enrollment was at 93 percent in 2016,[22] with relatively equal net enrollment between male and female students.[23] As of 2016, 86 percent of students who began primary school completed the full cycle, although "timely" completion rates – defined as primary school completion by age 12 – are much lower, at 50 percent.[24]

Estimated enrollment for grades seven through nine is 52.1 percent, while estimated enrollment for grades 10 to 12 is 31.7 percent.[25] Net enrollment in secondary school has increased slightly in recent years; however, it is significantly lower than the LAC average of 76 percent.[26] Secondary completion rates are affected by multiple factors, including early marriage, teen pregnancy, gang recruitment, and migration. Limited financial resources create additional barriers to completion, as many students cannot afford uniforms or necessary school supplies. This is especially true for rural students. Dropouts in rural areas are also heightened due to limited availability of schools and poor educational quality.[27]

Enrollment rates fall even further at the tertiary level (i.e., all post-secondary education). In 2016, the gross enrollment rate in tertiary education was 13 percent,[28] compared to 46 percent in the LAC region.[29] In 2015, the gender parity index for school enrollment at the tertiary level was 1.367 with overall higher female gross enrollment.[30]

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[16] Honduras. World Bank Group.
[17] United States Census Bureau. International Data Base. 2018.
[18] Honduras Cross-Sectoral Youth Violence Prevention Assessment.
[19] Honduras. UNESCO UIS.
[20] Honduras Demographic and Health Survey 2011-2012. INE.
[21] Honduras. Education Policy and Data Center. FHI360. Last updated: 18 Jun 2018.
[22] *Informe de Progreso Educativo Honduras 2017: Una Deuda Pendiente*, Fundación para la Educación Ricardo Ernesto Maduro Andreu (FEREMA) y el Diálogo Interamericano, Washington, D.C.
[23] Honduras. UNESCO UIS.
[24] *Informe de Progreso Educativo Honduras 2017: Una Deuda Pendiente*, Fundación para la Educación Ricardo Ernesto Maduro Andreu (FEREMA) y el Diálogo Interamericano, Washington, D.C.
[25] Ibid
[26] Honduras. UNESCO UIS.
[27] Adelman, Melissa and Miguel Székely. "School Dropout in Central America: An Overview of Trends, Causes, Consequences, and Promising Interventions." World Bank Group. February 2016.
[28] *Informe de Progreso Educativo Honduras 2017: Una Deuda Pendiente*, Fundación para la Educación Ricardo Ernesto Maduro Andreu (FEREMA) y el Diálogo Interamericano, Washington, D.C
[29] Honduras. UNESCO UIS.
[30] Honduras. World Bank Group.

The National Vocational Training Institute or *Instituto Nacional de Formación Profesional* (INFOP) is the GOH agency responsible for technical and vocational education and training, offering training at the secondary, tertiary, and adult education levels. INFOP is under the authority of the Secretariat of Labor and overseen by a multi-sector Board of Directors. More than 253,000 pupils enrolled in vocational secondary education in 2016,[31] with a slightly higher proportion of male TVET students (48 percent) compared to female students (44 percent).[32] While technical training is a necessary component for employment generation,[33] quality assurance in the current TVET system is a significant gap.[34] At the same time, available training opportunities often do not align with real labor market needs. The lack of market-driven skills training creates a significant mismatch between labor market needs and available skills, contributing to youth unemployment and underemployment.

Quality concerns are rife throughout Honduras' educational system. The Global Partnership for Education cited teacher performance, education quality, and learning outcome evaluations as areas the GOH must improve.[35] The Secretariat of Education is currently implementing curriculum and instruction quality reforms at the primary and secondary levels. However, teachers unions cite increased hours and stagnant salaries since 2008 as significant disincentives to quality improvement and a key barrier to recruitment and retention of good teachers.[36] While the system is struggling, recent studies show that youth nonetheless express a high level of interest in obtaining an education.[37]

Youth Employment Status.
While the country's official unemployment rate is estimated to be 5 percent among those engaged in the formal labor sector, youth experience a higher formal unemployment rate than the general population in Honduras, at 8 percent.[38] However, when taking into account the significant informal employment sector, youth unemployment is estimated at close to 30 percent.[39] FAO further estimates that young people under age 24 constitute more than half of the unemployed population,[40] with young women employed at less than half the rate of young men. Moreover, in 2017, almost 30 percent of youth were either unemployed or not engaged in any education or training activities, representing a significant "idle" youth population, with women again affected at a significantly higher rate than men.[41]

A lack of formal employment opportunities leads nearly 70 percent of young people to engage in the informal economy, e.g., working in ambulatory sales.[42] While working in the informal sector, youth do not have income security, access to health care or other benefits, or opportunities for professional development. According to FAO, 40 percent of youth workers are "paid less than the minimum wage and work long hours without access to social protection or adequate representation."[43] Unfortunately, while often dependent on self-employment, youth lack the knowledge, relevant skills, access to capital and credit needed to effectively start and manage their own businesses. The majority of youth who are employed in the formal economy work in the following sectors: agriculture and fishing (40 percent),

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[31] Ibid.
[32] UNESCO 2014.
[33] "Formación técnica y profesional fortalecerá programa Honduras 20/20." Hondudiario. 17 August 2016.
[34] Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) in Latin America and the Caribbean: A Regional Approach Towards 2030. 2013. UNESCO Regional Bureau of Latin America and the Caribbean.
[35] Education in Honduras. Global Partnership for Education. Accessed 2 October 2018.
[36] OECD. PISA for Development. Capacity Building Plan: Honduras. 2016.
[37] Honduras Cross-Sectoral Youth Violence Prevention Assessment, USAID and Proyecto Metas. November 2013.
[38] Honduras Unemployment Rate, 2017. ILO modelled estimates. May 2018.
[39] Labor Market Study. Empleando Futuros. Banyan Global. 2016.
[40] "FAO supports entrepreneurship amongst rural youth in Honduras."
[41] Key Statistics: Honduras. International Labour Organization.
[42] Youth employment and migration: a review of practices from joint programmes of the United Nations / International Labour Office, Employment Policy Department, Youth Employment Programme. Geneva: ILO 2013.
[43] "FAO supports entrepreneurship amongst rural youth in Honduras."

retail and wholesale businesses, hotels and restaurants (22 percent), manufacturing (14 percent), and social services (13 percent).[44] As of 2014, the gender wage gap was approximately 15 percent.

Health Factors Affecting the Wellbeing of Youth.
Sexual and reproductive health is a significant challenge for youth health in Honduras. A 2014 report by the Guttmacher Institute estimated that "among all 18–24-year-olds, 44 percent had sex before age 18; the proportions among those in rural areas and in the poorest households are higher than the national average, at 49 percent and 58 percent, respectively."[45] Contraception needs vary between married and unmarried women, both urban and rural. Forty-two percent of sexually active, never-married women aged 15-19 cited an unmet need for contraception, while just 16 percent of married women noted the same concern. Nearly 90 percent of Honduran women aged 15-19 say they know where to obtain a condom; however, only 37 percent of those who are sexually active report using condoms.

Approximately half of recent births to women under the age of 20 were unplanned.[46] In urban areas, approximately one in five young women aged 15-19 is a mother or pregnant; this statistic increases as socioeconomic and education levels decrease. A 2011 Honduras National Institute of Statistics (INE in Spanish) report estimated that only approximately 33 percent of youth aged 15-19 have comprehensive knowledge of HIV/AIDS.[47] The high rates of early sexual activity and low levels of condom use increase the risk of HIV and STI transmission for Honduran youth. Current HIV transmission rates are among the highest in the LAC region.[48]

Drug and alcohol use are relatively common among youth in urban areas, especially among males. A 2010 survey of secondary school students in Tegucigalpa indicated that 43 percent of youth use alcohol, 42 percent use cigarettes, and 8 percent use marijuana.[49] Mental health issues in general are also a concern, with the majority of suicide victims (36 percent) in Honduras being young men between the ages of 15 and 29. Among females only, 34 percent of suicides occur between ages 15 and 19.[50]

Safety and Security.
In the 2017 Legatum Prosperity Index, Honduras ranked 114 out of 149 countries with regard to safety and security.[51] The development and proliferation of drug trafficking networks within the region has led to gang formation and organized crime, both of which considerably affect youth. In particular, youth experience intra-family violence, sexual violence, criminal violence, and arbitrary executions, including by the police.[52]

The majority of homicides (83 percent) involve firearms, with 73 percent occurring in urban areas.[53] In 2012, 48 percent of homicide victims were youth (15–29) and 92 percent of those were male,[54] although the number of female victims has been increasing since 2011.[55] While the homicide rate in Honduras is

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[44] Honduras Cross-Sectoral Youth Violence Prevention Assessment, USAID and Proyecto Metas. November 2013.
[45] Anderson R, Panchaud C, Singh S and Watson K, Demystifying Data: A Guide to Using Evidence to Improve Young People's Sexual Health and Rights, New York: Guttmacher Institute, 2013.
[46] Ibid.
[47] INE, Secretaria del Despacho de la Presidencia and ICF International, 2011.
[48] García, Patricia J; Bayer, Angela; and Cárcamo, César P, The Changing Face of HIV in Latin America and the Caribbean, Current HIV/AIDS Reports 2014 June.
[49] INE, Secretaria del Despacho de la Presidencia and ICF International, 2011.
[50] National Violence Observatory. 2012.
[51] Honduras. The Legatum Prosperity Index 2017. Legatum Institute Foundation.
[52] Interpeace, 2011. "Entornos Violentos: Contexto en el que Crece la Juventud Hondureña."
[53] Honduras Cross-Sectoral Youth Violence Prevention Assessment.
[54] Observatorio de la Violencia 2012. UNAH-IUDPAS.
[55] "Violence, Children, and Organized Crime." Inter-American Commission on Human Rights. OAS. 2015.

among the highest in the world, the government has reported a decrease in homicides by half – from 85.5 per 100,000 residents in 2011 to 42.8 per 100,000 in 2017.[56]

According to the most recent Demographic and Health Survey (DHS) conducted between 2011 and 2012 by INE, approximately 40 percent of married or partnered women in Honduras have experienced violence at the hand of their husband or domestic partner.[57] In 2012, 47 percent of victims of violence against women were aged 20-29.[58] Young women also represent the majority of sexual violence victims (85 percent), with those between the ages of 10 and 14 making up 36 percent of all victims. Young men and women also experience intra-family violence, including rape, physical mistreatment, and homicide.

Honduras has one of the highest perceived levels of corruption in the world, ranking 135th out of 180 globally on Transparency International's Corruption Perceptions Index.[59] That perception has created high levels of mistrust of public servants among the Honduran population, specifically with regard to politicians (84 percent), the police (69 percent), NGOs (54 percent), and the press (51 percent).[60] Given the perceived frequency of youth involvement in crime and violence, mistrust of young people – especially young men – is also common, with 63 percent of adult respondents reporting that they would "always" or "almost always" cross the street if they saw a group of young people. Fifty-four percent said they would "always" or "almost always" be fearful if they saw a group of young people gathered on a street corner.[61]

Youth Migration.
Economic, social, and security factors contribute to high levels of external and internal migration. According to FAO, in 2010, the number of Hondurans legally living abroad was equivalent to about 7.5 percent of the country's total population.[62] In the same year, workers' remittances composed approximately 17 percent of Honduras' GDP, equaling nearly $2.8 billion.[63] The Pew Research Center estimates the immigrant population from Honduras to the US grew from 480,000 in 2007 to 630,000 in 2015.[64] In 2012, the US Department of Homeland Security (DHS) estimated 67 percent of Hondurans residing in the US were in the country illegally.[65]

Many Hondurans also migrate to urban centers within the country in search of economic opportunities. From 1990 to 2010, the urban population grew from 41 percent of the population to 46 percent.[66]

Youth are often disproportionately affected by migration. As many as 65 percent of Honduran migrants are young women and men who leave in search of economic opportunities.[67] This has negative consequences for human capital development and future growth prospects, reducing the available

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[56] Palencia, Gustavo. "Honduras murder rate fell by more than 25 percent in 2017: government." Reuters. 2 January 2018.
[57] Encuesta Nacional De Demografía Y Salud Endesa 2011-2012, República de Honduras Secretaría Del Despacho De La Presidencia, Instituto Nacional De Estadística Secretaría De Salud, ICF INTERNATIONAL Calverton, Maryland, EEUU, Mayo 2013
[58] National Violence Observatory. 2012.
[59] Corruption Perceptions Index 2017. Transparency International.
[60] UNDP (United Nations Development Programme). 2012. *Caribbean Human Development Report 2012: Human Development and the Shift to Better Citizen Security.* UNDP: New York.
[61] Ibid.
[62] FAO, Supporting Rural Youth Entrepreneurship to Reduce Migration in Honduras, Rural Employment, Good Practices #2015
[63] Youth employment and migration: a review of practices from joint programmes of the United Nations / International Labour Office, Employment Policy Department, Youth Employment Programme. Geneva: ILO 2013.
[64] Pew Research Center, December 2017, "Rise in U.S. Immigrants From El Salvador, Guatemala and Honduras Outpaces Growth From Elsewhere"
[65] Bryan Baker and Nancy Rytina, Estimates of the Unauthorized Immigrant Population Residing in the United States: January 2012, Department of Homeland Security (DHS), Office of Immigration Statistics, March 2013.
[66] Honduras Country Implementation Profile. UNFPA. International Conference on Population and Development Beyond 2014. July 2012.
[67] FAO, Supporting Rural Youth Entrepreneurship to Reduce Migration in Honduras, Rural Employment, Good Practices #2015.

working age population. Migration can also impact the youth who are left behind when their family members migrate. For example, if the breadwinner in the family leaves, their absence can present new income-earning or household demands on youth, affecting school attendance and completion[68] or other aspects of their psychosocial development.[69] Young migrant returnees – numbering over 10,500 in 2016 – also likely have unmet emotional and psychosocial needs related to the migration and repatriation processes.

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[68] Adelman, Melissa and Miguel Székely. "School Dropout in Central America: An Overview of Trends, Causes, Consequences, and Promising Interventions." World Bank Group. February 2016.
[69] UNICEF, Migration and Children, found on November 12 at: https://www.unicef-irc.org/article/606-migration-and-children.html

II. PURPOSE OF THE ASSESSMENT

USAID/Honduras commissioned YouthPower Learning to conduct a Youth Assessment in the Zone of Influence (ZoI) of Development Objective Two (DO2) of the United States Agency for International Development/Honduras Country Development Cooperation Strategy (CDCS). Using a Positive Youth Development (PYD) lens, YouthPower Learning sought to use the DO2 Youth Assessment (DO2YA) to better understand the status and aspirations of Honduran youth ages 18-29 in the country's six western departments (equivalent of states or provinces) of Ocotepeque, Copán, Lempira, Santa Bárbara, Intibucá and La Paz.

PYD is both a philosophy and an approach to youth development that "engages youth along with their families, communities, and/or governments so that youth are empowered to reach their full potential. PYD approaches build skills, assets, and competencies; foster healthy relationships; strengthen the environment; and transform systems."[70] This approach has a proven positive impact across an array of outcomes and sectors in the United States and other high-income countries. Donors, governments, practitioners and policymakers are increasingly looking to this approach to provide more holistic support for youth in low- and middle-income countries.

The PYD Framework offers four domains through which the vision of healthy, productive, and engaged youth can be achieved:

Assets. Youth have the necessary resources, skills, and competencies to achieve desired outcomes.

Agency. Youth perceive and have the ability to employ their assets and aspirations to influence their own decisions about their lives and set their own goals, as well as to act upon those decisions to achieve desired outcomes.

Contribution. Youth are engaged as a source of change for their own and for their communities' positive development.

Enabling environment. Youth are surrounded by an environment that develops and supports their assets, agency, access to services and opportunities, and strengthens their ability to avoid risks and stay safe, secure, and protected, and

Figure 1. PYD Framework

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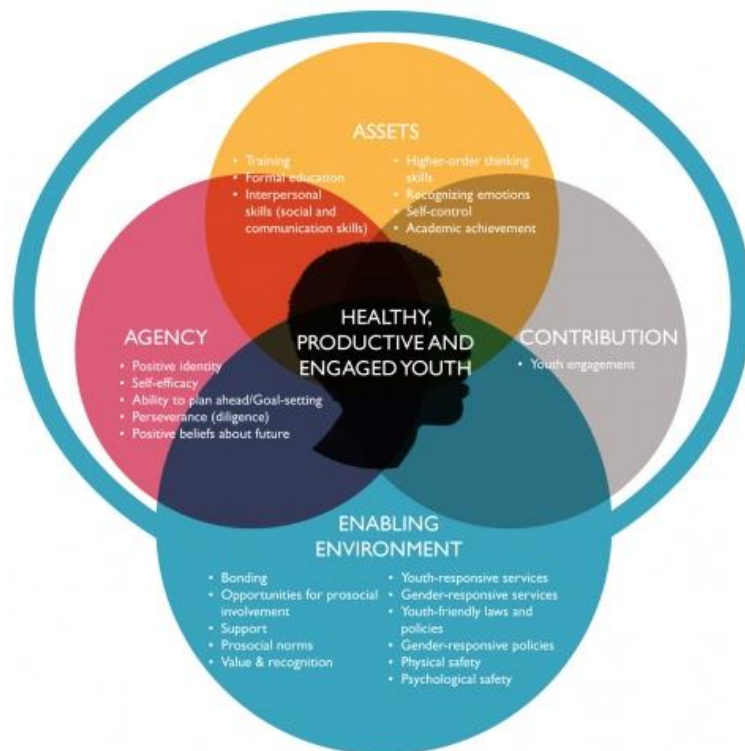
[70] Hinson, L., Kapungu, C., Jessee, C., Skinner, M., Bardini, M. & Evans-Whipp, T. (2016). Measuring Positive Youth Development Toolkit: A Guide for Implementers of Youth Programs. Washington, DC: YouthPower Learning, Making Cents International.

live without fear of violence or retribution.[71]

With a PYD application in mind, this assessment sought to: (a) identify the challenges and unmet needs of youth from Honduras' western region in their transition to adulthood; (b) identify existing youth development programming and priorities in the region; and (3) provide strategic guidance in the design and development of future PYD programming for the region within the framework of the new USAID/Honduras CDCS. For a copy of the assessment Statement of Work (SOW), see **Annex 1**.

The assessment also represented an important opportunity to systematically compile, consolidate, synthesize and analyze existing *tacit knowledge* about youth in western Honduras into a single publicly available assessment report. It became clear early in the assessment process that while government actors and development agency staff have significant knowledge about youth in the region, much of their knowledge is largely available only through internal agency (Government of Honduras [GOH], donor, NGO) reports and anecdotes. The team was unable to find any publicly available reports that systematically and comprehensively describe the aspirations, experiences and challenges of youth in western Honduras based on a methodologically grounded discussion with youth themselves. As a result – although it was not an explicit objective within the original SOW – the DO2YA represents an opportunity to add value to the overall understanding of youth in western Honduras among academics, donors, GOH actors and development practitioners alike.

Figure 2. Map of DO2YA data collection locations

Western Honduras
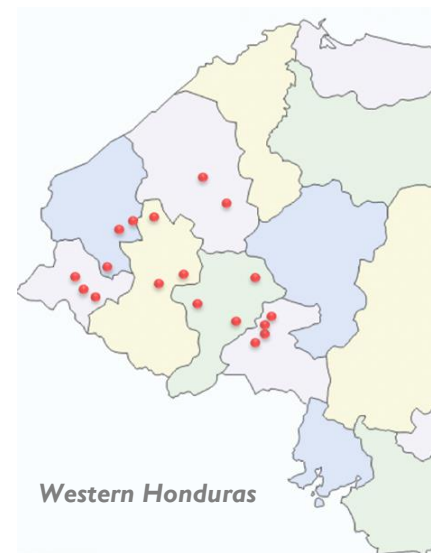
III. METHODOLOGY

In line with the SOW provided by USAID, the DO2YA assessment team utilized a largely qualitative methodology that included a literature review, peer group discussions (PGD) and key informant interviews (KII).

Literature Review. The assessment team reviewed over 75 documents covering general background and context regarding Honduras; Honduran youth; positive youth development; Honduran governmental strategic plans and priorities; reports from existing USAID and other donor projects; and general theoretical frameworks around topics such as violence, entrepreneurship, workforce development and employment. These documents served to frame the assessment methodology as well as provide context, supporting and comparative data for the assessment. For a list of the resources consulted for the DO2YA, see **Annex 2**.

Peer Group Discussions with Youth Ages 18-29. The data collection team conducted primary data collection using peer group discussions (PGDs), named for the fact that the methodology focused on youth aged 18-29 and was led by youth facilitators from the same age groups to support free and uninhibited conversation. To identify youth for PGDs, the team used a two-stage *purposive sampling* methodology. In the first stage, between two and four municipalities were identified from each department using a list of prioritized municipalities provided by USAID and considering the travel distances between locations to ensure efficient use of time and resources. In the second stage, the team

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[71] An enabling environment encourages and recognizes youth, while promoting their social and emotional competence to thrive. The term "environment" includes four key domains: (1) social- relationships with peers and adults, (2) normative- attitudes, norms, and beliefs, (3) structural- laws, policies, programs services, and systems; and (4) physical- safe, supportive spaces.

relied on key points of contact from local government offices to identify between eight and 10 area youth for participation in each PGD using clear written criteria, including location (urban/peri-urban/rural), sex, age, and ethnic parameters as well as *willingness to participate* and *to freely share their perspectives and expertise*. The team intentionally targeted youth from the area's dominant Lenca and Maya Ch'ortí ethnic groups as well as members of the LGBT community.

The data collection team also completed a **structured PGD registration questionnaire** with each PGD participant, covering demographics (sex, age, marital status, children), educational attainment and employment data, as well as data regarding telephone and internet access. In total, the team collected data from **242** male and female youth between the ages of 18 and 29 through **31 PGDs** across 18 municipalities and 92 communities / villages within Honduras' six western departments. **Figure 2** illustrates where the team collected data during the department-based field exercise. For copies of the PGD guide and registration questionnaire, please see **Annex 3** and **Annex 4**.

Key Informant Interviews. The team used **purposive sampling** to develop a preliminary list of KII informants in coordination with USAID, prioritizing key GOH offices, donors and NGOs. The team identified additional interviewees during the data collection process using **snowball sampling**. In total, the team conducted **44 key informant interviews**, including 25 at the departmental level and 19 in Tegucigalpa, the capital city. For a copy of the interview protocols for key stakeholders, see **Annex 5**. For the list of key informants, please see **Annex 6**.

Team Composition
The team was comprised of: **(1)** a *Team Leader* with overall responsibility for methodology design, implementation, team training and supervision, quality control, data analysis and reporting; **(2)** a *Deputy Team Leader* who supported data collection planning and team training, shared oversight of PGDs with the Team Leader, supported planning of the Youth Summits and conducted national-level KIIs jointly with the Team Leader; (3) Four *Youth researchers*[72] who worked in pairs to conduct PGDs under the supervision of the Team Leader and Deputy Team Leader. Given the analytical, methodological, leadership and relationship-building skills required to effectively facilitate qualitative research, the data collection process represented an important opportunity to promote PYD principles by building youth capacity through direct training and ongoing mentoring and supportive supervision; (4) a *Logistics support staff*, engaged through the local Honduran firm Central American Research and Investigation (EICA in Spanish), which provided a logistician to help plan the PGDs and interviews as well as two drivers to transport the team during the data collection process in Tegucigalpa and within the six target departments; and (5) Making Cents' Headquarters-based staff in Washington, D.C. provided planning, logistical and technical backstopping support throughout the data collection, analysis and writing process.

Quality Control
To ensure quality of **data collection**, the Team Leader and Deputy Team Leader: (1) provided three days of quality control training, including theoretical concepts, pilot testing and field testing of the data collection tool; (2) conducted daily observation and feedback for each data collection pair using a standard quality control checklist; and (3) conducted daily debriefs with the assessment team to identify and address data collection or logistical challenges in real time. For **data processing** quality: (1) the youth researchers took notes directly on laptop computers,[73] using a data entry template in Microsoft

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[72] Making Cents engaged a local Honduran local firm, EICA (*Estudios e Investigaciones de CentroAmerica*), which identified the local youth researchers.
[73] Given that the youth researchers were initially unsure of their ability to process notes directly in digital form, the Team Leader requested that they take notes manually and subsequently transfer them to electronic form. On the third day of data collection it became clear that this process would be difficult, so youth took notes directly into computers during the PGDs.

Word to avoid challenges with recall during transcription from hand-written notes; (2) the Team Leader reviewed transcripts to provide feedback regarding areas for clarification or improvement; and (3) the Team Leader developed a database for data resulting from the PGD survey. The Deputy Team Leader reviewed the database daily against a sample of forms to identify and correct errors. For full details regarding quality controls, please see *Annex 7*.

Analysis

The team conducted its analysis in two phases. In Phase 1, the team identified and captured common themes and outliers based on the perceptions and impressions of the youth researchers on a daily basis. The Team Lead and Deputy Team Lead used these themes to plan and conduct *Youth Summits* (see *Box 1)*. The team then used the feedback from the Youth Summits to refine the analysis and develop a presentation of preliminary findings for the USAID Mission Director and members of the USAID/Honduras DO2 team.

During Phase 2, the Team Leader used a color-coding system to identify common themes and sub-themes across PGDs and KIIs. He also analyzed the quantitative data derived from the PGD respondent survey using frequencies and cross tabulations (pivot tables) in Microsoft Excel. He used the findings from these complementary data sources – as well as data from relevant secondary literature, where relevant – to develop this report. For a full description of the analytical process, please see *Annex 8*.

Box 1. Youth Summits

To support completion of the assessment's data collection process and foment PYD principles, the assessment team conducted two *Youth Summits* within western Honduras – one in La Paz and the other in Lempira. The summits – interactive, half-day sharing and learning events – included the 30 most dynamic participants from each Peer Group Discussion as well as key local stakeholders. During each summit, the assessment's youth facilitators presented the assessment's preliminary findings and solicited feedback and recommendations through interactive roundtable discussions.

Objectives of the Youth Summits
(1) To validate, refine, and modify the preliminary assessment findings through an interactive, youth-centered methodology;
(2) To provide local youth with a space to directly impact development decisions affecting their lives; and
(3) To facilitate constructive engagement between youth and local leaders

The summits enabled the DO2YA team to validate the assessment's key findings and gather additional insights. Most importantly, it provided an opportunity for youth from across the region to share their challenges, aspirations and hopes for the future with their peers in a safe, nurturing, and youth-led environment. Each summit included a diverse group of youth participants, including young men and women, Lenca and Maya Ch'ortí youth, LGBT youth, and youth from across the 18-29 age spectrum. Summit attendance represented the first time some participants had ever left their municipality or department. Many of the youth participants said that the assessment represented the first time anyone had ever asked their opinion about their own development. Participants engaged jubilantly and thoughtfully throughout the sessions, demonstrating the incredible potential of young people in western Honduras.

IV. LIMITATIONS

To optimize understanding and use of the report's findings, it is important to view them within the context of the following limitations:

Breadth versus depth. Given the breadth of the study (six overarching research questions with 25 secondary questions; 6 Departments); the depth of youth challenges in Honduras; the complexity of Honduras' institutional and political environment; and the small and young data collection / logistics team, the assessment does not answer all questions exhaustively. Some key challenges, existing stakeholders and programs may have been omitted unintentionally as a result of this limitation. Where possible and feasible, the data collection team conducted follow-up interviews and additional literature reviews to deepen analysis of key issues, policies and programs.

Small and young team. Meaningful youth engagement is a core principle of PYD and, through the collaboration of youth researchers, was a cornerstone of the assessment approach. The local youth researchers identified for the study did a fantastic job, especially since most of them had no prior experience facilitating qualitative data collection processes. Working with youth researchers resulted in more accurate data and deeper understanding of the topics discussed. To ensure continuous improvement throughout data collection, the Team Leader and Deputy Team Leader provided intensive feedback and supervision. Nonetheless, it is important to keep this limitation in mind when reading the report, as the team's small size and relative inexperience affected the depth of follow-up in some cases.

Use of qualitative methodology. The assessment utilized a largely qualitative methodology, focused on KIIs, PGDs and a secondary literature review. Qualitative methodology is well-suited to understanding the range of perceptions and impressions of those who are targeted within the assessment; however, it does not provide a statistically representative or generalizable snapshot of youth or stakeholders in the region. The data collection process included an initial survey of PGD participants around a range of demographic, labor and educational topics, but the results of that survey – included in quantitative tables, graphs, and figures throughout the document – is, likewise, not statistically representative of the youth population as a whole; these data instead represent the experience only of youth participants in the assessment. The team utilized data from secondary sources where available to provide context or comparison with established trends. Nonetheless, it is important to keep the assessment's focus on qualitative methods and the resulting characterizations of perceptions and trends in mind when reading the report.

V. FINDINGS

This section outlines findings from the PGD and KII conducted during the DO2YA and includes references to relevant literature where available and appropriate. It is broken into seven sub-sections covering demographics; youth satisfaction; root causes of youth dissatisfaction; effects of youth dissatisfaction; GOH policies and programs; promising platforms and networks; and promising programs, partners and sectors.

A. DEMOGRAPHIC DATA

This section provides an overview of the demographics of PGD respondents. Particularly notable data are highlighted in each table.

Table 1. Age and sex of PDG respondents by department

Department	Male, 18-24	Male, 25-29	Female, 18-24	Female, 25-29	TOTALS
Ocotepeque	16	4	10	5	35
Copán	8	6*	6	18*	38
Lempira	9	10	23	3	45
Santa Bárbara	13	2	25	1	41
Intibucá	2	4	18	7	31
La Paz	11	6	23	12	52
TOTALS	59	32	105	46	**242**

* These numbers include one young man and four young women who participated in a LGBT-specific PGD in Copán

As Table 1 shows, young women represent a higher proportion of participations in PGDs than men, with women making up 62 percent of respondents compared to 38 percent for men. Women between 18 and 24 years of age represent the largest share of total participants. Due to logistical challenges during data collection, women within the 25-29 age group did not attend PGDs in high numbers. According to respondents, many of the young men who were invited to participate did not come to the meetings due to work or other previous commitments, resulting in lower overall numbers of young men. This was especially pronounced in Ocotepeque, Lempira, and Santa Bárbara.

Figure 3. Percent of PGD Respondents by Ethnic Group

- Lenca — 53%
- Mestizo(a) — 28%
- Blanco(a) — 8%
- Maya Ch'ortí — 7%
- Other — 4%

Ethnic group composition of PGDs

The Lenca, who number more than 450,000, are the largest indigenous community in Honduras and make up over 60 percent of the indigenous population.[74] The Lenca population comprises more than half of all inhabitants in La Paz (56 percent) and Intibucá (52 percent) and almost half of inhabitants in Lempira (45 percent).[75] Maya Ch'ortí is the second most prominent ethnic group (albeit far smaller than the Lenca), representing approximately 5 percent of the population in Copán and approximately 1 percent in Ocotepeque.[76] The assessment team purposefully selected PGD respondents to ensure strong representation of local ethnic groups based loosely on the existing ethnic characteristics of the region. As shown in *Figure 3* above, 53 percent of respondents identified as Lenca while 7 percent identified as Maya Ch'ortí. Twenty-eight percent self-identify as mestizo and 8 percent identify as white. Four percent identify as "other," which includes black as well as other unspecified indigenous groups.
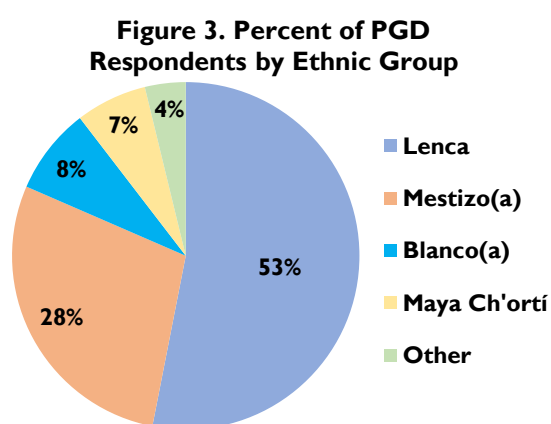
Marital status

At the national level, approximately 25 percent of youth are married or partnered/cohabiting. Young women are married or partnered at higher rates than men (women: 10 percent married / 21 percent partnered; men: 6 percent married / 16 percent partnered).[77] The conjugal status of PGD respondents varies slightly from these statistics, with approximately 30 percent either married (7 percent) or partnered (23 percent), with no discernible differences by sex. Perhaps unsurprisingly, there are differences in marriage/cohabitation across age cohorts, with 24 percent of the 18-24 cohort either married or partnered, compared to 38 percent of 25-29-year-olds. Likewise, there are differences by

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[74] Minority Rights Group International, https://minorityrights.org/country/honduras/
[75] Gobierno de Honduras Instituto Nacional de Estadística
http://170.238.108.227/binhnd/RpWebEngine.exe/Portal?BASE=CPVHND2013NAC&lang=ESP
[76] Ibid.
[77] Gobierno de Honduras Política Nacional de le Juventud 2010-2014

ethnic group, highlighted in **Table 2**. A substantially higher proportion of youth within the Lenca population are married or partnered in comparison with all other self-identified ethnic groups. A much higher proportion of mestizos are single compared to the other groups.

Table 2. Marital Status by ethnic group

Marital status	White *(n=17)*	Lenca *(n=112)*	Maya Ch'ortí *(n=14)*	Mestizo *(n=60)*	Other *(n=8)*
Partnered/cohabitating	18%	32%	21%	12%	13%
Married	12%	10%	0%	1%	12%
Single	70%	58%	79%	87%	75%

Childrearing

Thirty-six percent of PGD respondents have children. Youth within the older age cohort have children at a higher rate than those within the younger age cohort. Forty-seven percent of youth aged 25-29 have children compared to 27 percent of those between the ages of 18 and 24. According to 2011-2012 Demographic and Health Service (DHS) data, 28 percent of all 18-year-old young women have children. This

Table 3. Respondents with children by ethnic group

White	35%
Lenca	50%
Maya Chortí	7%
Mestizo(a)	17%
Other	25%

figure rises to 36 percent by the time a woman reaches age 19. On average across the six departments of western Honduras specifically, approximately 26 percent of all 19-year-old young women are already mothers.[78] Married or partnered youth are much more likely to have children than youth who are not married. Eighty-eight percent of married or partnered youth have children compared to 12 percent among those who are not married. There are also differences in whether respondents have children based on ethnic group affiliation, with the Lenca respondents having children at a much higher rate than the other ethnic groups and the Maya Ch'ortí respondents having children at a much lower rate.

B. YOUTH SATISFACTION

At the start of each PGD, youth facilitators distributed three cardboard emojis to each youth – a smiley face, a neutral face, and a sad face. Respondents were asked to rate the perceived level of satisfaction of youth in their communities[79] using one of the three emojis, where the happy face signified satisfaction, the sad face signified dissatisfaction, and neutral face signified neither satisfaction nor dissatisfaction. Although this exercise was meant to help break the ice and facilitate subsequent discussion, it also

Table 4. PGD Youth Satisfaction

Group	Satisfied	Dissatisfied	Neither Satisfied nor Dissatisfied
All respondents (n=164)	9%	35%	56%
Men (n=56)	20%	37%	43%
Women (n=102)	4%	33%	63%
Lenca (n=53)	8%	30%	62%
Maya Ch'ortí (n=8)	50%	50%	0%

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[78] Encuesta Nacional De Demografía Y Salud Endesa 2011-2012, Republica de Honduras Secretaría Del Despacho De La Presidencia, Instituto Nacional De Estadística Secretaría De Salud, ICF INTERNATIONAL Calverton, Maryland, EEUU, Mayo 2013

[79] By asking youth to rate the satisfaction of youth that they know/in their communities, the team hoped to open the discussion by focusing on an anonymous third person rather than on the direct experience of individuals in the room. By focusing on the third person, the team sought to maximize participation as it can be easier to speak in general terms about sensitive topics.

provided a snapshot of overall perceived satisfaction among PGD participants. In general, based on recorded responses using the emojis, PGD participants generally described a state of either dissatisfaction or neutrality among youth in their communities. Very few respondents described their peers as satisfied with their lives and circumstances. Across all PGDs, a combined 90 percent of respondents said that youth in their communities were either dissatisfied or neutral, while approximately 10 percent said that youth felt generally satisfied. It is noteworthy that young women respondents generally perceived their peers as the least satisfied. They also described higher levels of dissatisfaction or neutrality. Young men, on the other hand, perceived a higher level of satisfaction among their peers. Maya Ch'ortí respondents perceive their peers as dissatisfied/satisfied in equal measure.

C. KEY ROOT CAUSES OF YOUTH DISSATISFACTION

Lack of viable employment and livelihoods opportunities
High unemployment and underemployment
Across all departments and within all PGDs included in the assessment, the lack of reliable employment opportunities (livelihoods and income) represented the primary youth concern, with almost all other issues paling in comparison. Youth raised concerns about the lack of meaningful, long-term employment consistently in every PGD regardless of age cohort, sex, ethnic group, or location. It is by far the greatest frustration among youth in the region.

Based on data extracted and analyzed from the 2016 Honduras Multi-purpose Household Survey,[80] the national-level labor force participation rate[81] among 19- to 29-year-olds[82] is 68.5 percent, with males at 87 percent and women at 53 percent. Based on the PGD participant survey, the labor force participation rate among all PGD respondents is 55 percent, with evident differences by gender and ethnic group illustrated in *Table 5*. The Maya Ch'ortí have the highest overall labor participation rate, followed by young men. Women have the lowest labor participation rate, at 41 percent.

Table 5. Labor Participation

Men (n=88)	80%
Women (n=152)	41%
White /Mestizo (n=76)	51%
Lenca (n=111)	58%
Maya Ch'ortí (n=14)	86%
Other (n=7)	63%
All groups (n=209)	55%

The national unemployment rate[83] for youth between ages 19 and 29 is 13 percent, with male unemployment at 8 percent and women's unemployment at 20 percent.[84] Among PGD respondents, unemployment is 23 percent, with male unemployment at 10 percent and women's unemployment at 37 percent.[85] The majority of respondents across PGDs work in piecemeal, informal employment (54 percent). Employment status among PGD respondents varies by sex and ethnic group as shown in *Table 6*. Young women experience lower rates of overall employment (formal and informal sectors) compared to their male counterparts and all ethnic groups. Male respondents as well as respondents from the Maya Ch'ortí and Lenca ethnic groups have higher overall levels of employment than all other groups.

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[80] Labor Market Data, National Statistics Institute, found at:
http://170.238.108.227/binhnd/RpWebEngine.exe/Portal?BASE=EPH2016&lang=ESP on September 30, 2018
[81] Labor force participation rate= number of people who are employed + the number of people actively looking for work divided by total working age population
[82] The data in the Honduras Multi-purpose Household Survey aggregates data across the 15-18, 19-24 and 25-29 age ranges. The labor participation rate was calculated using the combined data for the 19-24 and 25-29 age ranges. As a result, this data does not include 18 year-olds.
[83] Unemployment = number of people who are jobless, looking for and available for work divided by the total labor force
[84] Labor Market Data, National Statistics Institute.
[85] Self-reports of joblessness-- including youth who have given up on searching for work altogether-- are much higher, at 48% across all respondents.

Table 6. Employment status by ethnic group and sex

Ethnic Group	Formally employed	Informally employed	Unemployed
Ethnic Group			
White /Mestizo (n=39)	18%	51%	31%
Lenca (n=64)	28%	53%	19%
Maya Chortí (n=12)	8%	67%	25%
Other (n=5)	20%	80%	0%
Sex			
Female (n=133)	26%	37%	37%
Male (n=84)	21%	69%	10%
Aggregate	**23%**	**54%**	**23%**

PGD respondents generally perceive that full-time formal employment is limited to a small number of available jobs in the public sector (municipal government offices) and in local retail shops or other services. In terms of private-sector jobs, with the exception of larger municipal centers such as Santa Rosa de Copán, Intibucá, and Gracias, there were few businesses, offices, or other economic infrastructure, such as shops and restaurants, in most locations visited by the assessment team.

Among respondents, informal employment type varies by sex. A significant portion of informal employment among young men is concentrated in the agricultural sector, even for those who come from peri-urban areas. Of all young male PGD participants who work informally, approximately 70 percent work in agriculture. According to the PGDs, some also work in construction or odd jobs, while respondents from three PGDs harvest and haul sand from local rivers as a primary, albeit unreliable, income source. Young women's informal employment tends to focus more on "reproductive" labor, including child-rearing, domestic household labor and micro-businesses, often focused around the preparation of food and snacks. Young women also work in paid agricultural labor, although some respondents characterized it as "men's work". One woman said that usually only the most vulnerable women – single mothers, for example – would have such jobs.

Respondents in more than half of the PGDs mentioned low daily wages as a significant challenge to meeting their basic needs. Several respondents discussed daily wages, saying they fluctuate between L130 and L150 per day, or approximately $6. Given that informal day jobs are often infrequent and unreliable (i.e., leading to work only a handful of times during the month), cumulative monthly wages are generally low. Even for those youth with full-time informal work, such as household domestic laborers, respondents said that wages can be as low as L1500 ($60) per month. Youth lamented that the degree of competition for informal jobs leads to significant wage suppression. The level of competition for jobs makes it difficult for employees to ask for more money because should they complain, many other jobseekers are willing to replace them at the offered wage.

The dearth of reliable employment makes it difficult for youth and their families to make ends meet. Respondents in more than half of PGDs expressed significant challenges in this regard. Respondents from several PGDs said that the lack of employment made it difficult to reliably pay for basic needs such as healthcare costs or school fees. There were no discernible differences in these data by location, sex, age cohort, or ethnic group.

It is important to note that while these challenges are significant, the national government, the private sector, and international partners in Honduras are prioritizing job growth. Honduras' National Vision (2010-2038) and National Plan (2010-2022), the country's key overarching development strategy guidelines, place high priority on economic development and job growth, with a focus on western Honduras. At the same time, Plan Honduras 20/20, a shared initiative between the GOH and the private sector, has developed the goal of generating 600,000 jobs in the tourism, textiles and apparel, light manufacturing, outsourcing services, housing, and agribusiness sectors by 2020.

Several donor-funded programs also seek to improve employment prospects nationally and in the region. Euro+Labor, funded by the European Union, is helping the Secretariat of Labor implement the National Employment Service program, which links job seekers to employment opportunities through local employment offices. The program is also helping develop an information management system to generate real-time labor market statistics. Pro-Lenca – funded by the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD), the Global Environment Facility (GEF), and GOH and implemented in Lempira, Intibucá, and La Paz – seeks to improve employment opportunities among smallholder farmers, rural artisans, rural micro-entrepreneurs, and small-scale merchants. The project expects to form 52 agro-industrial organizations and micro-enterprises and generate 1,800 new jobs by 2021.

Employment related to the coffee sector

According to the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) Foreign Agricultural Service, Honduras is the largest coffee producer in Central America, the third largest in Latin America, and the fifth largest globally. In the 2016-2017 harvest year, small and medium producers were responsible for approximately 85 percent of Honduras's total coffee production.[86] All six departments in western Honduras are located squarely within the country's coffee-producing region.[87] Coffee contributes at least partially to the livelihoods of a significant number of families across the region.[88]

Youth from a majority of PGD locations across all departments work in the coffee sector, either in production or in coffee processing (harvesting, drying, de-pulping). Coffee harvesting (the *corta del café)* represents a primary, albeit short-term, income-generating opportunity between the months of November and January for both male and female respondents from all departments and at least half of PGDs, especially from rural areas. Coffee harvesting represents a significant portion of families' annual livelihoods regardless of gender, age category, or location. In fact, respondents suggested that "la corta" is a secure income source, even if it is temporary and insufficient. Across PGDs, youth shared that entire families, including young children, often leave their homes to work in the coffee harvest. Given that children often leave school early to participate in the coffee harvest, this activity represents two opportunity costs – one because children are missing part of their childhood to work; the other because their educations also suffer.

> *"We all get anxious for the start of the coffee season because it's our primary means or survival"*
> -Young man, 18-24 age group
> Santa Barbara Department

Male and female youth in at least half of PGDs also *produce* coffee on small parcels of land. Across PGDs, respondents said that the low productivity on traditional coffee farms, combined with the volatile price of coffee, makes coffee an unreliable and often precarious livelihood. The price of a bucket of coffee

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[86] Ana Gomez, Honduras Coffee Annual 2018, USDA Foreign Agricultural Service Global Agriculture Information Network (GAIN) Report, May 2018
[87] Honduras' Coffee Regions, IHCAFE, accessed on 30 September 2018.
[88] Interview with government official in Ocotepeque

during the "corta"[89] also varies based on the price of coffee in local and international markets. The representative of the Honduran Coffee Institute (IHCAFE in Spanish), a national-level coffee coordinating, quality control and promotional body, said small-to-medium-scale farmers suffer the most significant losses due to the variable price of coffee. He suggested that increased productivity, through integrated farm management, farm diversification, and increased specialization, (e.g., organic and certified coffees) would increase coffee incomes.

However, achieving those changes would require reliable and consistent extension and business development services that are not currently available for most existing family-based small and medium coffee farms in western Honduras. Credit services that could support increased investment are available throughout the region but are inaccessible to youth due to significant collateral requirements, high interest rates, and short payment plans. Furthermore, even with optimal technical assistance and investment, climate variability – especially in Honduras' Dry Corridor, which runs across much of western Honduras' coffee production zone – is difficult to mitigate and often undermines production. The Regional IHCAFE Representative in Santa Bárbara observed, *"…For every ten years of production, only two of them will be good years."*

IHCAFE provides technical assistance through its training and research centers in Copán, La Paz, and Santa Bárbara. The centers are used to conduct research regarding new and improved coffee varieties. Although IHCAFE provides direct extension services, the group does not have the capacity to reach all coffee producers in the region. It does, however, disseminate information via radio and other mass media platforms, helping them reach a broader audience. USAID's Governance in Ecosystems, Livelihoods, and Water Activity (GEMA), implemented by DAI, is also active in the region, providing technical support and training to improve coffee marketability through certification and specialization.

The quality, prestige, and value of the region's coffee have improved markedly in the past decade,[90] resulting in the proliferation of local coffee shops throughout the region, especially in larger urban and peri-urban centers. This has opened specialized opportunities across the coffee value chain (e.g., for coffee dryers and roasters, tasters, and baristas), representing new and potential future sources of employment for area youth. According to multiple KII respondents, local professional training opportunities related to these specializations have increased significantly in the region in recent years. However, training tends to be expensive (L3,000 for each module of a 24-module training course). At the same time, several respondents also suggested that the disproportionate recent focus on these emerging professions could also lead to market saturation within a relatively short period of time, especially given the dearth of other options.

"Most of us do not work in agriculture because we like it, but because we have to."
-Young man, 18-24 age group
Copan Department

Agricultural production

Approximately 28 percent of Honduras' territory is agricultural land, and the agricultural sector employs about 39 percent of the population. A large portion of the country's agricultural production is focused on staple crops such as bananas, rice, maize, and beans.[91] The agriculture sector stands as the top source of income for Honduras' rural poor.[92] Agriculture makes up a portion of the livelihoods strategies of many youth in the assessment area

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[89] Coffee is both harvested and compensated in "buckets". A harvester is paid for each bucket he or she fills, so incomes largely depend on the number of buckets that a harvester can fill during a workday.
[90] Interviews with: 1. IHCAFE officials in Santa Barbara; 2. Agriculture Director at Catholic Relief Services in Tegucigalpa.
[91] International Fund for Agricultural Development- IFAD.
[92] Feed the Future: Honduras.

irrespective of age cohort, sex, ethnic group, or urban/rural divide. Some youth work their own land, while many of those without land work as day laborers on other people's farms.

Although facilitators did not ask the question directly in every discussion, in the PGDs where youth facilitators did ask about respondents' enthusiasm for undertaking agricultural livelihoods, youth expressed either no interest or indifference. Where youth respondents did not explicitly state a distaste for agriculture, they often described barriers to viable agricultural livelihoods, including limited land ownership; high associated costs of production (including land rental, fertilizers, and insecticides); limited access to capital, including credit services; variable climate and rain dependency; limited access to new technologies and approaches; low productivity and limited production volume; market barriers; generally low commodity prices; and a perceived lack of interest among local communities in buying local goods. Although youth respondents did not identify all of these barriers in every PGD, participants identified *at least one of these barriers* – and often many of them simultaneously – in all departments and in 26 of 31 PGDs (84 percent). Together, these observations suggest that youth view agricultural livelihoods as a limited means to get ahead. A high-ranking official from the Honduran Bank for Production and Housing (BANHPROVI in Spanish) confirmed, *"Youth do not want to work in the fields because they have seen the history of their parents for years. They see that they do not have a house, they do not have a car, they do not have property – they have nothing."*

Unsurprisingly, the majority of PGD respondents identified beans and corn as staples of local production. Male and female youth across the region also mentioned vegetable production as an important part of their livelihood strategies. The majority of youth who discussed the production of basic grains and vegetables said they primarily produce for household consumption and occasional discrete sales. Cash crops include potato (mentioned in several locations throughout Intibucá, La Paz, and Lempira), as well as malanga (also known as taro), sugarcane, and sesame (mentioned by a very small segment of respondents only in Intibucá and Santa Bárbara).

Through its ACCESS to Markets activity, a five-year Feed the Future activity implemented by Fintrac in Copán, Ocotepeque, and Santa Bárbara, USAID targets the agriculture sector, improving the use of technologies to enhance production while supporting diversification from traditional to high-value crops. Fintrac also increases access to capital and matches producers to local, regional and international buyers, The recently launched PROLEMPA project (Promoting Rural Economic Development for Women and Youth in the Lempa Region), a $9 million initiative funded by Global Affairs Canada and implemented by CARE, also focuses on employment among women, youth, and indigenous people through their inclusion in the coffee value chain and tourism as well as links to capital.

Climate change
In discussions of agricultural production, PGD respondents and key stakeholders raised climate change as a concern in the region. Youth producers as well as leaders of the regional office of the IHCAFE in Santa Bárbara attributed increased climate volatility – and associated production losses – to climate change. According to World Coffee Research, a collaborative research and development program of the global coffee industry, "as temperatures rise and extreme weather grows more frequent, coffee becomes increasingly susceptible to diseases, pests, and drought, while productivity and quality both fall."[93]

Coffee is not the only commodity that will be affected by climate change. In fact, climate variability was mentioned as a risk factor for agricultural production more generally throughout the region. According to CGIAR, corn and beans will also suffer the effects of climate change, causing stress, low crop yields,

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[93] World Coffee Research.

decreased quality of crops, and crop losses. Production losses for corn alone could amount to as much as 120,000 tons annually by 2025.[94] Respondents confirmed that small-scale farmers who depend on rain-fed agriculture for production are most affected by prolonged drought or other weather events. In the face of increasingly variable rainfall and droughts, the region's production – already considered by respondents across the majority of PGDs to be insufficient – will become even less reliable, representing an increasing threat to food security (and security more broadly) as households' own production decreases and food prices increase. In four of the last five years, Honduras has faced severe droughts affecting the livelihoods of tens of thousands of farmers.[95] Between 2014 and 2016, prolonged drought slashed bean and maize harvests by up to 90 percent in affected areas.[96] At the end of July 2018, the GOH declared a state of emergency until December 31 due to another drought, affecting the livelihoods of an estimated 170,300 families[97] in five of the six target departments (Intibucá, Lempira, Copán, Ocotepeque, and La Paz.).[98]

According to an employee of the GOH's Forest Conservation Institute in Santa Bárbara, a recent extreme outbreak of bark beetles (*gorgojo* in Spanish) in the pine forests of northern Honduras is also partially attributable to climate change. The outbreak, which began in 2013 and affected parts of Santa Bárbara, La Paz, and Intibucá[99], went virtually unaddressed until 2015, when the president declared a state of emergency. By that time, an estimated 500,000 hectares (representing 20% of the country's total pine forest area) had been affected.[100] According to forest experts, this was one of the most significant ecological disasters of the last several decades in Honduras and could recur with the effects of climate change.[101] Given the significant livelihoods opportunities that Honduras' forest sector represents[102], such events could have increasingly detrimental impacts on the economies of youth and their families.

Market Access
Youth face significant barriers to effectively engage with agricultural markets. Youth from at least five PGDs[103] said that there are no markets in their communities, making local sales of agricultural produce difficult in those locations. Where market opportunities do exist, most youth produce basic grains, such as corn and beans, resulting in high competition and low prices for those goods, especially following the harvest. It is also difficult for most youth to take advantage of markets outside of their communities of origin. A few respondents complained of the poor state of local roads, while respondents in a handful of locations mentioned unreliable and expensive transport as impediments. Limited productivity due to challenges with land ownership, access to credit and technical support, as well as pests and climate (all described above), also results in small production volumes, making it economically inviable for youth to transport their goods to larger market centers. Limited land ownership and access to capital also act as barriers to youth participation in local cooperatives, which often have capital investment requirements. The existing infrastructure and services of local cooperatives (e.g., technical support, financing, storage/aggregation, and transport) could offer opportunities to help young producers access markets. When youth cannot readily access markets, they often rely on intermediaries to sell their crops, limiting their ability to negotiate favorable prices. Several young producers of cash crops also complained about

[94] The CGIAR Research Program on Climate Change, Agriculture and Food Security (CCAFS).
[95] "Central America: Drought - 2014-2017." Relief Web.
[96] Moloney, Anastasia. "Drought-hit Honduras needs new approach to tackle extreme weather: U.N. envoy." *Reuters*. July 28, 2016.
[97] Government of Honduras, Permanent Contingency Commission (COPECO), http://copeco.gob.hn/content/solicitud%C2%A0sinager-pide-consejo-de-ministros-declaratoria-de-emergencia-para-municipios
[98] https://reliefweb.int/report/honduras/partir-de-la-fecha-hasta-el-31-de-diciembre-gobierno-decreta-emergencia-en-corredor
[99] "Plaga de gorgojo se propaga en 57 municipios y 8 departamentos," El Heraldo, August 11, 2015.
[100] "Honduras pone freno a plaga que arrasó con árboles de pino," La Nación, February 3, 2017
[101] "Honduras controla plaga del gorgojo descortezador." La Tribuna, February 3, 2017
[102] Interview with officials at the Forest Conservation Institute's Regional Office in Santa Barbara
[103] La Paz rural women, 25-29; La Paz, rural women 18-24; La Paz, rural men 25-29; Lempira, rural women 18-24 (2 groups)

unregulated competition. Potato producers from PGDs in Intibucá, La Paz, and Lempira, for example, said that competition from cheap Guatemalan potato imports is making potato production less viable.

Entrepreneurship

Respondents from across more than half of PGDs recognize the important role that small businesses play in opening up new employment opportunities and acting as an economic engine. Generally speaking, more young women than young men expressed interest in forming non-farm small businesses. This finding aligns closely with existing expectations about sex-based economic roles and livelihoods. Far more young women than young men in PGDs already piece together a living through small businesses, mostly selling food items. This finding also reflects those of the recent small business survey that COHEP finalized in April 2018, which found that more women than men participate in entrepreneurial activities.[104]

"When I had my son and was studying, I identified the need for a daycare center. There is nothing like that here. I even had a friend who was willing to join with me. But when we saw the number of requirements, the whole idea went up in smoke."

-Young woman 25-29 age group
Copan Department

Nonetheless, young men and young women alike mentioned significant barriers to entrepreneurship. Several PGD respondents identified government registration requirements as a substantial roadblock to formalizing small businesses, describing it as cumbersome, costly, and long. According to a 2013 report on the investment climate in Honduras commissioned by COHEP, the requirements to formalize a business act as disincentive for small business owners.[105] Tax requirements are a particularly vexing issue.

Microbusinesses, such as basic ambulatory sales of homemade food items, often operate without any formal recognition by the state. According to COHEP, as many as 60 percent of micro-enterprises are informal. However, if businesses want to grow and establish relationships with other business entities in the formal economy, such as distributors and vendors (e.g., Coca Cola) or formal clients (e.g., governments), they need to have a tax ID, which allows them to issue formal receipts and invoices. But to get a tax ID, small businesses must have a formal accounting system. They also must pay an initial tax upon registration, calculated based on annual sales projections. Once they have a tax ID, small businesses must comply with social security and minimum wage requirements.[106] Both the registration process and its related costs often intimidate small business owners from the outset. Several PGD respondents suggested that the investment of time and effort may not be worthwhile, given that tax payments would be likely to consume their small profit margins.

PGD respondents and key stakeholders agreed that lack of formal registration keeps small businesses from growing. An official from the municipal government in Intibucá described how local NGOs and government offices cannot hire local food vendors to cater the multiple meetings and events that happen throughout the region due to transparency rules. Because they require formal receipts, NGOs and government are often unable to do business with the small businesses that need their support the most. At least two female respondents echoed this concern, saying that such requirements made it impossible for them to take advantage of the potential business opportunities represented by local government and NGO events.

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[104] Mujeres En La Gestión Empresarial En Honduras, Informe De La Encuesta Empresarial Y Propuesta De Agenda Estratégica, Consejo Hondureño de la Empresa Privada (COHEP), abril 2018.
[105] STATCOM, Clima De Negocios En Honduras Y Obstáculos Para El Desarrollo De La Empresa En El País: La Visión De Los Empresarios Y De Otros Actores Ligados A Este Sector, COHEP, Abril 2013
[106] Ibid.

Access to credit is another obstacle to entrepreneurship. Youth in more than half of PGDs and in all departments lamented the lack of accessible and affordable credit options. Current credit schemes, they say, require substantial collateral and have high interest rates and short payment plans, all of which act as significant barriers. Youth in approximately half of PGDs had personal knowledge of people who had defaulted on loans from local microfinance institutions (MFIs) or banks, resulting in wages garnishment or – in several extreme cases – having their homes and properties taken away. Knowledge of these experiences has reinforced a sense of risk aversion among youth respondents.

Key stakeholders agreed that youth access to credit is limited. According to senior officials from BANHPROVI,[107] regulatory requirements impede credit access for youth, almost by design. To access credit within the formal banking sector, loan applicants are required to demonstrate (1) a history of credit access and use; and (2) experience in the business sector relevant to the loan they are seeking. Most youth do not meet either of these criteria. Furthermore, in both MFIs and formal banks, the legal age to access credit is 21, keeping loans out of reach for youth under that age limit.[108] Officials at Confianza, a semi-private loan guarantee agency modeled after Colombia's National Guarantee Fund, said that youth also have a difficult time accessing credit for small enterprise due to collateral requirements. According to REDMICROH, a union representing 25 MFIs in Honduras, youth entrepreneurs need a tax ID number to access business capital and most of them do not have one (see discussion above). In short, the regulatory environment and requirements of the Honduran banking sector do not favor or facilitate youth business investments because they are considered risky. According to officials from all three agencies, youth entrepreneurs require innovative credit products that effectively minimize or distribute risk, such as risk-pool or loan guarantee mechanisms.

Finally, economic, cultural, and contextual factors in western Honduras also present challenges to entrepreneurship. On the economic side, the lack of employment and disposable incomes throughout the region makes it difficult for entrepreneurs to sell anything but essential goods and services. However, markets for essential goods and services tend to be saturated, leaving little room for newcomers.

Interestingly, across multiple PGDs, youth expressed frustration that local community members often prefer to buy products in outside markets rather than purchasing them within the community, a phenomenon that – according to some – led many local businesses to fail. Some respondents said that this resulted from a general perception among community members that products from "outside" are of higher quality. Many other respondents perceive the impulse to buy outside rather than locally as a manifestation of the "envy" of their neighbors. Although it was difficult to ascertain the causes underlying this phenomenon, youth mentioned it across all departments and in approximately half of PGDs.

The GOH and private sector actors recognize the need to foster entrepreneurship. The Secretariat of Economic Development and Social Inclusion has established 14 CDE-MIPYMEs – including one in Intibucá – in coordination with academia, local governments, NGOs, and the private sector. CDE-MIPYMEs provide technical assistance and training for entrepreneurs to help them establish and strengthen micro, small and medium enterprises. The center in Intibucá, which offers services across Intibucá, La Paz, and Lempira, provides two-day entrepreneurship training for youth, support to develop business plans, and linkages to the INFOP for technical/vocational skills training. They also can assist

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[107] BANHPROVI is a government-backed national bank whose mission is *"to promote the growth and inclusive socioeconomic development of all Hondurans, through the provision of financial services…for production and housing, with emphasis on the social sector of the economy…"* http://www.banhprovi.gob.hn/BANHPROVI/Nosotros.html

[108] Cooperatives allow youth to access credit as of age 16.

small business owners with the legal and tax registration process for their businesses. One weakness in the current CDE-MIPYMEs model is that it does not support access to finance. However, the Secretariat for Economic Development is currently promoting reforms to the law on MSME that would allow youth to bypass traditional requirements. This would help CDE-MIPYMEs to facilitate access to finance in addition to the other services they provide.

Inadequate educational, training and skills
Limited formal educational attainment
Youth respondents across all DO2YA departments and PGDs *recognize the importance of education and identify educational advancement as a common and important life goal*. However, limited educational attainment is the second most significant source of frustration for youth respondents.[109] Educational attainment levels among PGD youth are illustrated in *Figure 4* using the results of respondent surveys conducted prior to each PGD.

Across all respondents, approximately 91 percent completed all six years of primary school,[110] comparable to the national average of 93 percent.[111] Sixty percent of PGD participants enrolled in secondary school, a 27 percent decrease over primary school completion rates but higher than the national average of 52 percent.[112] This difference is likely due to the purposive selection used in the PGD sample. Completion rates among PGD respondents differ approximately 40 percentage points between the primary and secondary levels. University completion rates plummet to approximately 3 percent of respondents. At every level of education, young women fare better than young men.

Figure 4. Educational Attainment Among PGD Youth
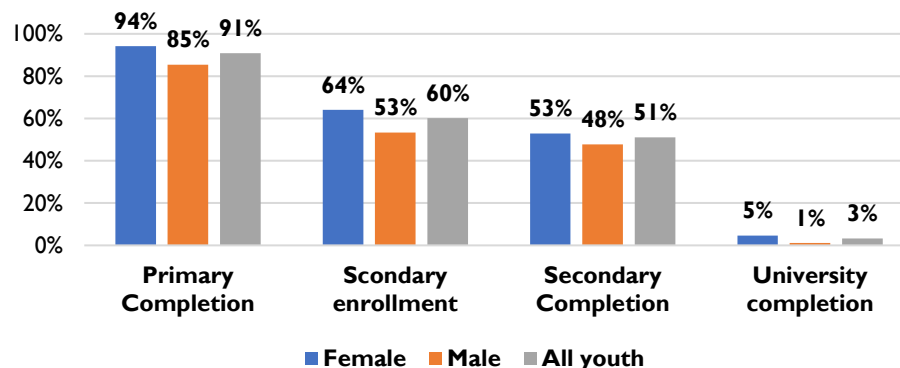
Given the precipitous drops in completion rates between primary and secondary school, it is clear there are significant barriers to secondary education. PGD respondents described several of these during the discussions. The first relates to the up-front *economic costs* of secondary education. Given the limited employment prospects in the region, families – especially from rural areas – often cannot afford secondary school or university studies. Moreover, because secondary schools are often not available in Honduras' rural areas, youth from those locations must travel to high schools located in urban centers. According to a recent education study in Honduras by the Inter-American Dialogue, only approximately

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[109] In Honduras the academic year begins in February and ends in November. The official age to start primary school is 6. The primary school cycle lasts 6 years, lower secondary lasts 3 years, and upper secondary (bachillerato) lasts 2 or 3 years, depending on whether students select a general (2 years) or technical track (3 years).
[110] Enrollment was calculated as: number completed 6th grade + numbers enrolled in secondary + numbers enrolled in university + numbers enrolled in vocational-technical education / total number of respondents
[111] *Informe de Progreso Educativo Honduras 2017: Una Deuda Pendiente*, Fundación para la Educación Ricardo Ernesto Maduro Andreu (FEREMA) y el Diálogo Interamericano, Washington, D.C.
[112] *Informe de Progreso Educativo Honduras 2017: Una Deuda Pendiente*, Fundación para la Educación Ricardo Ernesto Maduro Andreu (FEREMA) y el Diálogo Interamericano, Washington, D.C.

10 percent of the more than 23,000 schools in Honduras offer secondary education and 80 percent of them are in urban areas.[113] Together with the routine costs of books and uniforms (required in Honduras' schools), the additional expense of daily travel to urban areas pushes secondary school out of reach for many youths.

Table 7. Employment status by level of education

Schooling	Formal employment	Informal employment	No employment[114]
Primary (n=59)	7%	59%	34%
Secondary (n= 126)	18%	22%	60%
Post-secondary (n=31)	16%	26%	58%

The second broad challenge relates to perceptions about the utility of secondary or university education. The most consistent complaint among youth respondents is that education – whether secondary or university level – does not improve overall job prospects. This seems to be borne out by data from the survey conducted among respondents prior to each PGD, as seen in *Table 7*. Respondents with any secondary or post-secondary education have higher rates of formal employment-- more than twice the rate of those with primary education only. Inversely, youth respondents with a primary education are more than twice as likely to work informally than their counterparts with more education. These findings are not surprising. However, overall unemployment is nearly twice as high among respondents with a secondary or post-secondary education compared with respondents who only completed primary school. In short, while respondents with secondary and post-secondary educations have slightly higher levels of formal employment, they are also unemployed at much higher rates, suggesting that employment does not improve markedly as educational attainment increases.

Youth view education as a route to employment. Since education does not seem to increase success in the job market, some respondents said that families often view education as an opportunity cost. Going to school represents an expense that has no perceptible positive impact on employment prospects. Youth across the region expressed this concern consistently regardless of sex, age cohort, and ethnic group.

"We want to study, but for what? For nothing. I sometimes think, 'if I'm going to end up in a factory after I finish my studies, then what's the point?' This [reality] really lowers morale."

-Young female, 18-24 age group
Santa Barbara Department

When probed further regarding specific aspects of secondary education that hinder job prospects, youth from several PGDs identified the *poor quality* of public high schools as a significant impediment. In one PGD (La Paz), a male respondent said that local inhabitants felt lucky to have a local secondary school since many communities do not have one, but that the school did not meet local needs because there are no books for the students. In another PGD (La Paz), a respondent described how the math teacher doubles as the Spanish teacher due to challenges filling teaching positions. In several other PGDs, respondents questioned the *relevance* of secondary education to the reality of the 21st century, specifically noting the lack of basic computer classes, limited use of technology and absence of English language instruction. Youth respondents understand that not receiving such classes puts them at a disadvantage in both the Honduran and global economies.

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[113] Educational Challenges in Honduras and Consequences for Human Capital and Development, Inter-American Dialogue, February 2017

[114] The definition of "unemployment" used here differs from the one used under discussions of unemployment on page 10. Here "unemployment" is the sum of self-reports of long-term joblessness plus those who are looking for work.

When asked to describe challenges at the university level, respondents described costs as a barrier. They also observed a mismatch between university course offerings/majors, student interests, and needs of the labor market. One female respondent from Santa Rosa de Copán (25-29 age group) described how a limited array of university majors results in saturated labor markets, dragging down salaries for everyone and thus acting as a disincentive to seeking post-secondary education. Key stakeholders in Lempira and Ocotepeque echoed this observation, describing how the lack of diverse options in university studies is a disincentive to enrollment.

Box 2. Sex-based differences in educational attainment

In addition to the common obstacles to secondary and post-secondary education described above, respondents from more than a third of female PGDs[115] directly attribute the truncation of young women's educational opportunities to their sex.

Parents often have entrenched sexist attitudes about young women's judgement and ability to make their own decisions. Respondents describe this type of "overprotection" as a common experience that removes young women's agency and often makes it difficult to break the cycle of poverty. In Intibucá, a respondent told the story of a young woman whose parents had taken her out of school because they heard rumors that she was socializing with boys and they feared that she would become pregnant. They preferred to take her out of school than to risk having her reputation tarnished. In addition to demonstrating a lack of trust in women's decision-making, such decisions also severely limit young women's autonomy, agency, and mobility.

Teenage pregnancy is another significant factor limiting young women's educational advancement, with respondents across the region describing peers who were unable to continue their studies as a result of becoming pregnant at an early age. According to the World Bank, Honduras has the fourth highest adolescent fertility rate in Latin America. Teenage childbearing is highly correlated with lower educational achievement and poorer labor market outcomes for women.[116]

Vocational-technical training gaps

Several respondents suggested that short-term skills-based vocational/technical training would be a more meaningful investment of time and resources than traditional secondary or university education given its focus on concrete and employment-related skills. Youth are clamoring for training opportunities that will help them secure livelihoods. In approximately one-third of PGDs, male and female respondents expressed a desire for training in a specific trade. However, both PGD respondents and key stakeholders also generally agreed that current formal and informal vocational and technical training offerings are inadequate. Many respondents complained of limited availability of training opportunities, while others mentioned that existing vocational training courses tend to be costly. Like with secondary and university education, most technical training opportunities are also concentrated in urban centers, resulting in additional costs for rural youth.

Furthermore, based on the PGDs as well as conversations with multiple local and national stakeholders, available training opportunities often do not align with labor or service market demands. According to an official in the regional office of the INFOP in Gracias, Lempira, INFOP does not conduct market studies to match technical-vocational training course offerings to local market needs. Instead, local

"Currently INFOP is training people for unemployment. This is a market failure for the private sector – they are training people that private business does not need."

-Official at the Honduran Council for Private Enterprise

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[115] Two PGDs in Intibucá; one in Copan; one in Santa Barbara and another in La Paz.

[116] Azevedo et. al, *Teenage Pregnancy and Opportunities in Latin America and the Caribbean: On Teenage Fertility Decisions, Poverty and Economic Achievement*, International Bank for Reconstruction and Development / The World Bank , Washington DC 2012

staff at the INFOP administer an aptitude test, ask youth about their course preferences, and place them accordingly. Training courses at both the INFOP and other local training institutes are largely limited to a list of predictable, outdated, and highly gendered options (e.g., hairstyling / nails and baking for girls; mechanics, woodworking and cellphone repair for boys). Given how ubiquitous these training courses are throughout the region, many youth see them as viable and legitimate options to help them secure employment. When training was discussed in PGDs, most of the discussions centered around these limited offerings. However, youth are likely to have a difficult time either finding related employment or selling related services in their communities due to market saturation. A given community only has so much need for barbers or cake makers. In fact, several youth recognized the mismatch between available trainings and market needs.

Empleando Futuros, a USAID activity implemented by Banyan Global and funded under DO1, focuses on helping youth develop basic job skills and increasing employment opportunities. Banyan is currently strengthening the INFOP to better align its training options with the market-based needs of the private sector and to provide more comprehensive workforce services, like job matching and job placement.

An innovative training model that is currently entering its second phase of implementation is the Swiss-funded ProJoven II project. Although the project is not implemented in western Honduras, it provides market- and competencies-based job training to youth. The model includes a "psychosocial skills" component and other innovations, such as the incorporation of childcare at training centers to ensure that childcare does not act as a barrier for young mothers.

Business and entrepreneurship training
In terms of entrepreneurship, there are also few existing, affordable, comprehensive training programs focused on the development of the essential *business planning and administrative* skills required to form small businesses. Conversations with youth and stakeholders alike suggest a tendency to *equate* technical and business training. Across the region, training providers and youth themselves suggested that technical skills training (in mechanics, for example) will also prepare youth to be entrepreneurs.

One program in its early implementation phase but with potential promise for fostering youth entrepreneurship is *Jóvenes Constructores*. Implemented in Intibucá by local NGO COCEPRADII with financing from CRS through the US Department of Labor, the program seeks to build entrepreneurship, job readiness and life skills among rural youth. The model is the local iteration of YouthBuild International and works closely with a small cohort of youth to provide educational tutoring; build life, work, and leadership skills; support extracurricular activities; and promote volunteer community service. Youth who choose to establish a small business also receive a small business loan with a low interest rate (7 percent) to support start-up. The methodology is intensive and includes an eight-day orientation followed by 750 hours (five months) of training and volunteer service.

Soft skills gaps
According to multiple local stakeholders, underdeveloped soft skills are also a significant barrier for local youth, impeding their success in either full-time formal employment or entrepreneurship. The importance of soft skills is well-recognized for fostering positive youth outcomes, including workforce success, social and health behaviors, and education.[117,118] In particular, multiple stakeholders noted the lack of service orientation, limited attention to detail, impatience, lack of ambition, and a focus on short-term consumerism as significant obstacles that need to be addressed to position youth for success in the

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[117] Deming, D. J. (2015). The growing importance of social skills in the labor market (No. w21473). National Bureau of Economic Research.
[118] Gates, S., Lippman, L., Shadowen, N., Burke, H., Diener, O., and Malkin, M. (2016). USAID's YouthPower: Implementation, YouthPower Action.

workplace writ large. According to an official from CARE's ProLenca Program, the lack of soft skills often manifests itself in the impatience and immaturity of youth with respect to expectations, especially regarding the success of small businesses. She observed, *"…many youth open a business today and think that by tomorrow there will be sales and that it will take off. That shows a lack of maturity and understanding about how markets and businesses work."*

There are, however, existing potential models that effectively develop soft skills in youth. The Youth Conservation Corps, funded by USAID, builds youth employability and life skills through a training and volunteer program focused around environmental conservation. The training program includes five key modules, focused around Leadership, Life skills and healthy habits, Technical training in conservation management, Community service, and a Practicum. Youth participants gain both key technical skills as well as "soft" skills, such as relationship building, effective community engagement, problem solving, commitment and collaboration through both training and hands-on community service.

Crime and Violence

Over the past decade, Honduras has had one of the highest murder rates in the world. Almost 60 percent of all homicides occur in the three departments of Cortés, Francisco Morazán, and Yoro. San Pedro Sula, Honduras' second largest city, located in the department of Cortés, has had the highest homicide rate consistently since 2011 with a peak of 193.4 homicides per 100,000 persons in 2013, more than double the national rate.[119] Violence in Honduras predominantly affects male youth from poor urban areas; the majority of homicide victims are young men between 15 and 34 years of age.[120]

Community-level crime and violence

Although western Honduras still enjoys relative peace compared with the most troubled parts of the country, youth respondents described varying degrees of crime and/or violence across all departments and in more than half of PGDs. Based on the content of PGDs, they were grouped into one of three broad categories with respect to perceptions of crime and violence at the community level: (1) Crime-free, where respondents explicitly described their communities as safe (e.g., safe, calm, peaceful); (2) Petty crime, where respondents described non-violent, infrequent and/or isolated crime perpetrated by individuals, such as theft; and (3) Violent/organized crime, where respondents described significant criminal or violent activity – such as murder, extortion, assault, or rape – or where they mentioned formal or informal groups involved in criminal activity.[121] These basic categorizations and the number of PGDs corresponding to each one are included in **Table 8**.

Table 8. Number of PGD mentions of crime, by Department and type

Department	Crime-free	Petty crime	Violent / Organized Crime
Copán	0	3	1
Intibucá	1	1	2
La Paz	2	2	3
Lempira	2	2	1
Ocotepeque	3	0	2
Santa Bárbara	3	1	1
TOTALS	11	9	10

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[119] Youth Violence and Citizen Security in Central America's Northern Triangle, innovATE; Feed the Future; USAID

[120] Honduras Cross-Sectoral Youth Violence Prevention Assessment, USAID and Proyecto Metas

[121] It is important to note that these categorizations do not align with existing technical classifications from the criminology field. Instead, the categories emerged inductively. These findings should not be used to draw representative or categorical conclusions about crime in the region. A survey would measure the magnitude of crime and victimization more precisely. Nonetheless, the data do serve to provide limited insight into broad perceptions of crime and violence.

Respondents in 12 PGDs – approximately 40 percent of the total – either described a general sense of security in their communities or did not mention crime as a challenge. The majority of PGD respondents who described their communities as safe come from rural areas. Many respondents expressed a sense of thankfulness that their communities are peaceful compared to other locations in the country. As a young woman from a rural area in Intibucá observed, *"We are content because you can go to work and return home without being afraid something will happen to you on the way."*

Respondents in approximately 30 percent of PGDs mentioned petty crime as an issue in their municipalities. Perceptions of petty crime are most frequent among rural youth and are relatively consistent across sex categories. Although petty crime is fairly frequent in many of these locations, respondents viewed most of these crimes as a nuisance rather than a serious threat to their wellbeing or to the overall quality of life in their communities. Several respondents said that this kind of crime was rarely more serious than the theft of a household's chickens.

The area of biggest concern is the approximately 30 percent of groups that described serious crime and violence in their municipalities, with murder, assault, extortion, and other crimes mentioned as frequent occurrences in a third of locations. Young women PGD respondents identified serious criminal acts as a challenge at about twice the rate that men did. Several key stakeholders also identified crime and violence as impediments to youth development in the region. According to a government official in Santa Rosa de Copán, criminal activity is a particular challenge in urban areas. She described a neighborhood where a local criminal group charges every outsider with an entry "tax" as a way to control the community, suggesting a nascent but sophisticated level of criminal organization. A high-ranking member of World Vision's team in Intibucá observed that violence is a challenge in a limited number of municipalities, especially along the border with El Salvador. GOH officials in the region also highlighted the negative influence of narcotrafficking and "violent" murders in some locations throughout the region. In one location in La Paz, local stakeholders described such vivid experiences with violence that they warned the assessment team to leave before dark.

These perceptions track closely with recent homicide statistics from the national Secretariat for Security. Out of 108 municipalities in Lempira, Intibucá, La Paz, Santa Bárbara, and Ocotepeque for which there is available 2017 homicide data, 56 of them have homicide rates of at least 30 per 100,000 inhabitants, 24 have rates of 50 or more, and 12 of them have rates of 70 or more.[122] These rates compare to those of the top 10 deadliest cities in the world according to 2012 data from the UN Office on Drugs and Crime.[123]

It is particularly noteworthy that in three locations where PGD respondents *did not complain of serious crime* (two in Santa Bárbara, one in Copán), they matter-of-factly attributed the relative stability of their communities at least in part to vigilante groups that *eliminate* suspected criminals before they can cause harm, suggesting a high degree of normalization of extra-judicial killing in those locations despite widespread agreement within the groups that they are relatively safe communities. A recent World Bank study shows that Honduran communities have often used vigilantism to confront insecurity, but that such actions have also contributed to the expansion and normalization of violence. Although communities often believe that vigilantism increases security, it may actually increase risks for all involved by painting extra-judicial killing as "justice"[124]

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[122] Gobierno de Honduras, Secretaria de Seguridad (SEPOL), unofficial data shared with the DO2YA Team Leader by USAID in July 2018

[123] Van Mead, Nick and Jo Blason. "The 10 world cities with the highest murder rates – in pictures." The Guardian.

[124] Berg, Louis-Alexandre and Carranza, Marlon, *Crime, Violence, and Community-Based Prevention in Honduras*,

Weak and ineffective security and justice systems
Respondents in multiple PGDs suggested that the security situation in their communities is precarious partly as a result of unreliable citizen security and justice systems.

Respondents in multiple locations described local police or citizen security forces as corrupt, ineffective, or non-existent. In one group (Copán), a young woman described a case in which local police leaked information about a victim's police complaint to the perpetrators of the crime, requiring the alleged victim to flee out of fear. In two other cases (both in La Paz), respondents said that the lack of a local police force in their community – following a recent "purge" as part of a police reform process in Honduras – made them feel more vulnerable to crime. Although the "purge" of corrupt police is ostensibly positive, citizens fear that the security of their communities could easily deteriorate in the absence of a visible police force. According to a recent UNDP study, 69 percent of citizens mistrust the police.[125]

In two urban PGDs of young women, respondents said that they also did not trust local authorities to apply justice fairly due to either corruption or indifference. A young woman in Intibucá mentioned the case of a wealthy man whose charges on illegal possession of firearms were dropped due to the widely-held belief that he had paid off the judge who heard his case. In another case in Santa Bárbara, a respondent described how authorities in a recent allegation of child sexual abuse did nothing to apprehend the suspected perpetrator.

Although these cases are anecdotal, they reflect broader justice sector trends in Honduras. According to the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, impunity is a significant problem in Honduras, with only 1 out of 4 criminal cases reaching the trial phase. Often the rulings of local courts are implemented with delays, or only partially, with access to justice especially limited among indigenous populations.[126] Some of these challenges are attributed to rampant corruption in the Honduran judiciary.[127]

The government is taking steps to combat these challenges, including the establishment of the Mission to Support the Fight against Corruption and Impunity in Honduras (MACCIH). The body – the first of its kind supported by the Organization of American States (OAS), and modeled after Guatemala's UN-sponsored International Commission Against Impunity (CICIG) – investigates and prosecutes illegal activity in the Honduran government, judiciary, and security forces.[128]

Violence against women
Violence against women is common across the region. Respondents in approximately one-third of PGDs – and fully one half of women's PGDs – mentioned domestic violence as a common part of community life in both rural and urban areas. According to the most recent DHS, approximately 40 percent of married or partnered women in Honduras have experienced violence at the hand of

"Husbands beat [their wives]. It is kept secret because people do not speak ill of the husband. Instead, they say that the wife may not be a good woman and that is why husbands beat them and that is why they deserve what is happening to them."

-Young women 18-24 age group
Copán Department

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[125] Fintrac, March 2018 Quarterly Report, USAID, ACCESS to Markets, March 2018.
[126] Human Rights Council of the United Nations, Annual report of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights on the situation of human rights in Honduras, March 19, 2018
[127] Freedom House Honduras Overview, accessed on 1 October 2018.
[128] Human Rights Watch, accessed on 2 October 2018.

their husband or domestic partner.[129] The departments of Intibucá, Lempira, Ocotepeque and Santa Bárbara report the most serious injuries from domestic violence (cuts, bruises, deep wounds, broken teeth), at almost twice the national level.[130] PGD respondents generally attributed violence to sexist attitudes and entrenched beliefs about male power, and they said that it is often exacerbated by alcohol and drug consumption.

Domestic violence happens behind closed doors and is not discussed openly. Several respondents said that women rarely denounce domestic violence cases because it is highly normalized. According to a government official working in youth issues in Santa Rosa de Copán, many youths do not view domestic violence as violence; they see it as a normal part of family life. Several young women PGD respondents from across the region echoed this perception, saying that most people think that women have done something to "deserve" it when their husbands beat them.

Government officials in Intibucá said that women often will not seek legal recourse because of these cultural norms and because they often rely on their husbands economically. Seeking support would put them and their children in financial jeopardy. Based on the DHS, half of battered women at the national level do not seek help out of fear, the sense that it is "unnecessary," or because of feelings of shame. Younger women seek help less frequently than older women.[131] According to respondents, another key reason women do not seek legal or psychosocial services is because traditionally such support has been either unavailable or very limited. The government official from Santa Rosa also said that there are still very limited consequences for men who hit their wives. She cited multiple cases where a man who has beaten his wife receives a sanction of a few hours of community service or 24 hours in jail. These are not significant deterrents and often cause even worse violence. In short, there is a context of relative impunity for men, providing very few incentives for women to seek external support.

Respondents in some places suggested that this is slowly changing as a result of domestic violence training and orientation from local organizations, as well as the recent opening of local Municipal Women's Offices whose mandate is focused on addressing such challenges. According to the 2009 Municipal Law, local municipalities are required to address the needs of women and other vulnerable groups, including the creation of units, departments, or social development programs to address their needs and protect their rights.[132] One way that municipalities have sought to address these concerns is through the establishment of Municipal Women's Offices, focused on addressing violence against women. However, such offices do not exist in every municipality[133] and according to PGD respondents, both their degree of funding and functionality depends on the political will of municipal authorities.

Exclusion
Youth feel excluded along multiple dimensions in western Honduras, including as a result of political affiliation, sex, and sexual orientation.

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[129] Encuesta Nacional De Demografía Y Salud Endesa 2011-2012, República de Honduras Secretaría Del Despacho De La Presidencia, Instituto Nacional De Estadística Secretaría De Salud, ICF INTERNATIONAL Calverton, Maryland, EEUU, Mayo 2013

[130] Ibid.

[131] Encuesta Nacional De Demografía Y Salud Endesa 2011-2012, República de Honduras Secretaría Del Despacho De La Presidencia, Instituto Nacional De Estadística Secretaría De Salud, ICF INTERNATIONAL Calverton, Maryland, EEUU, Mayo 2013.

[132] Gobierno de Honduras, Ley de Municipalidades, accessed on 1 October 2018.

[133] DAI, *Análisis de Genero, Poblaciones Vulnerables e Inclusión Social*, USAID/HONDURAS, Proyecto para la Gobernabilidad Local de Honduras, Bethesda, MD, 22 de Mayo, 2017

Politicization and corruption

The political crisis of 2009 highlighted the fragility of Honduras' democratic system and the critical challenges it faces in guaranteeing human rights. That event brought social and political fractures to the fore in Honduras, and eroded citizens' trust in their institutions.[134] The polarization resulting from that episode continues, reflected in the political turmoil following the 2017 presidential elections.

Respondents in approximately half of PGDs share a common perception that the political environment is an impediment to progress for youth and their communities. A plurality of groups in Copán, La Paz, and Santa Bárbara expressed the general perception that political affiliation often determines whether youth receive official government support for employment, training, or other social benefits. Several respondents explicitly said that those people who cannot prove they mobilized political support for current municipal administrations in prior elections are excluded from public events and local development initiatives. Local staff from an area high school in La Paz echoed these observations, alleging that the school had practically been abandoned by the national government because the director does not belong to the ruling National Party. The quotes in **Box 3** illustrate the sense of exclusion that many youths feel in the region as a result of politicization:

Box 3. Politicization

"Everything has been politicized. The coordinator of the community development organization in my community does not invite me or my family to meetings because we are from another political party."
-Young man 18-24, Corquín, Copán (rural)

"There are health centers here that provide women with corn and beans during prenatal visits. Here it is by affinity. If you are not of the right political color, you are not given the help. If you do not have connections, you do not receive anything."
-Young woman, 25-29 age group Chinacla, La Paz (rural)

"There are government employment programs, but the problem is that the contracts are for young people who worked in politics. They have to present documents and records that they went to the marches organized by the National Party."
-Young woman 18-24 age group, Santa Bárbara (urban)

Several other PGDs also mentioned corruption as a challenge that undermines Honduras' development, affecting the poor most detrimentally. According to Transparency International, Honduras has one of the highest perceived levels of public corruption in the Latin American region and is ranked at 135 out of 180 countries on the organization's 2017 Corruption Perceptions Index (CPI). The country received a score of 29 out of 100 on its perceived level of public corruption.[135] These rankings are indicative of widespread corruption. As one male PGD respondent from Copán (25-29 age group) said, *"The biggest error we make is trusting politicians. Politics is good, but politicians are corrupt, and that's why Honduras is in the situation it's in."*

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[134] Honduran Youth for Democracy, Luisa Maria Aguilar.
[135] Transparency International, 2017 Corruption Perceptions Index.

Sex-based exclusion

Youth identified gender inequality as a barrier to development across all departments and over half of the PGDs. Perhaps unsurprisingly, young women mention this as a concern far more frequently than their male counterparts, arising in approximately 70 percent of all the women's PGDs compared to approximately 40 percent of young male groups. Both urban and rural groups identify sex-based exclusion as a challenge at approximately the same rate. Several respondents described how parents and male romantic partners/husbands limit young women's agency by controlling their decisions and movements, including decisions around education, sexual and reproductive health, and civic and labor participation. Several young women described how their parents had taken them out of school, limiting

> *"Parents protect you so much that they do not let you progress. If you leave the house, they say, 'you're going to get pregnant,'... 'they can kill you,'... 'you'll become a prostitute.' Parents scare you and you end up thinking you're not capable of anything."*
>
> -Young woman 18-24 age group
> Copan Department

their educations, due to entrenched beliefs about women's capacity. Others explained how parents view secondary school either as a risk (e.g., that young women would be "corrupted" or unable to control their impulses) or as a poor investment given the limited prospects they envisioned for their daughters' futures (see Education section above). Some respondents also described how parents, romantic partners, and women themselves proscribe a limited set of livelihood options for young women based on traditional sex roles (e.g., women need to stay home and be housewives). Other women explained how they were expected to remain in the home, *"like chickens in a coop"* according to a young woman from Lempira. Frequent and normalized violence against women also relegates young women to second-class status (see "Violence against women" section above). Many agreed that all these factors also affect women's self-esteem and confidence.

Respondents generally agreed that these barriers limit both women's development as well as the development of families and communities. Ironically – and in line with multiple global studies that suggest the important role women play in the economic wellbeing of their families – despite these challenges, several respondents suggested that women in their communities are the economic backbone of their families.

PGD respondents also observed a high level of teenage pregnancy among their peers and explained that this often exacerbates their social exclusion by truncating their studies (or eliminating the possibility of studying altogether) and increasing poverty. According to the 2011-2012 DHS, 28 percent of all 18-year-old young women have either been pregnant or have already given birth. This figure rises to 36 percent by the time a woman reaches age 19. On average across the six departments of western Honduras specifically, approximately 26 percent of all 19-year-old young women are already mothers.[136] Adolescent pregnancy remains a major contributor to maternal and child mortality, and to intergenerational cycles of ill health and poverty. Up to a third of girls ages 15 to 24 that drop out of school do so because of early pregnancy or marriage, often leading to lower education attainment, fewer skills, and limited opportunities for employment.[137]

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[136] Encuesta Nacional De Demografía Y Salud Endesa 2011-2012, Republica de Honduras Secretaría Del Despacho De La Presidencia, Instituto Nacional De Estadística Secretaría De Salud, ICF INTERNATIONAL Calverton, Maryland, EEUU, Mayo 2013

[137] World Health Organization (WHO), Adolescent Health Fact Sheet, accessed on 29 September 2018.

Exclusion based on sexual orientation

A PGD with members of the LGBT community in Copán, as well as an interview with an official from Diversa, the first LGBT collective in western Honduras, reveal a context of significant LGBT exclusion in the region. According to respondents, the biggest challenge is that western Honduras is an extremely socially conservative and closed society due to multiple factors, principal among them the dominance of the Catholic Church. Within this context, respondents describe the LGBT community as "invisible" at best and actively mistreated at worst. The degree of invisibility and lack of acceptance create emotional, inter-personal, social, and political barriers. Respondents agreed that the context makes it difficult for LGBT youth to live their lives openly. Several of them described living in

> *"It is the right <u>to be</u> that we are promoting. Imagine that society tells you that your existence is wrong – obviously this has repercussions. It closes doors at home and at work. Society wants you to change who you are."*
>
> \- Representative of LGBT collective Santa Rosa de Copan

a state of perpetual nervousness due to the social stigma attached to their sexual identities. The director of Diversa told stories of youth who have been kicked out of their parents' houses or fired from jobs for being LGBT. Respondents confirmed that living openly (e.g., being "out" at work or at home) in western Honduras would jeopardize their livelihoods. The official of the movement himself does not live completely openly, underscoring the challenges that the LGBT community faces. He stated, *"It is the right to be that we are promoting. Imagine that society tells you that your existence is wrong – obviously this has repercussions. It closes doors at home and at work. Society wants you to change who you are."*

Legislation still exists in Honduras that permits discrimination against and the violation of LGBT rights, especially of transgender people. The 2001 Police and Social Coexistence Act facilitates police abuse and arbitrary detention of transgender people. Under the law, the police have the authority to arrest anyone who "violates modesty, decency and public morals" or who "by their immoral behavior disturbs the tranquility of their neighbors." Transgender people – especially transgender women – are subjected to abuse and arbitrary arrest by the police, regardless of whether or not they are engaged in the sex trade.[138]

According to Human Rights Watch, lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender individuals in Honduras are among those most vulnerable to violence.[139] Between 2009 and 2014, there were 174 recorded violent deaths of LGBT people in the country. Killings of LGBT people tend to go unpunished. Of the deaths recorded, less than one-fourth have been prosecuted.[140]

The legislative amendment passed by Congress in 2013 includes penalties for hate crimes related to sexual orientation and gender identity, and imprisonment and fines for both restriction of LGBT rights and identity. The law also imposes punishments for inciting public hatred or discrimination based on sexual orientation.[141]

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[138] Inter-American Commission on Human Rights, Situation of Human Rights in Honduras, Organization of American States, December 2015

[139] Human Rights Watch Country Profiles: Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity, accessed on 2 October 2018.

[140] Inter-American Commission on Human Rights, Situation of Human Rights in Honduras, Organization of American States, December 2015

[141] Ibid

Lack of Parental Support
Limited parental motivation
A core principle of Positive Youth Development is the presence of a caring and consistent adult.[142]
Search Institute's Developmental Relationships Framework identifies five elements of positive relationships as: expressing care, challenging growth, providing support, sharing power, and expanding possibility.[143] Youth across approximately half of PGDs (17) consider parents as one of the most important influences on the lives of young people. They associate parental support, encouragement, and guidance – strong parental relationships in general – as essential for youth satisfaction and success. This

"If you are told, 'you're not worth anything,' then you will fail...sometimes it is the emotional support that makes you succeed."

-Young woman 18-24 age group
Lempira Department

finding is consistent across sex, age, location, and ethnic categories. Respondents from PGDs across the region indicated that youth often felt unsupported by their parents. Several young women described challenging relationships between parents and their daughters, asserting that often parents of young women did not trust their daughters' judgement or decision-making capacity. They mostly attributed these attitudes to deeply ingrained ideas about sex roles (see "Sex-based exclusion" section above). Others described a general sense that their parents do not encourage or motivate them. Others still shared stories of parents actively discouraging educational, work, or recreational goals (e.g., *"Why study gastronomy? There's no future in that"*; *"Stop dreaming about music"*; *"If you were born poor, you'll die poor"*). Youth intuitively understand that the messages they receive from their families affect the way the feel about themselves. As one young woman from Lempira (18-24 age group) observed, *"Resources and emotional support are what you need because if you are told, 'you're not worth anything,' then you will fail…sometimes it is the emotional support that makes you succeed."* The principals of two high schools in the region agreed that parental support is often lacking. According to the principal of a high school in La Paz, one of the biggest challenges is that parents do not have the time – or often the interest – to guide and motivate their children. Another high school principal in Santa Bárbara described this as a generational phenomenon: parents experienced this paradigm in their own childhoods, so it is the one they transmit to their kids.

Limited Spaces for Recreation and constructive engagement
Limited Recreational opportunities
Respondents in slightly more than one-third of PGDs (13) identified a lack of recreational opportunities as a factor in youth dissatisfaction, an observation most common in male PGDs (nine groups). It is noteworthy that youth mentioned recreation as a challenge in every department except La Paz. Respondents in seven groups asserted that improving recreational opportunities would improve youth motivation, decrease alcohol and drug use, and reduce delinquency. They mentioned an interest in sports, art, music, and dance most frequently. Several key stakeholders[144] also recommended increasing these same recreational opportunities for youth as a way to increase their satisfaction and constructive engagement. An official from the Spanish Cooperation Agency, Spain's international development funding and technical agency, emphasized the establishment and refurbishing of public parks and other public buildings – a key part of the agency's strategy – as an effective way to increase both recreational opportunities and positive community interaction. Recovery of public spaces was also recently

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[142] Eccles & Gootman, *Community Programs to Promote Youth Development.* 20002. Washington, DC. National Academy Press.
[143] Search Institute Developmental Framework.
[144] 1. Official from the municipal government in Intibucá; 2. Official from ProJoven, a youth employability program funded by SwissContact; Faculty member at the Instituto Polivalente San José de Cupertino

highlighted as a good practice for community-based violence prevention in Honduras by the World Bank.[145]

Limited opportunities to participate in decision-making spaces
Youth respondents in approximately half of PGDs (15) and all departments discussed feeling left out of formal decision-making processes. An even mix of men and women shared the perception that adults either do not take them seriously or view them as inexperienced, incapable, or uncommitted. A third of these groups, mostly from the Lenca ethnic group, also perceived that key decision-making spaces at the community level (e.g., community development committees, water boards) are a traditionally adult male domain, making it difficult for youth – and young women in particular – to credibly participate. However, respondents from eight PGDs argued that adults resist opening leadership positions to youth because they often fail to show up for meetings or to follow-up on commitments.

Despite the fact that respondents in half of PGDs described limited opportunities for decision-making or leadership, youth do participate in civic groups at fairly high levels across the region. In approximately two-thirds of PGDs (20), youth participate in one or more of the following civic spaces: church committees, community development committees, community fair committees, open public meetings, community public works (e.g., volunteer construction/repairs), political parties and government- or NGO-sponsored youth networks.

While the results of the PGDs suggest a mixed view of participation and decision-making, additional survey research would provide more precise measures of the breadth and depth of youth participation and leadership.

D. DIRECT EFFECTS OF YOUTH DISSATISFACTION

The previous section described youth dissatisfaction and its primary causes from the perspective of youth PGD respondents. This section describes the *direct effects* on youth and their communities in western Honduras resulting from the high level of dissatisfaction they experience.

Apathy and Lack of Motivation
Youth respondents feel a sense of apathy as a result of the challenges they experience. Respondents in approximately half of PGDs (14 – 7W, 7M) explicitly mentioned a lack of interest, limited ambition, or a sense of apathy among their peers as an obstacle to achieving their goals. When facilitators asked youth to assess the level of perceived satisfaction among their peers at the beginning of each PGD, several respondents said they never thought explicitly about their own satisfaction before; it was the first time they had ever had such a conversation. In three separate PGDs, both male and female respondents described a sense of "mental poverty" among many of their peers. The principal of a local secondary technical school in Santa Bárbara agreed, explaining that youth operate based on the paradigm they know. He said that because they know a paradigm of poverty, they see that as the only paradigm. They often do not believe that anything else is possible.

> *"For some, mental poverty is an obstacle – the culture of thinking that if you are born poor, then you will die poor."*
>
> -Young male 18-24 age group, Ocotepeque Department

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[145] Louis-Alexandre Berg and Marlon Carranza, "Crime, Violence and Community-based Prevention in Honduras," Just Development, issue 4, The World Bank, June 2014

It is essential to point out that many youth respondents also described a sense of hope for the future and exhibited enthusiasm, sharp senses of humor, and grit. Many of the youth in the PGDs are entrepreneurs. Many others are parents who have hope for a brighter future for their children.

Interestingly, many respondents and key stakeholders alike theorized that the ubiquitous access to mobile phones and internet throughout the region contributes to the lack of motivation that many youth feel. According to the survey conducted with respondents prior to each PDG, nearly all young people and three-quarters of PGD respondents have access to the internet (see Tables 9 and 10) Many respondents described how youth spend hours connected to the phones browsing the internet. This serves as a distraction that many believe influences them negatively, by absorbing their time and making them less engaged in their surroundings. One key stakeholder asserted that when youth from these locations spend so much time on the internet, it also distorts their vision of the future. They absorb both the culture of instant gratification and consumerism that the internet promotes. That often makes them aspire to achieve what they see. When they do not achieve those things immediately, they give up and feel more hopeless.

Table 9. Mobile phone and internet access among PGD respondents

Respondents	Mobile phone	Internet
Women	87%	73%
Men	95%	75%
All respondents	90%	74%

Table 10. PGD respondent internet access, by Department

Department	Internet access
Copán	83%
Intibucá	63%
La Paz	65%
Lempira	50%
Ocotepeque	100%
Santa Bárbara	95%

More research is needed to understand the relationship between internet use and its influences on youth in the region.

Alcohol and Drug use

Respondents in over two-thirds of PGDs described drug and alcohol use as a pervasive challenge among youth throughout the region, attributing the problem to limited employment, study and recreational opportunities, as well as a lack of parental support and supervision. Many respondents also see alcohol and drugs as key triggers for crime and violence, including domestic violence. One respondent in Intibucá said that alcoholism often exacerbates existing economic troubles.

Young men and women perceive drugs and alcohol as a problem at approximately the same rate. Respondents from the Lenca ethnic group mentioned alcohol more frequently than all other ethnic groups, with almost half of all respondents who discussed the negative impact of alcohol coming from Lenca communities in Lempira, La Paz, and Intibucá. Only three Lenca groups did not mention alcohol and drugs as a problem. Regardless of their ethnic group or sex, however, respondents perceive drugs and alcohol as a more significant problem among young men than young women. This finding is supported by a recent study that confirmed that drug and alcohol is most common among young urban males.[146]

Several PGD respondents described local bars as among the most successful local businesses, with one young man from San Marcos Ocotepeque (25-29 age group) observing, *"If you go to church you'll find 10 people; if you go to the local canteen it's standing room only.'* Key stakeholders in Lempira[147] and Intibucá[148] agreed that alcohol and drug use are a significant challenge. As the coordinator from the Children and

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[146] Honduras cross-sectoral youth violence prevention assessment, USAID and Proyecto Metas
[147] Coordinator of the Municipal Youth Office in Gracias, Lempira
[148] 1. Coordinator of the Municipal Office of Children and Youth in La Esperanza, Intibucá; 2. Economic Development Coordinator of Save the Children in La Esperanza, Intibucá; 3. Coordinator of Youth Build in Jesus de Otoro, Intibucá

Youth Office in La Esperanza described, *"They drink to celebrate and also if they are sad….If you go to the communities on Mondays you find many of them lying in the ditches because they did not make it home on Sunday."*

Respondents mentioned drug and alcohol use interchangeably, although many respondents focused their discussion around alcohol. Nonetheless, respondents frequently described drug use as well, especially marijuana.

Crime and Violence

As mentioned above, crime is a factor influencing youth dissatisfaction. Youth respondents from PGDs across the region also say that dissatisfaction is a likely contributor to crime and violence. Respondents observed that youth, especially men, look for other ways to spend their time. In the absence of consistent work, school, or recreation, some start to drink, some get involved in petty crime, and others get entangled in even more serious crimes, such as drug trafficking, assault, and extortion.

Migration

Migration affects the region significantly. According to a 2010 study by the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), the number of Hondurans legally living abroad was equivalent to about 7.5 per cent of the country's total population. When accounting for those who have emigrated by irregular means, this figure is estimated to be substantially higher.[149] Respondents from every PGD discussed migration and, in every group, respondents know someone who has migrated. Respondents from all groups identify the lack of livelihood opportunities as the primary reason people seek opportunities elsewhere. Violence was mentioned as a contributing factor in four PGDs. According to respondents, external migration leads most people to the United States, while some also go to Spain. Internal migration routes lead to San Pedro Sula and Tegucigalpa. Respondents in more than half of PGDs (18) recognized the substantial risks related to migration to the United States, citing cases of people who died or were maimed, raped, or extorted. Several other respondents described getting caught by the "migra" and returned as a risk. Often migrants sell everything they own or go into significant debt to migrate. As a result, when migrants in those conditions are "returned", they come back poorer and more vulnerable than before they left. Respondents from five young women's groups described family separation as a negative consequence of migration, with both emotional and economic dimensions.

Despite these challenges, respondents in approximately half of PGDs characterize migration as a net positive, citing cases of individuals who migrated and now have land, cars, and homes. Six respondents (five female, one male) in five different PGDs said they either already had migrated or planned to do so in the future.

E. GOH POLICIES AND PROGRAMS

This section outlines existing GOH policies that have direct implications for and provide a potential framework within which to address the key causes of youth dissatisfaction in western Honduras, including overarching development policies and plans, policies focused on youth, and policies related to education and employment.

Overarching Policies/Frameworks
The National Youth Policy
The purpose of the National Youth Policy is to ensure that youth concerns and priorities are incorporated into Honduras' development policies and programs through cross-sectoral and cross-

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[149] Supporting rural youth entrepreneurship to reduce migration in Honduras, Good Practices Bulletin #2. FAO.

ministerial coordination. The National Youth Institute (INJ in Spanish) is the governing body that develops, updates, and promotes the National Youth Policy and coordinates all youth-focused actions across GOH offices, ministries, and cabinets. The INJ is currently working with multiple stakeholders to modernize the policy, including a reform proposal to require that municipal governments allocate 4 percent of municipal budgets to support youth development. One of the key goals of the INJ is to achieve the institutionalization of Municipal Youth Offices in every municipality in Honduras to provide key services for youth and to act as the primary youth coordinating body. Currently these offices only exist in a handful of municipalities and depend largely on the political will of municipal governments. According to officials at the INJ, both budget limitations and INJ credibility are significant barriers impeding their ability to take a leadership role and influence the agenda in favor of youth.

Honduras' National Vision (2010-2038) and National Plan (2010-2022)
The Vision and National Plan are Honduras' key development plans, providing a clear framework for national development. The Vision comprises a period of 28 years to ensure continuity across Presidential administrations, an innovative and progressive move in a country that has traditionally dismantled the entire public service system with each successive presidential election. The Vision, which prioritizes the western region in particular because of its high level of poverty and the concentration of the Lenca and Maya Ch'ortí indigenous groups in the area, is guided by 17 principles and four strategic objectives: (1) a country without extreme poverty, an educated and healthy population, with consolidated social protection systems; (2) a country that develops democratically, with security and without violence; (3) a productive country, generator of opportunities and decent jobs, that takes advantage of its resources in a sustainable manner and reduces environmental vulnerability; (4) a modern, responsible, efficient and competitive state. The National Plan (2010-2022) aligns with the Vision and includes 11 strategic guidelines and 58 indicators to measure progress. Currently, the plan does not have clearly defined objectives related to youth.

The National Plan is decentralized, with regional coordinators located throughout the country who represent the central government and ostensibly coordinate actions related to the plan's key pillars across local actors within the departments and municipalities under their purview. However, local stakeholders said that during the change of government in 2013, the National Plan went from being a Secretariat-level coordinating body to a lesser dependency of the Office of the Presidency. This reduced its legitimacy and budget and has made it difficult to coordinate National-Plan-related activities. Most of the regional offices have limited relationships with and influence over municipal governments, which also means they have limited first-hand knowledge of the actions of local development actors and minimal influence over coordination decisions. Some municipalities occasionally seek discrete support from the regional offices, mostly to channel concerns to the central government. However, regional offices often work closely with the municipal associations (*mancomunidades*), representing an important opportunity to increase coordination and improve targeting and impact of local development efforts. Budget and mobility constraints at the regional offices of the plan are significant. Most of the regional offices have minimal staff and virtually no operating budgets. Some of them do not have vehicles, which makes coordination even more difficult.

According to high-level stakeholders from the private sector, the National Plan was not developed in close coordination with the private sector or civil society, so buy-in is weak.

Education, Training and Skills
Draft bill to transfer the National Institute of Professional Training to the private sector
The National Institute of Professional Training (INFOP in Spanish) is a national body funded through an obligatory 1 percent tax paid by all private enterprises in Honduras. Its purpose is to "oversee, direct, control, supervise and evaluate activities aimed at professional training." According to multiple

stakeholders, including staff at the INFOP office in Gracias, Lempira; USAID; the European Union; and the Honduran Council on Private Enterprise, INFOP does not currently conduct market or prospection studies to ensure that course offerings meet market needs. This represents a significant weakness in its ability to meet its mandate. At the same, the Institute has a strong employee union and spends most of its budget on staffing, creating significant obstacles to reform within the institution. To address these challenges, private-sector and government stakeholders have developed a draft bill to transfer the administration of INFOP to the private sector to ensure it responds more efficiently to private sector and user (e.g., youth) needs. According to local stakeholders, a vote is expected to come before Congress by the end of 2018. They are optimistic that the bill will pass. A similar process was undertaken in March 2016 when entrenched (employee and political) interests consistently blocked reforms at the national tax authority (new staff, structure, etc.). Eventually, to institute the needed changes, the office of the president disbanded the national tax authority and replaced it with a new one by executive order. According to stakeholders, the transfer of INFOP to the private sector will ensure that INFOP course offerings are based on up-to-date prospection and market studies and that training courses offer competency-based and soft skills training to enhance employment and employability based on labor market demands. This change would also seek to integrate vocational training with entrepreneurship training through Business Development Centers (CDE in Spanish). With increased focus on market alignment and responsiveness, INFOP could serve to more effectively prepare job seekers, particularly youth, with relevant technical and soft skills.

Employment
Reform of the Law on Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises
The Undersecretary for Micro, Small and Medium Enterprise (MSME) of the Secretariat for Economic Development is currently promoting reforms to the law on MSME, with a goal for passage by 2019. These reforms seek: (1) to strengthen the role of Business Development Centers as local coordinating bodies for activities related to micro, small and medium enterprises; (2) to facilitate links between CDEs and MFIs and support modifications to current banking regulations that will enable youth to bypass traditional requirements such as collateral and previous entrepreneurial experience; and (3) to re-orient the formal elementary school education curriculum to focus on critical thinking, soft skills, problem-solving, planning, and entrepreneurship as an avenue to prepare young people to generate jobs for the 21st century economy.

Honduras 20/20
Honduras 20/20 is a country development plan backed by the GOH that provides a framework and technical focus that can help foster private sector investment and job growth. It is a public-private initiative driven in large part by the private sector to foster economic growth by strengthening six strategic sectors of the economy, including tourism, textiles and apparel, light manufacturing, outsourcing services, agribusiness, and social housing. Through its technical unit, the Honduras 20/20 team will design strategies to promote the identified sectors, promote investment and exports, and support simplification of regulatory framework to facilitate investment and venture capital. Honduras 20/20 is financed in equal parts by the government and the Honduran Foundation for Development Studies (FHED) from contributions that it receives from the private sector. It is governed by a Board of Directors that includes three private-sector representatives and three public-sector/government representatives.

According to high-level private sector stakeholders, the plan is ambitious, with the goal of generating 600,000 jobs by 2020, more than half of which are planned within the housing and agricultural sectors. Until now, there have been challenges in terms of implementation, and it is seen by some as needing more buy-in from key partners within the identified sectors. Nonetheless, the platform is extremely

relevant for job creation and could present opportunities for collaboration across key strategic sectors for USAID.

F. PROMISING PLATFORMS AND NETWORKS

This section describes several existing networks and platforms that USAID can work with or leverage to improve youth assets and agency.

Network of Community Technical Institutes (ITC) in Honduras

In the 1990s, FAO worked in coordination with the Secretariat of Education to develop a community-based education model focused on promoting local economic development through a curriculum that prepared students to address community development challenges in their communities. This model, known as Community Technical Institutes (ITC in Spanish), now includes a network of 28 technical high schools throughout western Honduras. The model, supported by Fundación Helvetas Honduras, provides students with technical competencies and entrepreneurial and life skills to support employability and contribute to local development. The curriculum provides youth with concrete technical and life skills based on principles of sustainability, equity, biodiversity protection, and value chains. The model is innovative within the Honduran context, but according to interviews with directors of two ITCs in the region (La Paz, Santa Bárbara), resources are limited, which also restricts the applicability of the curriculum. Discussions with ITC suggest that the success of the model is variable and it depends largely on the dynamism of the directors and staff.

USAID works with ITCs as part of the HLG activity, but could do more to leverage the innovation of the model. According to USAID staff in Tegucigalpa, it can be challenging to find qualified technical staff in the region. Because agriculture and environment are such important cross-cutting elements of the ITC model, the youth trained at these schools could be a source of technical support for USAID agriculture and value chain programs in the region. One ITC in the south of Lempira, for example, uses an agroforestry system (e.g., secondary forests) that has turned land that has been fallow for generations into a highly productive and ecologically diverse area. To achieve this requires an intimate and highly technical understanding of local ecological conditions and species. Such skillsets represent an opportunity for USAID to promote and replicate effective local technologies, while enabling qualified youth to stay in the region. In this way, ITCs are a way to mitigate brain drain and support local economic development.

National School-Workshop Program / Non-formal technical education

The National Commission for Non-Formal Alternative Education (CONEANFO in Spanish), a national member organization made up of 15 state and private-sector actors, promotes non-formal education opportunities. According to the coordinator of CONEANFO's Program Unit, one of its principle initiatives is the National School-Workshop Program (*escuelas-taller*). The program, focused on youth with a low level of formal education, provides tailored market-based technical and life skills training. Rather than separating youth into sex-specific and highly gendered courses, the model provides mixed classes (for both young men and women) with the express intent of breaking gender paradigms. The objective of the program is to support job placement for youth graduates. They have a job placement committee, as well as a small staff who monitors youth graduates. They also have an office that provides job-seeking advice and support to help youth find employment.

One additional innovation in the model is the recent introduction of mobile courses, where CONEANFO provides training in situ. Program staff recently found that some youth participants sought training in preparation to migrate. They wanted to have a concrete skill, such as soldering or carpentry, to facilitate their incorporation into the United States labor market. This is an important unintended consequence of such training. The government recently reduced CONEANFO's already small annual

budget of L21M (less than $1M) to L10M (approximately $400k), a trend that does not suggest a high priority for these types of programs. The Spanish Cooperation Agency provides additional budget support. The National School-Workshop Program currently includes schools in Lempira and Santa Bárbara. They are also exploring the possibility of opening schools in Lempira, Copán and La Paz, although current budget constraints are barriers. The coordinator also explained that teaching quality is sometimes a challenge since they usually hire technical specialists (e.g., carpenters) and then work with them to improve their teaching capacity.

Instituto Hondureño del Café (IHCAFE)

IHCAFE advocates for continued improvement and prosperity in the coffee sector in Honduras. IHCAFE represents over 100,000 coffee-producing families, providing technical assistance, training and research and development services. IHCAFE trains coffee producers through mass media and direct extension and training services such as meetings, workshops, field days and informal talks.

One of IHCAFE's key professional training strategies is the Escuela Superior del Café (ESCAFE) where participants can receive comprehensive and continuous training in topics relevant to the coffee value chain in Honduras, including farm management, administration of coffee cooperatives, cupping, and coffee processing, among others. The courses are expensive (e.g., the cupping course is 24 modules, each one costing L3,000, for a total approximate cost of approximately $3,000), which limits their accessibility to most youth.

IHCAFE also provides technical assistance to producers in the establishment of nurseries, crop management, integrated pest management, crop nutrition and fertilization, tissue management, wet and dry processing, storage, specialty coffee, marketing, and identification and development of markets. The extension process includes written material.

IHCAFE also has six research and training centers distributed across the main coffee regions – including Copán, La Paz, and Santa Bárbara. The centers are used to conduct research regarding new technologies that can help coffee-producing families mitigate productivity challenges caused by climate-related factors or pests. Each center has land for production of improved and commercial seed varieties; the establishment of demonstration plots and research trials; and diversification plots where alternatives such as high-value timber species are tested.

Micro, Small and Medium Enterprise Business Development Centers (CDE- MIPYME)

In coordination with academia, local governments, NGOs, and the private sector, the Secretariat of Economic Development and Social Inclusion has established 14 CDE-MIPYME in Honduras, including the CDE in Intibucá, which provides services for Intibucá, La Paz, and Lempira. The CDEs provide technical assistance and training to help people establish and strengthen micro, small and medium enterprises. According to the Coordinator of the CDE in Intibucá, the centers provide three key services to youth, including (1) entrepreneurship training (two-day training); (2) support to develop business plans; and (3) linkages to the INFOP for technical/vocational training. They also can assist small business owners with the legal and tax registration process for their businesses. She acknowledged that the lack of clear linkages to/agreements with credit institutions is a challenge since most youth require capital for business start-up. The CDE in Intibucá also has previous experience managing and administering donor funds, which is a potential advantage/added value. USAID has supported business development through the CDE MIPYME via GEMA. Working with three CDE-MIPYMEs – in Santa Rosa de Copán, Lempira, and Santa Bárbara – the activity provided enterprise development services to 150 businesses. GEMA also supported organizational capacity-building for the CDE-MIPYME, sharing best practices, formats, and procedures for management, training, and ongoing monitoring and quality improvement.

Microfinance Network of Honduras (REDMICROH)
REDMICROH is an umbrella organization representing 25 MFIs in Honduras. REDMICROH's mandate is to provide its microfinance institution members with capacity-building support to manage volatility and ensure quality, efficiency and accessibility to end-clients, particularly women. REDMICROH has a technical training unit that facilitates technical services for microfinance network members and affiliates. This enables knowledge transfer, skill development, and the platform for developing standards.[150]

Although the director of REDMICROH acknowledges systemic challenges for youth to access capital (discussed under "Entrepreneurship" above), the institution's purview can support coordination and promotion of microfinance efforts among youth with the capacity to fulfill collateral and other requirements. They could also work within their existing network and other actors in the banking sector to develop a new credit product that focuses on the specific needs of youth entrepreneurs.

Inter-Institutional Roundtable for Rural Youth Employability and Social Protection in Honduras
In early 2018, the inter-institutional roundtable was formed to better understand the reality of rural youth and support the formation of public policy focused on their needs, with a specific emphasis on employability and social protection. The roundtable is composed of the Secretariat of Labor, the Secretariat of Agriculture and Livestock, INJ, UN agencies (ILO, FAO, IOM), INFOP, COHEP, EU and others. Specifically, the roundtable seeks to offer a space for in-depth dialogue and coordination, as well as evidence-based promotion of policies and programs. Given the important investments that USAID is making in the country – as well as the significant existing investments in western Honduras – the roundtable represents an important opportunity for USAID to leverage those investments, as well as its leadership.

Selected Municipal Associations (Mancomunidades)
Municipal associations are a mechanism that donors have promoted in Honduras to strengthen regional and territorial governance that cuts across a single municipality or set of municipalities. Municipal associations are formed to provide various types of technical expertise that municipalities need in order to provide better services (e.g. associations may provide health services or support water services). The priorities of each municipal association are determined by the member municipalities. They often play a key role in the implementation of local development plans and sometimes play a lobbying role with the central government by representing concerns shared by members of the associations. There are 29 such municipal associations throughout western Honduras, including MANCURIS (Lempira/Intibucá), CODEMUSSBA (Santa Bárbara), and COLOSUCA (Lempira). Because they cut across single municipalities and have coordination at the heart of their missions, the *mancomunidades* can play an important role in efforts to better support youth in the region.

G. PROMISING PROGRAMS, PARTNERS, AND SECTORS

This section identifies a sample of promising programs, initiatives, partners, and sectors identified during the field assessment.

Promising Programs and Practices
*PROLEMPA (*Promoting Rural Economic Development for Women and Youth in the Lempa Region)
A $9 million project implemented by CARE and funded by Global Affairs Canada, ProLempa seeks to improve the economic well-being of 3,000 small-scale farmers and business owners in the Honduran Dry Corridor, especially women, youth, and indigenous people – who represent 80 percent of the target population. The project area includes 25 municipalities in Lempira, Intibucá, and La Paz. The project will focus on coffee, tourism, financial inclusion, social inclusion, governance, and gender.

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[150] Quintanilla, Saydra Battersby, *Client Protection in Honduras*, Center for Financial Inclusion, October 2014.

ProLempa will increase the civic participation, leadership, and influence of youth by supporting the creation of Municipal Youth Commissions and establishing Municipal Youth Networks. The project team is conducting several key studies at the beginning of the project to ensure that strategies are appropriate for the context.

ProJoven II

A follow-on project implemented by Swiss Contact and funded by the Swiss Cooperation Agency (COSUDE), ProJoven II will provide market- and competencies-based employment to 7,500 youth with a goal of achieving 80 percent insertion in the labor market. The model includes a central "psychosocial skills" component, which focuses on active listening, sensitivity, creativity, and conflict resolution. It also includes other innovations, such as the incorporation of childcare into the training centers to ensure that having young children does not become a barrier to professional training. Another element that sets the model apart is that the program seeks to equip training centers with state-of-the-art spaces and equipment to promote quality and instill a sense of purpose in youth participants. The program does not currently operate in DO2 ZOI, but the model could potentially be adapted for the region.

Youth Conservation Corps

The Youth Conservation Corps, funded by USAID and implemented by the United States Forest Service, seeks to address the multiple challenges of youth unemployment, crime and violence, migration, and environmental degradation in western Honduras by training youth Environmental Promoters. The YCC model replicates and builds on successful youth engagement models in the US, including Job Corps and AmeriCorps. The program builds youth employability and life skills through a training and volunteer program focused around environmental conservation. The training program includes five key modules, focused around Leadership (60 hours), Life skills and healthy habits (176 hours), Technical training in conservation management (540 hours), Community service (304 hours) and a Practicum (300 hours). YCC's underlying principles focus on gender equity, rigor, and mutual respect. Through the program, youth participants gain key technical skills as well as "soft" skills, such as relationship-building, effective community engagement, problem-solving, commitment, and collaboration. In its first cycle, the program maintained a 100 percent retention rate, with all participants achieving a maximum score of 87 percent or better across the key training components. At the same time, through YCC, youth have contributed significantly to their communities through conservation activities (reforestation of 1,000 hectares along 10 micro watersheds and two reserves in 10 municipalities) and educational outreach.

Honduras Local Governance Activity (HLG) Internship Program

USAID's Honduras Local Governance Activity, implemented by DAI, seeks to enhance the provisioning of basic services in western Honduras by increasing citizen influence and improving local governance. HLG seeks to ensure the expansion and sustainability of USAID investments in nutrition, water, education, and other critical services in the most vulnerable municipalities. HLG works through municipalities, local water boards, educational networks and both government and non-government nutrition service providers to improve governance and accountability in services. In its second year of implementation, HLG piloted a youth internship program, identifying and placing 30 youth from vulnerable and under-represented groups in each of the HLG offices in Tegucigalpa and at the department level. The internship program was designed to provide learning opportunities and improve the employability skills of youth participants during a year-long paid internship. Interns are selected based on an application process and subsequently placed within an HLG technical or management unit based on their prior training, professional interests, and learning objectives. Each intern is paired with a member of the HLG who provides ongoing mentoring support. Based on conversations with both HLG staff mentors and youth interns themselves, the internship program has increased youth confidence, technical skills, and soft skills, contributing meaningfully both to their professional and training goals and to HLG's objectives.

ACCESS to Markets and Alliance for the Dry Corridor (ACS in Spanish)
ACCESS to Markets and ACS are five-year Feed the Future activities that increase agriculture sector growth and improve nutrition for more than 50,000 households in Copán, Ocotepeque, Santa Bárbara, Lempira, Intibucá, and La Paz. Implemented by Fintrac, Inc. and Inversión Estratégica de Honduras (INVEST-H), both activities match producers to local, regional, and international buyers, with a focus on higher-value and value-added crops. The activities invest in technologies that enhance production and support agricultural diversification from traditional crops to high-value crops. Investments also expand rural financial services, increase consumption of more nutritious food in children under the age of five, and improve sanitary conditions, community nutrition, and health services. Many of the activities' key components – including agricultural diversification, improved production and market linkages and access to capital – are relevant for rural youth in western Honduras who earn their primary livelihoods through agriculture. In addition, ACCESS to Markets provides training to students in 12 agricultural technical schools. A total of 657 students, teachers, and other staff have been trained as of June 2018 in areas ranging from commercial agricultural practices to marketing and natural resource management.

Jóvenes Constructores
Implemented as a pilot project by local NGO COCEPRADII and financed by Catholic Relief Services (CRS) through unrestricted funds, Jóvenes Constructores seeks to build life skills, entrepreneurship, and job readiness skills among rural youth in Intibucá. Through the model – based on YouthBuild International, and building on other CRS activities funded by the US Department of Labor (USDOL) – Jóvenes Constructores works closely with a small cohort of youth in Intibucá to provide educational tutoring; build life, work and leadership skills; support extracurricular activities; and promote volunteer community service. Youth who choose to establish a small business also receive a small business loan with a low interest rate (7 percent) to support start-up. The methodology is intensive and includes an eight-day (eight hours/day) orientation process. The training program itself includes 750 hours (five months) of training and volunteer service. This is the first time that the YouthBuild International model has been implemented in Honduras. It could be replicated in other locations in the region if it proves successful.

PRO-LENCA
Pro-Lenca (the Competitiveness and Sustainable Development of the South Western Border Corridor Project) is funded by a consortium of donors including IFAD ($20.5M), the Global Environment Facility (GEF) ($3M), GOH ($1.13M), and a contribution from participant communities ($3.2M). The main goal of the project is to improve the employment opportunities, income, food security, and living conditions of the rural poor in Honduras. The project targets smallholder farmers, rural artisans, rural micro-entrepreneurs, and small-scale merchants and expects to generate 1,800 new jobs; incorporate 8,000 people into the savings system; and support the formation of 52 agro-industrial organizations and micro-enterprises. The project will train 11,800 families on productive technologies; establish linkages to financial services; rehabilitate 95 kilometers of tertiary roads; develop three new water systems, including the rehabilitation of 50 kilometers of channels and pipes; and rehabilitate/reclaim 225 hectares of forests. The project operates in Lempira, Intibucá, and La Paz.

Euro+Labor
Euro+Labor is funded by the European Union and focuses on strengthening the Secretariat of Labor. Specifically, the program works to: (1) support the development of joint action planning to address and resolve employment problems in coordination with the Secretariat of Labor, employers and workers' organizations; (2) strengthen the Secretariat's capacity to align supply and demand in the labor market; (3) help the Secretariat implement the new decentralized model for the National Employment Service program, which seeks to establish a series of regional employment offices where job seekers can look

for jobs, find employment resources, and receive referrals; and (4) establish an information management system that brings together labor market, production, and social security data under a single roof for improved decision-making. This will include the development of a Labor Market Observatory to generate periodic labor market statistics.

Empleando Futuros

Empleando Futuros, a USAID activity implemented by Banyan Global and funded under DO1, develops the job skills of at-risk youth in urban neighborhoods within the five Honduran municipalities most affected by violence and crime. The activity, an important part of *Alliance for Prosperity of the Northern Triangle*, strengthens vocational training, fosters entrepreneurship, and links youth to vacant jobs. The program develops relationships between the private sector and workforce-development implementers to ensure that training responds to market needs and to support job placement through integrated orientation and training to at-risk youth. Specifically, Empleando Futuros strengthens the INFOP to align its training options with the market-based needs of the private sector and to provide more comprehensive workforce services, like job matching and job placement.

Promising Partners
Global Affairs Canada

Canada's international development program in Honduras is aligned with the Government of Honduras' priorities and with the Plan of the Alliance for Prosperity in the Northern Triangle. Program priorities include improving the commercial, technical, and financial practices of small businesses, including those run by or employed by women, youth, or marginalized groups.

European Union

The European Union funds GOH directly – with plans to provide €60 million to the Secretary of Finance in 2019 – for use over a period of five years. The EU supports the development of the National Employment Policy around four pillars: competitiveness, employment generation, human resource development, and enabling environment. The EU's investment strategy in western Honduras focuses on low investment with high impact. The primary strategy is Euro+Labor, which focuses on ensuring "decent employment" through policy-level support and capacity-building for decentralized employment offices managed initially by third parties, and subsequently transferred directly to the Secretariat.

Spanish Cooperation Agency (AECID)

AECID works in collaboration with municipalities and *mancomunidades*, mainly in the areas of tourism, heritage (architectural), and environment, including basic sanitation and water resource management. AECID's youth programming includes recovery of public spaces, prevention of violence, and support of culture, art, and communication. AECID provides support for CONEANFO's Schools-Workshops programs in Santa Bárbara and Lempira and the CDEs in Copán, Lempira, and Ocotepeque. The agency has strong links with the Association of Municipalities of Honduras (AMHON) and with the *mancomunidades,* 29 of which (of a total of 45) operate in the DO2 ZOI.

Forest Conservation Institute

ICF, the GOH forest conservation agency, focuses on the conservation and sustainable use of natural ecosystems. ICF has 12 regional offices and 21 outreach offices throughout the country, including offices in the targeted DO2YA departments. ICF implements programs related to land use planning and forest management; watersheds; protected areas management; and community development. ICF could be a strategic partner for coordination, technical support, and training in areas related to forest management, forest inventories, watershed management, and diversification of coffee farms.

National Chamber of Tourism (CANATURH)

CANATURH is a membership organization made up of private businesses that seeks to promote tourism and related businesses (e.g., hotels, tour operators, restaurants, etc.) as a vehicle to promote prosperity and economic development. Given the high tourist potential throughout western Honduras and CANATURH's experience promoting the tourism industry in the country, there is potential for CANATURH to contribute meaningfully to youth development in the region. The institution's recent experience helping to establish a formal tourist "circuit" in the Atlantic region could provide important lessons for western Honduras' tourism sector.

Honduran Council on Private Enterprise (COHEP)

As the largest organization representing the interests of the private sector in Honduras, COHEP represents dozens of businesses across multiple sectors of the economy. COHEP fosters Honduras' economic growth and development through policy advocacy, research, and technical advising. According to COHEP staff, the organization seeks to foster the growth of micro, small and medium enterprise in Honduras. They have been involved in both the conception and start-up of the CDEs and as such play a strategic role in the sector by influencing local private-sector development. Given their role as a convener of some of the largest private-sector actors in Honduras, COHEP can influence policies to foster private-sector growth, particularly in terms of key investments such as infrastructure. If the group takes over leadership of INFOP – as is currently rumored – it will also have significant influence over ensuring that vocational and technical training opportunities for youth meet labor market needs. Ultimately, COHEP is an important actor in the sector and may take on an increasingly important role over the coming months, making COHEP an important potential thought partner for any actors looking to promote youth employment and entrepreneurship.

CONFIANZA Loan Guarantee Fund Management Company (CONFIANZA SA-FGR)

CONFIANZA is a trust fund that receives contributions from 44 partners, including the GOH. The company's main objective is to administer loan guarantee funds to facilitate access to credit, especially for strategic projects and sectors, including MSMEs, rural finance, housing, and technical-vocational training. Out of a total of 45,000 guarantees, they have reported only 250 claims (unrecovered loans), a loss ratio of less than 1 percent. To support high-risk entrepreneurs, CONFIANZA could create a dedicated fund or "customized" financing model that could be implemented using the resources of existing (or new) financial institutions. Such an arrangement could provide an important opportunity to enhance access to capital among youth in western Honduras.

VI. CONCLUSIONS

The purpose of the DO2YA was to understand the aspirations of and challenges facing youth ages 18-29 in western Honduras. The YouthPower Learning assessment team found that youth throughout the region are largely dissatisfied with their lives due to significant obstacles to their advancement in the labor force, in education and training, and in their overall agency to influence the direction of their lives.

For youth across every PGD – from all six departments, 18 municipalities and over 90 communities – the primary driver of dissatisfaction is the lack of employment and livelihood opportunities. Using the same calculation for formal unemployment used by the GOH yields an unemployment rate of 13 percent among youth respondents, with significant differences by sex and ethnic groups. Young women's unemployment approaches 40 percent. However, the calculation of formal unemployment only counts those youth who are actively seeking work (e.g., the economically active population). Self-reports of long-term youth joblessness show much higher numbers. The vast majority of PGD participants who do have work are employed in the informal sector doing piecemeal jobs that often pay far below the minimum wage. In agriculture, including coffee – a mainstay of the Honduran economy – incomes are limited as a result of limited productivity; challenges of land and technology access; variable climate

conditions; poor access to markets; and high levels of competition. Limited private investment in the region means that jobs in the private sector are scarce and highly competitive, and they are perceived to only be available to those with the best qualifications or the strongest connections. Youth entrepreneurship is hampered by limited technical and soft skills, as well as high barriers to entry, including cumbersome formal registration requirements and limited access to seed capital.

Youth in the region also feel frustrated by limited access to and low quality of education and training opportunities. Only a small proportion of communities offer secondary school meaning youth from most rural areas are required to travel to urban areas to attend school, which often represents a significant – and prohibitive – cost. Secondary enrollment and subsequent graduation rates plummet between primary and secondary school. And while there are some options for technical and vocational training, most notably from the National Vocational and Technical Training Institute, these are also often located in urban centers, represent a significant time commitment for prospective students, and frequently do not align with labor market needs, rendering them irrelevant and costly.

The enabling environment also presents several obstacles. Many youth respondents and key stakeholders complain that the political environment has created conditions of exclusion for youth who do not align with the political leanings of their elected leaders. There is a high degree of disillusionment and distrust in government based on the perception of entrenched corruption in politics and government, and many youths feel shut out of opportunities for participation, leadership and local decision-making. Others choose not to participate out of a sense that their efforts will not make a difference. At the same time, while the western region is relatively peaceful compared to the country's criminal hotspots of Cortes and Francisco Morazán, there is a sense that violent crime is on the rise. Some municipalities in the region have homicide rates comparable to those of the world's most violent cities.

These vulnerability factors increase significantly for women and members of the LGBT communities. The traditional *machista* culture of western Honduras often still relegates women to subservient roles in household decision-making and power dynamics, especially in rural areas. There are many exceptions, but PGD respondents commonly described how young men and women live under a rigid set of social norms with their families and often replicate these patterns when they marry or find romantic partners. Domestic violence is common and highly normalized, and legal and psychosocial services for survivors are still nascent, are sometimes poorly conceived and are often under-utilized. Members of the LGBT community struggle with basic acceptance, confront significant and explicit mistreatment and discrimination and often fear for their security and safety. PGD respondents expressed a sense of constant nervousness about what would happen if their families or co-workers knew of their sexual orientations or gender identities. Violence against member of the LGBT community can go unnoticed and rarely gets prosecuted.

Given these significant challenges, alcohol and drug consumption is rampant throughout western Honduras, especially among young men. Some youth perceive that the use of substances contributes to criminal activity and violence throughout the region, and many believe that it exacerbates domestic abuse. With limited education and employment prospects – and within an enabling environment that often seems static – many youth see migration as the only viable way to advance their lives and careers. Across the region and in all PGDs, youth cited case after case of people who have gone to the United States, Spain, and the cities of San Pedro Sula and Tegucigalpa in search of "opportunity". Several PGD respondents themselves shared their plans to travel north despite the known risks of kidnapping, rape, capture by the "migra" and death. They believe the potential positive outcomes outweigh the potential negative consequences.

Despite these challenges, there are several bright spots.

Young people throughout the region are sophisticated in their understanding of the reality in Honduras. They are dynamic and energetic, and they have hope for their futures. They continue to aspire to education, gainful employment and better lives for themselves and their families. This should provide an important platform – and source of inspiration – for everyone working toward positive youth development in Honduras.

The GOH, the private sector, and donor-funded programs are making inroads in terms of improving employment planning, increasing employment access, and ensuring relevant employability and skills training. The GOH National Vision and National Plan emphasize economic growth and job creation, providing an overarching and consistent platform to support planning and coordination through 2038. The Secretariat of Labor is prioritizing legal reforms to facilitate entrepreneurship and access to credit; promoting CDE-MIPYMES as local small business incubators; and is working to establish and institutionalize employment offices offering a range of services to job-seekers throughout the country, including in western Honduras. The private sector is coordinating closely with the government to drive toward the creation of 600,000 jobs through the Plan Honduras 20/20. Although that plan currently has gaps in terms of transparency and clarity of implementation, it provides a basic vision; has identified priority sectors; and enjoys legitimacy within the private sector space. COHEP is pushing for regulatory reform to improve the investment climate and support growth in MSMEs. And if it takes over management of the INFOP, as is rumored, they will play a key role in determining market-based training vocational and technical training in the future. Finally, key donors – such as the EU, Canada, and USAID – are making significant investments in employment growth, including policy and technical support for improved systems and institutions at the national level as well as direct technical assistance within western Honduras.

In terms of the enabling environment for youth engagement, the National Youth Institute is currently working across sectors to update the National Youth Policy, prioritizing the obligatory assignation of 4 percent of municipal budgets for initiatives focused on youth as well as the development of appropriate regulations to ensure that municipal governments comply with this requirement. The INJ is under-funded and has limited staff capacity, but its work around the National Youth Policy provides an important platform to support coordination across sectors and actors. Donor programs such as USAID's Honduras Local Governance (HLG) activity are working to strengthen the transparency and accountability of municipal governments and services. This includes the use of innovative mechanisms to collectively engage citizens around shared and non-political service agendas, such as citizen report cards for water, education and nutrition services. Such mechanisms represent an important opportunity to engage youth and bridge partisan divisions. At the same time, many NGOs, including CARE, Save the Children, and World Vision, support the development and strengthening of *municipal youth networks* that build youth leadership and life skills, advocate for youth-focused development, and provide opportunities for engagement and decision-making that can act as a springboard for continued civic participation.

Western Honduras has many challenges. But there is also significant existing investment, momentum, energy and interest in improving the reality across the region. A clear youth employment strategy-- based on the real context of youth and directly linked to current and projected market needs for labor-- is needed. Additional investment in proven strategies, practices, systems and programs and new investment focused on the development, piloting, measurement, and scale up of new approaches and practices will be required. Appropriate, well-targeted and coordinated investment will help build the necessary enabling environment to foster inclusive development and provide Honduran youth with the skills to help build the economy and transform the country for the 21st century.

VII. ANNEXES

ANNEX 1: SCOPE OF WORK

I.   PURPOSE

USAID/Honduras is interested in carrying out a youth assessment in order to help its programming in the Development Objective 2 (DO2) Zone of Influence (ZOI) to involve youth more strategically and intentionally. The DO2 ZOI comprises six departments located in the western part of the country: Copán, Santa Bárbara, Intibucá, La Paz, Lempira, and Ocotepeque.   The assessment will also help USAID/Honduras address cross-cutting Intermediate Result (IR) 4 of the Global Food Security Strategy "Increased youth empowerment and livelihoods." The results of this youth assessment will serve to inform USAID/Honduras on ways to mainstream youth in areas of agriculture, food security, market systems development, and nutrition. More specifically, the results of the youth assessment will be used by the Transforming Market Systems activity, which aims to actively seek out the integration of youth. The results will also be used to inform the design of the new agricultural activity and the design of the new CDCS. The assessment should also identify areas of programmatic interventions that are likely to lead to improved development outcomes, such as increased employment, financial inclusion, and increased incomes, for the youth population.

II.   GUIDING RESEARCH QUESTIONS

The guiding research questions that the assessment will answer are:
1) What are youth interests and desires (life goals)?
    a. Are there factors that hinder them from achieving their life goals?
    b. Who are the most vulnerable youth populations in western Honduras, and what are their unique needs?
    c. How are young people currently engaging in civic and economic capacity development and opportunities?
2) What is working well to support youth in western Honduras and enable them to actualize their enormous potential?
    a. That is, what promising policies, structures, programs and partnerships currently exist that could be learned from, scaled up, and/or borrowed?[151]
    b. In particular, what has worked in youth employment (micro, small, and medium enterprise development, increased farm productivity, agriculture service provision, etc.)?
3) What have the challenges been for youth development in western Honduras? Where are the gaps in services?[152]
4) What areas for partnership offer the most potential benefit for engaging youth, i.e. partnerships with other USG agencies, the private sector, NGOs, universities, faith-based organizations, etc.?

Illustrative secondary-level research questions have been identified and grouped into categories below. The team is not expected to answer each of these questions but should use them when designing the research design process and questionnaire as prompts or probes.

Overall
- What are the defining structures and characteristics of youth cohorts in western Honduras?
- What are the prevailing differences between male and female, urban and rural?
- What do youth express as their priorities and ambitions? For those young people who may be dissatisfied, what are the sources of their greatest frustrations?
- How does crime impact young people in western Honduras? How is it manifested, and why?

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[151] Alternatively, this question could be structured along the lines of the Local Systems Framework of analysis: Resources, Rules, Roles, Relationships, and Results.
[152] It would be great to have this question linked to the Positive Youth Development Features: skill building, youth engagement and contribution, healthy relationships and bonding, safe spaces, etc.

Going to Work
- What are the aspirations of Honduran youth with regard to employment by age cohort, gender, rural/urban location? What are their main opportunities in accessing employment? What are the key barriers to getting employed?
- What opportunities exist for youth in the agriculture and food systems sectors? What can be done to make employment in the agriculture sector a viable livelihood option for youth?
- What vocational, entrepreneurship, employability and life skills training institutions/programs exist in western Honduras and are these accessible to most youth?
- What opportunities and challenges are faced by youth in accessing credit and building savings?
- To what extent are youth moving between rural and urban areas and/or migrating to other countries or regions to find employment?

Learning for Work and Life
- How do youth feel their education has prepared them for the decisions and challenges they face in their lives, or not?
- What do they identify as barriers to education?

Exercising Citizenship
- What challenges and opportunities do youth experience in their civic engagement? How do these challenges differ by age, gender, disabilities, and/or other demographic information or marginalization?
- What informal or traditional structures exist at community level that involve youth in civic engagement activities?

Other
- Are there any other important challenges (health, social, etc.) and opportunities experienced by youth in Honduras? If so, what are they?

Institutional and Policy Infrastructure for Supporting Youth
- What other donors, international and local non-governmental organizations (NGOs), and community-based organizations (CBOs) have youth-centered activities in western Honduras? What have been their experiences and accomplishments? What lessons learned and/or recommendations do they have for potential USG youth programming?
- What institutions, structures, programs and/or policies has the GOH set up to address youth issues in western Honduras? What is the capacity of the government to respond to youth needs?

Findings should be disaggregated by sex and age (18-24 and 25-29), to the extent possible. It is expected that the assessment team will work with USAID to further refine these research questions and identify the research areas that are most significant, salient, and of strategic interest to USAID/Honduras.

III.   RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Although USAID defines youth as those aged 10-29, this assessment should focus on those 18-29 years of age. The assessment will employ research methodologies with sufficient rigor to generate actionable answers to the research questions within the resources and timeframe available for this effort. A research design based on rigorous methodologies that balances the needs of the situational analysis and available resources should be proposed. Principles of participatory methods should be utilized in the research process. Key components of the research methodology should include:

Literature Review and Secondary Data Collection: Some research exists on youth in Honduras, although much of it is focused on urban youth and violence prevention. USAID will assist in compiling known materials. The assessment team should seek to identify, collect and incorporate additional secondary data sources wherever possible.

Geographic Sampling: USAID is looking for a broad and diverse sampling of youth in its DO2 ZOI. Including both men and women in the sample is required. Efforts should be made to include youth that

identify as LGBT, indigenous youth, and people with disabilities in sampling. USAID will connect the contractor with USAID's implementing partners to help identify youth to participate in focus groups and interviews. The contractor will propose a regional sampling framework that takes these considerations into account. The sampling framework will be subject to Mission review and approval.

Youth-Centered & Participatory Methodologies: The assessment should actively engage youth as protagonists throughout the research design, data-gathering, and analysis. It is imperative that the majority of youth that are consulted as part of this assessment are rural (residing within the six departments of the DO2 ZOI) "non-elite youth," which can be defined as those with limited access to assets (such as land), financial resources, and family connections. Engagement of youth is a key objective of the assessment, and the focus should be on qualitative data, at the primary data collection level. Participatory methodologies are mandatory, and should aim to include diverse participant samples to create a nuanced picture of youth development from multiple perspectives.

- Peer Group Discussions: It is expected that systematic discussions with groups of youth will be the core approach for primary data collection and participatory assessment. It is important that these youth be groups of peers, or those of the same socio-economic class, age, gender and ethnicity who are comfortable speaking and interacting with one another. Enough time must be allotted for each session to give youth the space to "open up" and speak honestly in front of the facilitator. Some questions may need to be asked privately because of their sensitivity. Ideally the research will employ creative approaches that use youth to help facilitate these sessions and support the analysis. This will build capacity among the youth researchers as well as deepen the analysis and assessment. If necessary, follow-up sessions with the same peer groups can be scheduled if the first meeting does not allow enough time for open dialogue with the target peer group.

- Key Informant Interviews: Primary data collection through group discussions should be complemented and expanded using semi-structured interviews with key informants; primarily youth. These interviews could be carried with youth who are beneficiaries of the current DO2 activities (ACCESS to Markets, Alliance for the Dry Corridor, Governance in Ecosystems, Livelihoods, and Water (GEMA), Honduras Local Governance, and USFS). For interviews with youth, it is recommended that females are interviewed by female interviewers and males by male interviewers. Other interviewees should include implementing partner staff, youth-focused organizations and associations, service providers, educational and training institution officials, private sector stakeholders, government officials, and donors.

Engagement of USG and GOH Stakeholders and Partners: Information-sharing and engagement of GOH stakeholders, USG Agencies and USG-funded partners should be included. USAID will provide contact information for the relevant individuals within the GOH and partner organizations, but the assessment team should also reach out to other relevant stakeholders. The assessment team can meet with these contacts one-on-one or assemble groups of stakeholders for roundtable discussions.

IV.   TEAM COMPOSITION

USAID/Honduras will review and approve the team lead and deputy team lead included on the team prior to the commencement of the assessment. The assessment team will include professionals with expertise in youth assessments and youth programming for the various issues touched by this assessment.

The assessment team will be led by a senior specialist with at least 10 years of experience in youth development, field research methodologies, and cross-sectoral youth assessment. Experience in Latin America is required, with a preference for prior experience in Honduras. Experience leading assessment teams, conducting analyses and writing high quality reports in English is required. Fluency, both written and spoken, in Spanish and English is also required. The team leader will be complemented with an appropriate mix of professionals (as the budget allows) with collective expertise in relevant sectors:

- Livelihoods
- Agriculture
- Workforce development
- Gender

These additional team members should be fluent in Spanish. Although fluency in English is preferred, it is not required as long as the leader of the assessment is fluent in English and can write high quality reports in English. If needed, the assessment could also include enumerators, a logistics coordinator, drivers, etc. as members of an extended team. These individuals are not subject to USAID approval.

The contractor should identify youth to be engaged and trained to assist in data collection, facilitation of interviews, focus groups, data analysis and to make recommendations in the final report (or identify a youth-led organization). Youth facilitators will be a balanced group of Honduran males and females up to age 30 who possess social science skills to conduct the data collection and analysis activities mentioned above. Facilitators may be a mix of undergraduate, masters and PhD students with demonstrated sensitivity to youth in disadvantaged communities, ideally through living in the communities (or communities of a similar socio-economic status and ethnic make-up) where the interviews and focus groups will take place. Facilitators will preferably have demonstrated commitment to youth development issues and have excellent communication and interpersonal skills.

USAID will be closely involved with the assessment and considered part of the extended team. In addition to reviewing and approving assessment deliverables, USAID may also contribute personnel to guide the strategic focus of the assessment, strengthen sectoral expertise, and/or interact with relevant stakeholders within USAID, the donor community, and the Government of Honduras. The Economic Growth Office's M&E Advisor will be the team's main POC within USAID/Honduras for the assessment.

VI.   DELIVERABLES
This assessment will result in a series of deliverables that will be expected as part of this assessment:

1) **Work Plan:** Due to USAID/Honduras at least three weeks prior to arrival of the assessment team in country. The Work Plan should lay out the composition of the assessment team, logistics for the assessment, and a schedule of activities. It should include a draft proposed research agenda including methodologies, protocols, and tools.

2) **In-Briefing meetings**: This will include a short 15 minute meeting with the Front Office and a longer one-hour meeting with key representatives from the DO2 Team. These meetings should take place within the first three days in-country.

3) **Honduras Development Objective 2 Youth Situational Analysis**: A main deliverable of the assessment will be a situational analysis that answers the four main research questions defined in Section III above. This deliverable is expected to become a public document.

4) **Strategic Priorities Document**: Within this document, the assessment team will include recommendations for strategic priorities that should be included in USAID/Honduras' approach to

youth development over the next five years and recommendations for how USAID/Honduras could make activities more youth-specific and/or youth-inclusive. This document will not be public, but will be just for Mission use.

5) **<u>Youth Summits</u>**: Prior to departure, the assessment team will hold two youth summits in the DO2 ZOI (one in the southern region and one in the northern region) to share and validate initial findings, link stakeholders with one another, and engage new stakeholders in coordinating youth-related work.

6) **<u>Out-briefing Presentation</u>:** Prior to departure, the assessment team will hold one briefing for the Mission aimed at presenting and finalizing the Situational Analysis. The purpose will be to ensure broad Mission approval of situational analysis and strategic priorities documents in order to ensure they meet USAID needs.

ANNEX 2: RESOURCE LIST

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ANNEX 3: YOUTH INTAKE INTERVIEW FORMS

PGD INFORMATION		Date: ___/____/_____
Name of Facilitator:		
Name of Recorder:		
Department:	**Community:**	**PGD # in this location:** _____
Group gender: ( ) Male ( ) Female	**Age cohort:**[153] ( ) Ages 18-24 ( ) Ages 25-29	**Observations / comments:**

Part I. Individual Intake Form

[Before the start of the focus group, complete the intake form below for each youth participating in the focus group. The intake form should be completed for each participant individually, in a private place out of the hearing range of others.]

Introduction to Part 1

Thank you for agreeing to meet with us today. My name is _____and my colleagues' name(s) is/are _____. We are part of the YouthPower Learning Assessment team. Together, we are conducting a study on Honduran youth, to better understand the economic, social, and political aspirations and challenges young people like you have. You have been asked to participate in this study because your knowledge, views, and experience as youth are very valuable and important to us.

Our discussion today will take place in two parts. First, I am going to ask some questions to learn more about you. We will do this individually so that only I will hear your responses. Then, we will ask some questions about the lives of Honduran youth like you and particularly what aspirations and challenges young people like you have. We will do through a group discussion.

Whatever information you provide for us during our time together will be kept strictly confidential and will not be attributed specifically to you. We will not be recording your name or any other identifiable information at any time. We ask that you not share who took part in this discussion or what others have said in this room with anyone outside of this room. However, we cannot promise others will not share what you have said during the discussion. We ask that you respond to the questions based on how you think youth in general would respond. Please do not share personal experiences when you respond to the questions.

Participation in this discussion is voluntary, and you can choose not to answer any individual question or all of the questions. You can also stop the discussion or leave the group or individual interviews at any time. However, we hope you will participate in this discussion since your views are important.

Will you join us today for this discussion? Please feel free to ask if you have any questions at any time, even before I start.

[Note any questions raised by participants and your responses in the comments section below.]

We anticipate our time together will be up to 90 minutes long. Refreshments will be served at the end.

Comments:

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[153] Only youth ages 18-29 will be eligible to participate in focus groups

Demographic Information: We would now like to spend approximately 5 minutes collecting individual information from each of you. My colleague _____ and I will fill out an individual form for each of you that gives us a bit more detail about some of your basic background. *[Complete the form individually, in a private place out of the hearing range of others.]*

Sex: ( ) Female   ( ) Male   **Age:** _____

Marital status?
( ) Married
( ) Unmarried   **If Unmarried, have you been married previously?** ( ) Yes   ( ) No

Do you have children?
( ) Yes **If yes, how many:** ( ) 1   ( ) 2   ( ) 3   ( ) 4 or more
( ) No

What formal educational level have you completed?
(Grade) _____

Are you currently enrolled in formal/informal education program:
( ) Enrolled   **If enrolled, please provide details** _____
( ) Not enrolled

What is your employment status:
( ) Employed   **If employed, list type of employment** _____
( ) Not employed
( ) Looking for work
( ) Cannot work [please indicate reason why] _____

Aside from formal employment, do you use other means to earn money:
( ) Yes.   **If yes, list the means** _____
( ) No

ANNEX 4: PROTOCOLS FOR PEER GROUP DISCUSSIONS

PGD INFORMATION			Date: ___/____/_____
Name of Facilitator:			
Name of Recorder:			
Department:	**Community:**		**PGD # in this location:** _____
Group gender: ( ) Male ( ) Female	**Age cohort:**[154] ( ) Ages 18-24 ( ) Ages 25-29	**Observations / comments:**	

INTRODUCTION

Hi! Welcome, and thank you so much for agreeing to participate with us in this peer group discussion! I am _____ and this is _____ and we are here on behalf of Youth Power Learning, a global USAID-funded program based in Washington DC that seeks to generate information about effective youth engagement. USAID has asked us to conduct research in Honduras to identify challenges and potential opportunities for effectively engage youth in economic development opportunities. We're excited to be here with you!

As mentioned earlier, during this peer group discussion, we would like to talk with you about the lives of Honduran youth like you, with particular focus on what aspirations young people have and what challenges you face. We would like this be a *conversation* between peers and colleagues. As such, in this process, there are **no right or wrong answers**, only differing points of view. You don't need to agree with others, but we would request that everyone listen respectfully as others share their views. In that spirit we would ask that you speak one-at-a-time. We look forward to this being a lively and energetic conversation where everyone feels safe and comfortable speaking. Remember, participation is voluntary, and you can choose to leave the group at any time. However, we hope you will participate since your views are important. And we also think it will be fun and informative for all of you!

My role will be to facilitate the discussion. You will notice that my colleague, _____, will be taking notes. People often say very helpful things in these discussions and we want to make sure we don't miss any of the important insights you will provide for us! So you'll probably see [recorder's name] furiously writing! As mentioned, we will not record your names. Instead, we will use the information you provide us to generate a report and recommendations for USAID regarding potential future strategic investments to better support youth in Honduras.

Remember, in keeping with our commitment to the confidentiality of all participants, we ask that you not share with people outside of this group EITHER who took part in this discussion OR what they have said during the course of our discussion

Do you have any questions for us before we start? *[Record both questions raised by participants as well as responses]* If not, then let's get started!

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[154] Only youth ages 18-29 will be eligible to participate in focus groups

PGD QUESTIONS

1. Because this is a *conversation*, we think it's important that we all be on a first-name basis! So we have left name cards in front of each of your chairs. Take a minute or two to write your name on the card— first name or nicknames only; no need to include your last names. Then we would like to go around the table and have everyone tell us their name (first name or nickname only!) and something you would like the group to know about you. *[Work with youth facilitators to determine the most appropriate way to address introductions]*

2. We'd like to start by asking what you think it means to feel satisfied in life? In an ideal world, what are the factors or things that make life feel full and satisfying?

Probes:

- *Another way to think about this is by thinking about the factors that help a person feel like they can achieve their potential. What kinds of things make a person feel that way? What are the components that help a person achieve his or her potential?*

3. *[Give each young person the three faces.]* **To answer this next question, I'd like you to use the faces we've given you. It might seem silly, but sometimes these faces can help generate conversation. Now, I'd like you to think about you and the people you know who are your age. Reflecting on our discussion about the factors that influence how satisfied people feel in their lives, how satisfied do you think people your age are with their daily life here in** *[COMMUNITY NAME]?*

To start the conversation, I'd like you to use the faces we've given to you. There are three options:
(1) If you think people your age are <u>GENERALLY SATISFIED</u> with their daily life here (have all the factors they need to feel satisfied), place the smiley face in front of you.
(2) If you think that people your age are <u>GENERALLY NOT SATISFIED</u> with their daily life here, place the sad face in front of you.
(3) If you think people your age are generally <u>NEITHER SATISFIED NOR UNSATISFIED</u> with their daily life here, place the neutral face in front of you.

You can take a minute to think about this. *[The recorder should note how many youth choose each face.]*

Now, we'd like to discuss your choices. Does anyone want to tell us why they chose the face they chose? Remember, there is no right or wrong answer; everyone's answer is meaningful and valid.

Probes: [Refer back to the factors that participants mentioned under question 2]
- *Let's start with the smiley faces- why do you think you are generally satisfied? What are the conditions that help people your age feel generally like their lives are moving in the right direction?*
- *Neutral faces- why do you think people your age are neither satisfied or unsatisfied? What things might be making them feel this way- what are some good things? What are some bad things?*
- *For the sad faces what's missing? What do you think are the greatest frustrations of people your age? What priorities and ambitions do those youth have that they are unable to achieve? What keeps them from achieving those things?*

4. I'd like to pick up on the topic of the goals of people your age. If you think about the people your age that you know in *[COMMUNITY NAME]*, **what are some of the dreams and goals they have for the future?**

Probes:
- *What do some of the people your age that you know seek to achieve or become in the future? (university studies, office jobs, jobs as farmers, etc.)*

- *What are some of your own goals and ambitions? These can be related to education, work, family or anything else you like. (They're your goals so they can be anything you like!)*
- *Do you feel like these goals are achievable? Why/why not? [Ask them to use the faces to rate interest]*

5. Are you aware of any opportunities here in *[COMMUNITY NAME]* that support people your age to reach their goals? *[THIS QUESTION WILL ALSO ADDRESS CHALLENGES. Organize the discussion in order around topics of education, on- and off-farm employment. Try to fully engage around one topic before moving on to the next]*

Probes:
- *What kinds of job opportunities are available for youth? What are the key barriers to getting employed?*
- *Are you aware of any vocational / entrepreneurship education programs in [COMMUNITY NAME]? If so, which ones? Who sponsors those programs (government, CBOs, NGOS)? What are the key barriers to accessing those opportunities? If you think about what you have heard about those programs, how successful have they been in linking people to employment? Do the people you know who have participated in those activities had success finding employment?*
- *What opportunities exist for youth in the agriculture and food systems sectors? What is the level of interest in participating in agriculture among the people your age that you know? High interest, neutral or little interest? [Ask them to use the faces to rate interest]*
- *Are there any barriers to accessing credit in [COMMUNITY NAME]?*
- *Are you aware of any programs that friends your age have participated in that have helped them secure employment (on/off-farm, local businesses, etc.)? Which ones? Who sponsors those programs (government, CBOs, NGOS)? What have you heard about those activities?*

6. Can you think of any other challenges or barriers that keep people you age from achieving their goals?

Probes:
- *Is crime a challenge in [COMMUNITY NAME]? What are the most common kinds of crimes here in [COMMUNITY NAME]? What are the key causes?*
- *To what extent are youth moving between rural and urban areas and/or migrating to other countries or regions to find employment? How does this affect [COMMUNITY NAME]?*

7. Suppose that you were in charge and could make changes to help young people like you achieve their goals and ambitions. What would you do?

Probes:
- *What do you think could be done to improve job opportunities / vocational training / agriculture and food systems programs / links to private businesses, etc.? [Refer to responses to Question #5]*
- *Thinking about the programs you have seen, which ones do you think should be replicated or expanded and why?*

8. We have talked about many topics related to the goals, ambitions and available opportunities for people your age. We'd like to briefly discuss the participation of people your age in local decision-making processes.

Thinking about the people you know, in general how actively do the young people you know participate in decision-making bodies, such as water boards, community development committees, or other groups that influence local decision? Why/why not?
Probes:
- *What are the key barriers to youth participation*
- *How do older people's attitudes about people your age affect participation?*
- *What challenges do youth experience in their civic engagement?*
- *What informal or traditional structures exist at community level that involve youth in civic engagement activities?*

9. Wrap-up: As I mentioned earlier in our discussion, in our study we are trying to understand the situation of young people like you living in Honduras today. Of all the things we discussed today, what do you think is the most important thing for us to understand? *[Recorder to highlight the key issues raised]*

Have we missed anything? Is there anything else we need to know about what it's like to be a young person living in Honduras today? *[If they add anything else, probe for rationale and other relevant information as youth share their thoughts with the group.]*
As we finish our discussion, do you have any questions for our team? *[Recorder to capture questions and answers]*

THANK YOU VERY MUCH for your thoughts and insights today. We really appreciate your time and energy!

ANNEX 5: INTERVIEW PROTOCOLS FOR KEY STAKEHOLDERS

KII INFORMATION	Date: ____/_____/_____
Name of Facilitator:	
Name of Recorder:	

Department:	Municipality:
Name of Respondent:	Institution

INTRODUCTION

Hi! Thank you so much for agreeing to meet with us. I am *[NAME]* and this is *[RECORDER'S NAME]* and we are here on behalf of Making Cents International, the implementer of USAID's global Youth Power Learning project, a global activity based in Washington DC that seeks to achieve sustainable outcomes in health, education, and political and economic empowerment for youth. The project seeks to empower youth to contribute to, and benefit from, the creation of more peaceful and prosperous communities. USAID has asked us to conduct research in Honduras to identify challenges and potential opportunities to effectively engage youth between the ages of 18 and 29 in economic development opportunities in the western Departments of Santa Bárbara, Copán, Ocotepeque, Lempira, Intibucá, and La Paz. During our time together, I'm going to ask you a series of questions related to: youth goals and aspirations, opportunities for economic engagement, the priorities, policies and programs of your office/organization, as well your recommendations about how to improve youth engagement programming. My role will be to facilitate the discussion. You will notice that my colleague, *[RECORDER'S NAME]* will be taking notes, so that we don't miss any of the important insights you will provide for us! We will use the information you provide us to generate a report and recommendations for USAID regarding potential future strategic investments to better support youth in Honduras.

Thank you for agreeing to speak with us. Do you have any questions for us before we start? *[Record both questions raised by participants as well as responses]* If not, then let's get started!

KEY INFORMANT INTERVIEW GUIDE

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1. What are the key challenges for youth development in Western Honduras? What are the key challenges that youth in Western Honduras face?

Probes:
- *What are the differences between the youth context in the West and the rest of the country?*
- *What do youth need / want that they are not getting? Where are the gaps in services? What do youth need regarding employment? Agricultural on-farm/off-farm incomes?*
- *What opportunities exist for youth in the agriculture and food systems sectors? What can be done to make employment in the agriculture sector a viable livelihood option for youth? (e.g., are they interested? What are they key barriers to entry? How can these be addressed?)*
- *What vocational, entrepreneurship, employability and life skills training institutions/programs exist in western Honduras and are these accessible to most youth?*
- *What opportunities and challenges are faced by youth in accessing credit and building savings?*
- *What institutions, structures, programs and/or policies has the GOH set up to address youth issues in western Honduras? What is the capacity of the government to respond to youth needs?*
- *For those young people who may be dissatisfied, what are the sources of their greatest frustrations?*
- *To what extent are youth moving between rural and urban areas and/or migrating to other countries or regions to find employment?*
- *How does crime impact young people in western Honduras? How is it manifested, and why?*

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2. Can you tell us a little bit about [ORGANIZATION NAME'S] priorities / strategies / programs as they relate to youth aged 18-29 in Honduras?

Probes:
- *Describe the programming conducted by your office targeting young people, ages 18-29? names of programs offered; locations where they're implemented [In the case of USAID and other donors, ask the names of implementing partners; Obtain youth program descriptions, program summaries, reports, evaluations, website links, etc. Be sure to drive how the point about why the age groups]*
- *Probe to see if the office's programming for youth covers any of the following themes: civic engagement, community service, entrepreneurship, financial services, life and employability skills, vocational/technical skills, youth leadership*
- *What are the characteristics of the young people, ages 18-29, who are targeted by your office's programming?*

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3. How you rate young people's civic engagement opportunities?

Probes:
- *What challenges and opportunities do youth experience in their civic engagement? Do these challenges differ by age, gender, disabilities, and/or other demographic information or marginalization?*
- *What informal or traditional structures exist at community level that support/act as barriers youth in civic engagement activities? What can be done to reduce the barriers and increase the facilitators?*
- *In thinking about your own programs/ services / strategies how do you promote youth leadership and engagement? How are youth involved in the design, implementation, and evaluation of the programs offered? Then probe: what opportunities are available for youth to provide feedback*

on program design, delivery, and their effectiveness (e.g., student councils, focus groups, satisfaction surveys.)?

4. What currently works well to support youth in western Honduras?

Probes:
- *What policies, programs and partnerships have you observed in your own work that you would consider effective? Why did you choose those programs? Please provide examples?*
- *What activities have you seen that you think offer strong opportunities for learning? [request copies of reports, evaluations, or other evidence]*
- *What are the youth-centered activities of other donors, international and local non-governmental organizations (NGOs), and community-based organizations (CBOs) in western Honduras? What have they done well? What do you think they could change?*
- *Which programs/strategies/approaches do you think should be scaled up or replicated? In particular, what has worked in youth employment (e.g., micro, small, and medium enterprise development, increased farm productivity, agriculture service provision)?*

5. What recommendations would you provide for decision-makers (GOH, donors, your own organization) to increase youth engagement in productive, remunerative, and leadership activities? Please provide a rationale for each recommendation you may make.

Probes:
- *What specific priority areas and programs should be the strategic focus of future support for youth in Honduras?*
- *How can institutions across sectors be engaged to support increased impact?*
- *What areas for partnership offer the most potential benefit for engaging youth, (e.g., partnerships with other USG agencies, the private sector, NGOs, universities, faith-based organizations)?*
- *Are there currently mechanisms to support coordination between agencies? Which ones? Do they work effectively? What could be changed to make them better?*

6. Do you have any questions you would like to ask me before we end this interview? Is there anything else you would like to add?

Thank you for taking time to talk with me today and sharing your insights!

ANNEX 6: LIST OF KEY INFORMANTS

1. Business Development Center (CDE), La Esperanza, Intibucá
2. Commonwealth of Lenca Municipalities of the Center of Lempira (COLOSUCA), Lempira
3. Country Vision 2010-2038 and Nation Plan 2010-2022, Region Lempa, Lempira
4. Catholic Relief Services (CRS), Tegucigalpa
5. COCEPRADII / Jóvenes Constructores, Jesus de Otoro, Intibucá
6. Community Technical Institute (ITC), San José, La Paz
7. Community Technical Institute (ITC), San Nicolas, Santa Bárbara
8. DIVERSA, Santa Rosa de Copán, Copán
9. Euro+Labor, Tegucigalpa
10. European Union, Tegucigalpa
11. Community Fair Committee, El Rosario, Ocotepeque
12. Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), Tegucigalpa
13. Forest Conservation Institute (ICF) – Western Region, Santa Rosa de Copán, Copán
14. Forest Conservation Institute (ICF) – Santa Bárbara Region, Santa Bárbara
15. GIZ / Support Program for Decentralization Processes in the Education Sector of Honduras (APRODE), Tegucigalpa
16. Honduran Coffee Institute (IHCAFE) - Santa Bárbara Region, Santa Bárbara
17. Honduran Council of Private Enterprise (COHEP), Tegucigalpa
18. Honduran Bank for Production and Housing (BANHPROVI), Tegucigalpa
19. Maya Ch'ortí Rural Council, Ocotepeque
20. Mutual Guarantee Society (CONFIANZA), Tegucigalpa
21. Municipality of Belén, Lempira
22. Municipality of San Marcos, Ocotepeque
23. Municipality of Santa Rosa de Copán, Copán
24. Municipal Women's Office (OMM) / National Institute of Women, Belén, Lempira
25. Municipal Women's Office (OMM) / National Institute of Women, San Miguelito, Intibucá
26. Municipal Youth Office, Santa Rosa de Copán, Copán
27. Municipal Youth Office, Gracias, Lempira
28. Municipal Youth Office, La Esperanza, Intibucá
29. National Chamber of Tourism of Honduras, (CANATURH), Tegucigalpa
30. National Commission for the Development of Non-formal Alternative Education in Honduras (CONEANFO), Tegucigalpa
31. National Institute for Professional Formation (INFOP), Gracias, Lempira
32. National Youth Institute (INJ), Tegucigalpa
33. Pedagogical University- Tourism Program, Gracias, Lempira
34. ProJoven II / Swiss Contact, Tegucigalpa
35. Promoting Rural Economic Development for Women and Youth in the Lempa Region of Honduras Project (PROLEMPA) / CARE, La Esperanza, Intibucá

36. Microfinance Network of Honduras (REDMICROH), Tegucigalpa
37. Save the Children, La Esperanza, Intibucá
38. Secretary of Economic Development – Sub-Secretary for Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises of the Social Sector of the Economy, Tegucigalpa
39. Spanish Agency for International Development Cooperation (AECID), Tegucigalpa
40. Technical School of Arts and Trades in Western Honduras (ETAOO), Santa Rosa de Copán, Copán
41. USAID Education and Youth Office
42. USAID Economic Growth Office (Environment)
43. USAID Program Office (Social Inclusion)
44. USAID ACCESS to Markets activity
45. USAID Transforming Market Systems Activity
46. World Vision, Yamaranguila, Intibucá

ANNEX 7: QUALITY CONTROLS

To ensure data quality the team used 3 key data quality controls during data collection and 3 additional controls during data processing

Data Collection Quality Controls

(1) *Data collection team training*. The data collection team received three days of training. The first day covered basic theoretical concepts (purpose and objectives of the assessment; qualitative methodology; data collection team structure and roles; focus group techniques, standards and procedures) and review/clarification of the PGD guides. Day two included a pilot test of the PGD guide with a mixed-sex group of youth interns from a USAID-funded project based in Tegucigalpa. The first day of data collection doubled as the third day of training. To reinforce learning from the first two days, each pair of youth researchers led a PGD while the other pair, along with the Team Leader and Deputy Team Leader observed. Following each PGD the pair that did not facilitate was asked to provide constructive feedback to their counterparts regarding what went well and what to improve using a standard quality improvement verification checklist (see below).

(2) *Daily observation and feedback using a standard quality control checklist*. Each day of data collection, the Team Leader/Deputy Team Leader observed each team of youth researchers at least once using a standardized *quality improvement verification checklist (QIVC)*. Following the observations, the Team Lead/Deputy Team Lead provided feedback regarding what went well and areas for improvement. Provision of feedback regarding targeted areas of weakness led to significant improvements in PGD facilitation, especially during the first week of data collection.

(3) *Daily debriefs of the research team*. To identify and address data collection, process or logistical challenges in real-time, the data collection team met each night to discuss and address common challenges identified during the data collection process in order to ensure ongoing improvement throughout data collection.

Data Processing Quality Controls

(1) *Real-time PGD and KII data transcription*. To support quality and efficiency in data management, the youth researchers were asked to process the notes from the PGDs every evening,[155] including transcription as well as separate annotations regarding key themes or observations. Real-time processing was meant to ensure that youth researchers could clarify concepts or themes, as needed, based on recollection of each day's events. Given that each pair of researchers conducted an average of 3 PGDs per day, it was essential to capture key details each day; waiting until the end of data collection would have made it impossible for them to remember the small details from each PGD. To reduce the need for a separate data processing step for KIIs the Team Leader and Deputy Team Leader also took KII notes directly in electronic form.

(2) *Review and feedback of transcriptions*. To both ensure that youth researchers explored and documented concepts fully and to avoid data transcription errors, the initial quality control protocol called for review and feedback of transcriptions each day by the Team Leader/Deputy Team Leader.

(3) *Use of standard protocols for data entry of the structured PGD registration questionnaire*. To support data entry, the Team Leader developed a standard Excel-based database that included a defined codebook as well as data entry controls (e.g., error signals when data did not fall into pre-determined categories). At the same time, after each day of data entry, the Deputy Team Leader was asked to review the data

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[155] Initially, given that the youth researchers were unsure of their ability to process notes directly in digital form, the Team Leader requested that they take notes manually and subsequently transfer them to electronic form.

against a sample of forms to identify and correct for errors. Finally, prior to data analysis, the data was cleaned by running frequencies (pivot tables), identifying and correcting discrepancies by tracing back to the original forms. In cases where discrepancies resulted from errors during the initial application of the questionnaire, discrepant data points were excluded from the analysis.

ANNEX 8: ANALYTICAL PROCESS

The team conducted analysis in two phases:

Phase 1: Through daily debriefs, the team conducted basic iterative analysis on a daily basis, identifying cumulative common themes and outliers across PGDs based on the perceptions and impressions of the youth researchers. These themes and outliers were systematically captured in daily notes that the Team Lead and Deputy Team Lead used to plan and conduct *Youth Summits* at the sub-regional level,[156] during which they: (1) presented the preliminary findings; (2) sought to validate or clarify findings; and (3) requested feedback and/or additional inputs from participants for use in the second phase of analysis. For more on the Youth Summits, see **Box 1**. The team then used the initial analyses and resulting feedback from the Youth Summits to develop a presentation of preliminary findings for the USAID Mission Director and an additional presentation for members of the USAID/Honduras DO2 team. During those presentations the team collected additional feedback and inputs for phase two of analysis.

Phase 2: During Phase 2 the Lead consultant colored-coded PGD text by location and subsequently identified themes in the data using a separate color coding system. For the first stage of coding the consultant used deductive analysis, relying on the key points of inquiry from the original PGD guide to identify key themes. He then further reviewed and clarified those themes and identified additional sub-themes through an inductive process. The color-coding system was used to subsequently group data and identify commonalities and differences within and across PGDs, sex, ethnic groups, age cohorts, rural/urban locations and Departments. Color codes were also used to identify examples and quotations corresponding to key themes and sub-themes. This process also enabled the Team Leader to rank themes by importance based on their prominence within and across transcripts (e.g., the topics with the highest "volume" of discussion generally corresponded to those considered most "important). The Lead Consultant then color-coded the KIIs using the same themes from the PGD analysis to identify points of overlap; to triangulate across sources and to enable identify relevant examples and quotations. The Team Leader / Deputy Team Leader also analyzed KIIs by type of actor (e.g., donors, GOH offices, NGOs, etc.), extracting relevant data regarding actors' key objectives; policies or programs; and potential opportunities for overlap, collaboration, leveraging or complementarity with USAID. Prior to analysis of the PGD survey data, the Team Leader cleaned the data by running frequencies (pivot tables), identifying and correcting discrepancies by tracing back to the original forms. In cases where discrepancies resulted from errors during the initial application of the questionnaire, discrepant data points were excluded from the analysis. He then analyzed the quantitative data using frequencies and cross tabulations (pivot tables) in Excel. The Lead Consultant used the findings from these complementary sources and analytical processes-- as well as data from relevant secondary sources, where relevant-- to develop the assessment report.

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[156] Sub-region 1: Ocotepeque, Lempira and Copan. Sub-region 2: Santa Barbara, Intibucá and La Paz