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USAID'S HEALTH EVALUATION AND APPLIED RESEARCH DEVELOPMENT (HEARD) PROJECT

Lessons from a Global Assessment of Positive Youth Development

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Presentation Overview

- A. Assessment Introduction and Methods
- B. Assessment Findings and Recommendations
 - 1. General PYD understanding and uptake
 - 2. Youth Engagement
 - PAUSE FOR DISCUSSION
 - 3. Youth Systems
 - PAUSE FOR DISCUSSION
- C. Wrap-up

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A big question: What is the international status of Positive Youth Development?

“ *It is easy to see the qualitative difference of youth programs that put youth out front, but difficult to quantify. While there are many youth programs, the systemic impact is unclear as to when and where PYD approaches are enhancing their effectiveness...**Many programs incorporate ‘some’ PYD components...[but how] those components have an impact is difficult to measure and typically make programs more expensive (e.g., planning the time and resources needed for meaningful youth participation).*** ”

--Global assessment key informant

Assessment of Positive Youth Development (PYD) including the Experience and Contributions of YouthPower (June 2019-July 2020)

Q1. To what extent has the PYD approach been adopted/integrated in USAID YouthPower programming and beyond in LMIC youth programming?

Q2. What are **lessons learned, gaps, and future recommendations** for cross-sectoral, sustainable **systems** for youth development programs, and effective **youth engagement**?

Mixed methods study:

Global, Indonesia, Uganda and Kenya

Key Informant interviews: 40

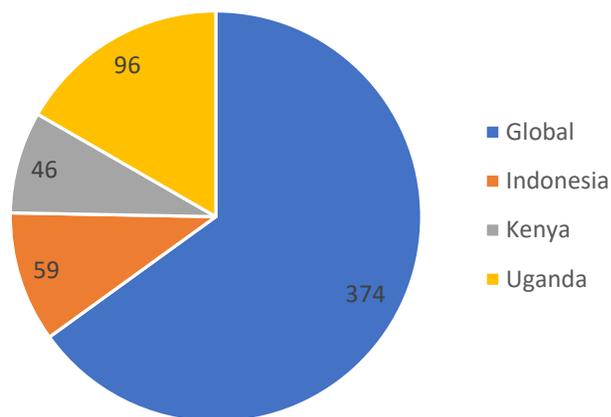
Focus Group Discussions: 5

Survey respondents: 575

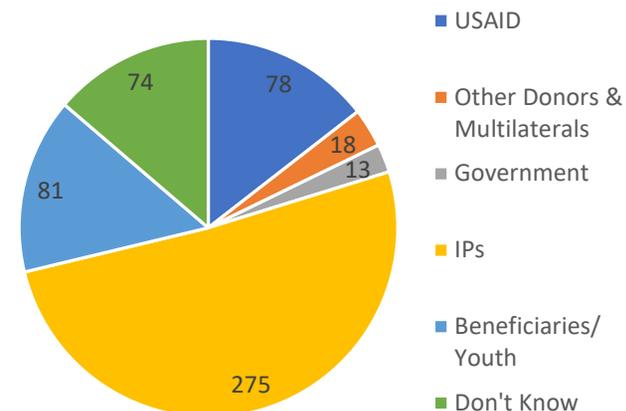
Document review: YP RFTOP for systems

Web review: Donor landscape

Survey Respondent by Country



Survey Respondent Types



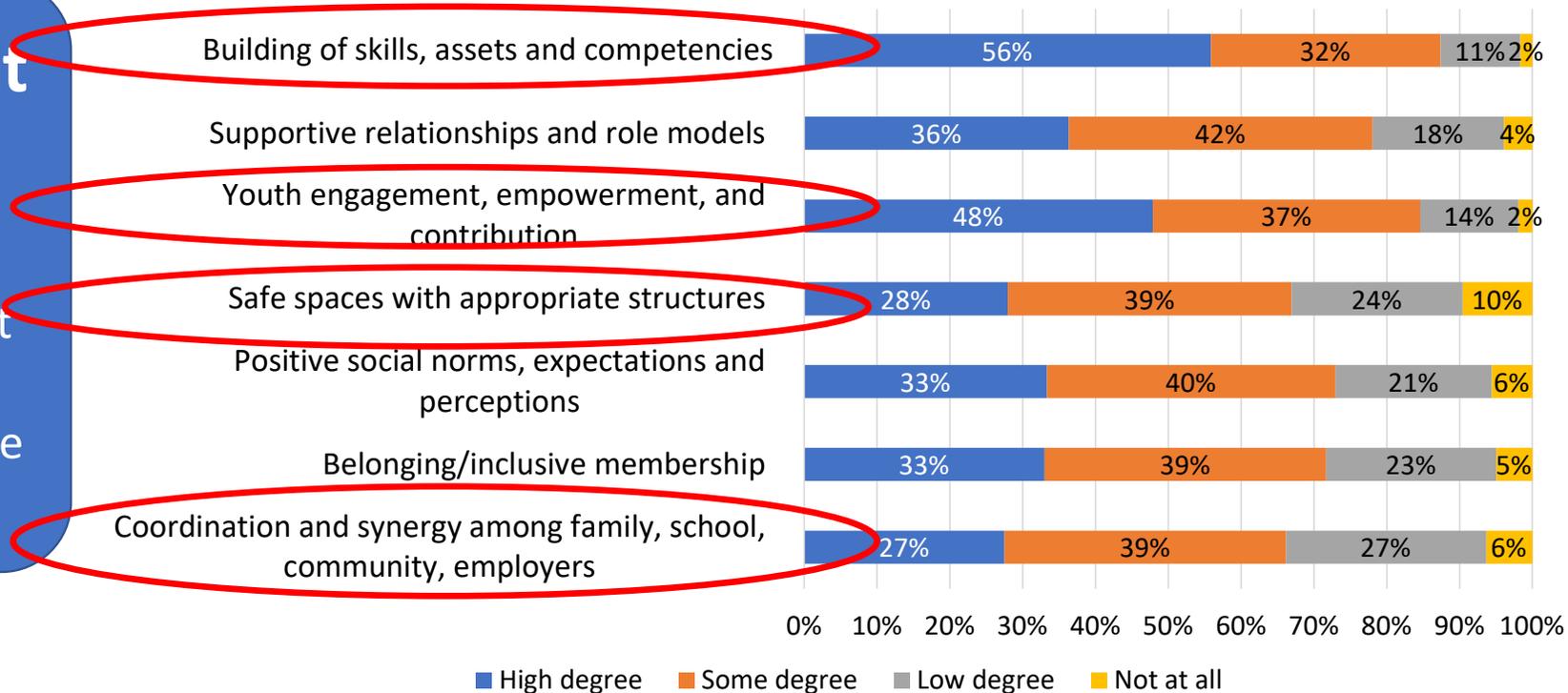
Stakeholder
understanding and
uptake of PYD



FINDING: Increased uptake of PYD overall, with variation

82 percent believe awareness of PYD had increased to at least some degree over the last five years

Extent to which respondents report their organization's youth development programs incorporate PYD features (Fig 3)



FINDING: Respondents perceive limited PYD awareness in LMICs

Perceptions PYD awareness and youth investments in LMICs (F.6)

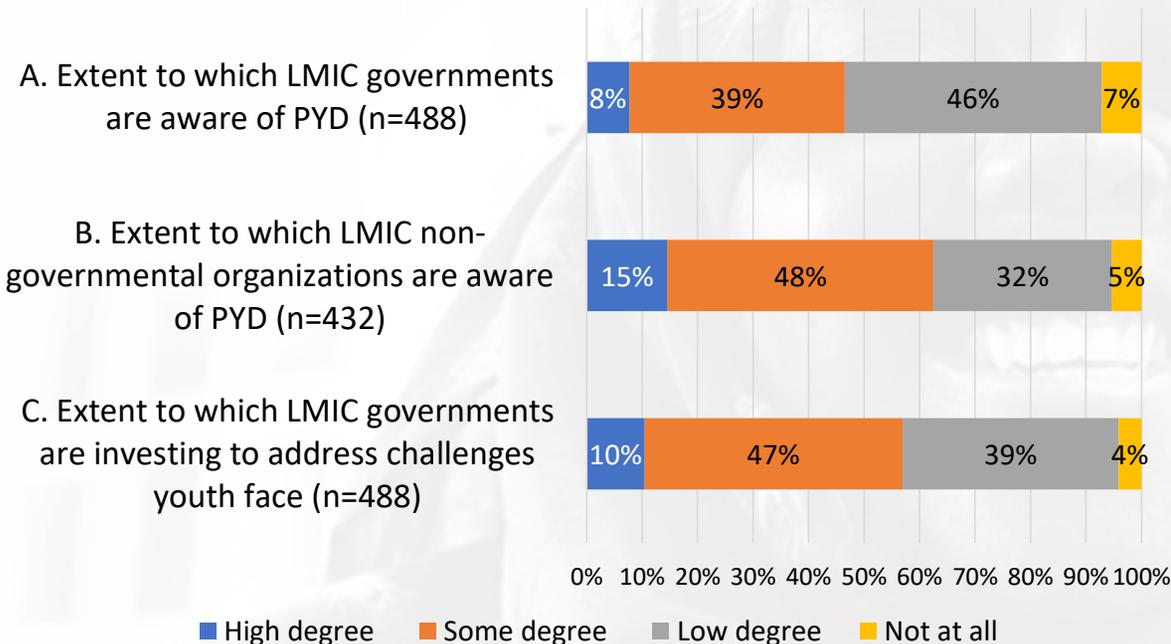
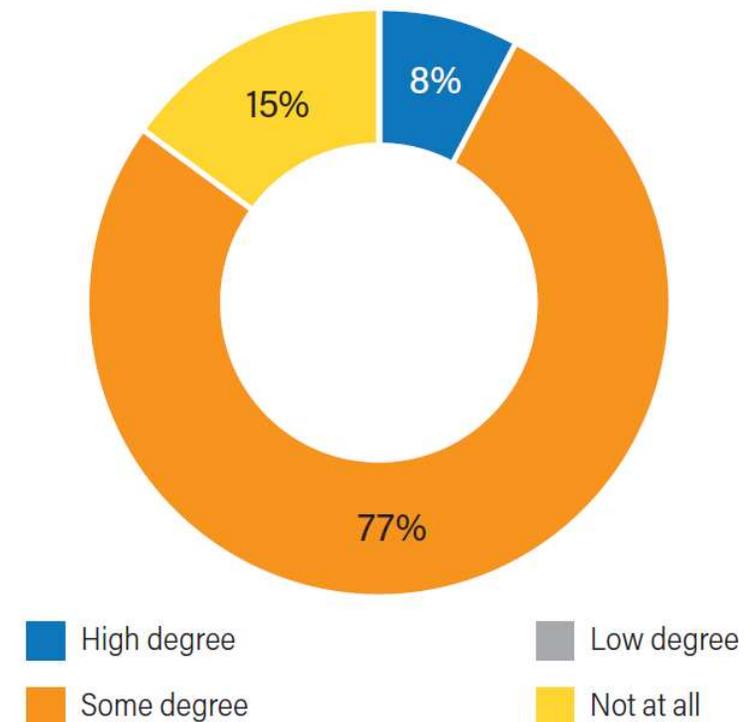
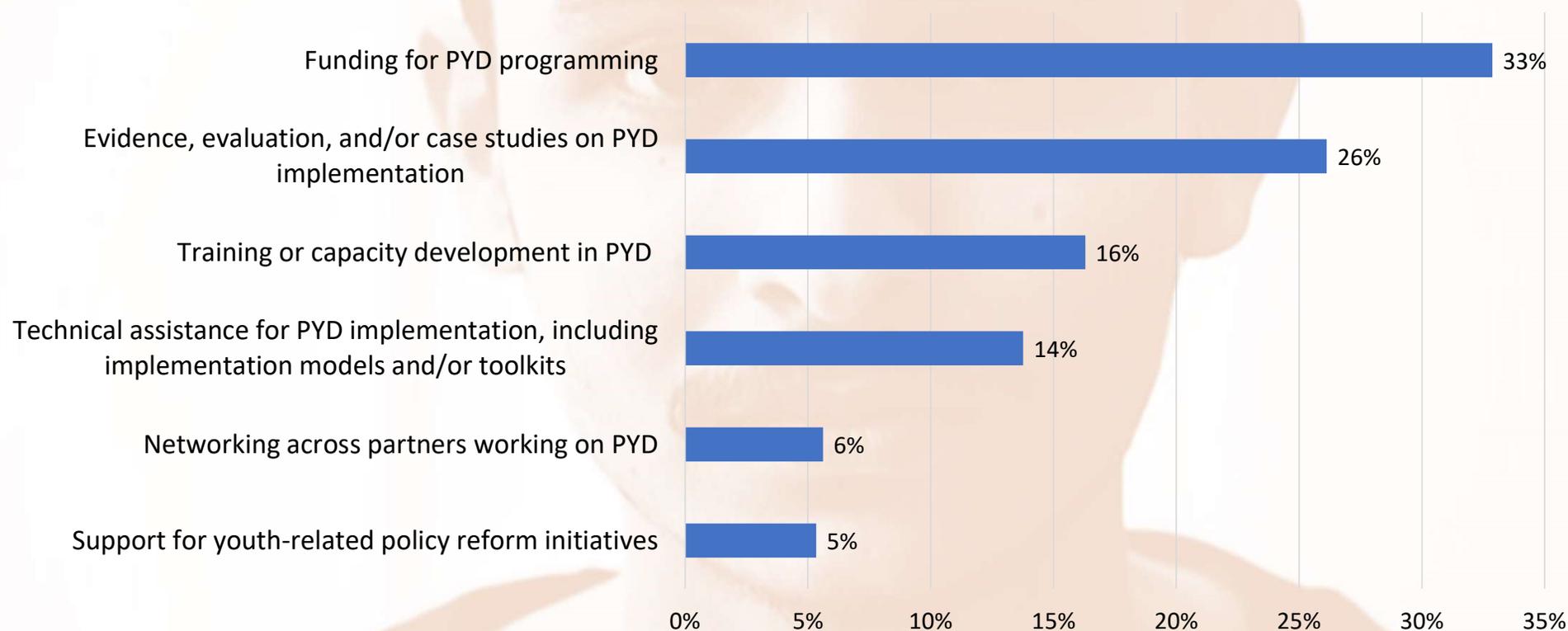


Figure 7: Level of buy-in for PYD among LMIC governments and policymakers (n=405)



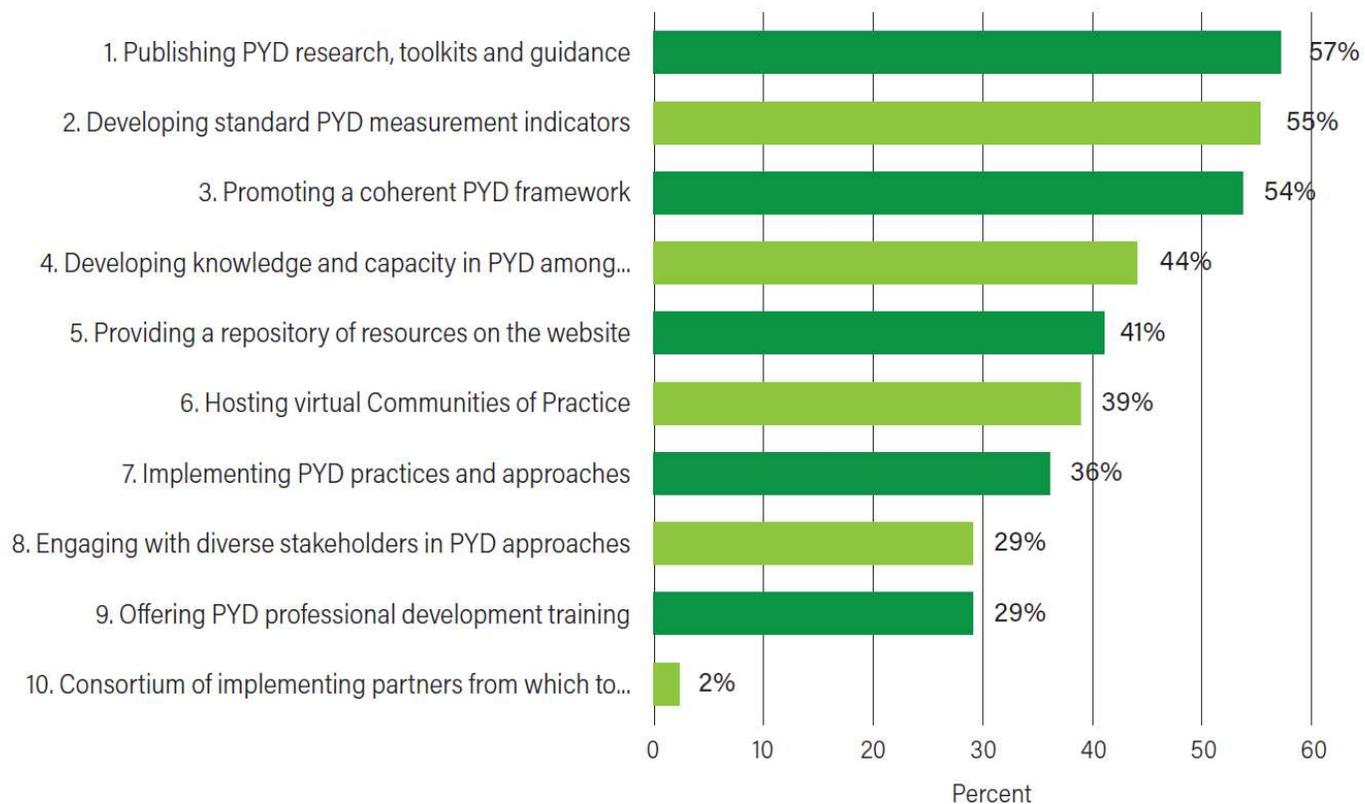
FINDING: Most critical resources needed for PYD

Figure 10. The most critical resources needed for improvements in PYD programming (n=356)



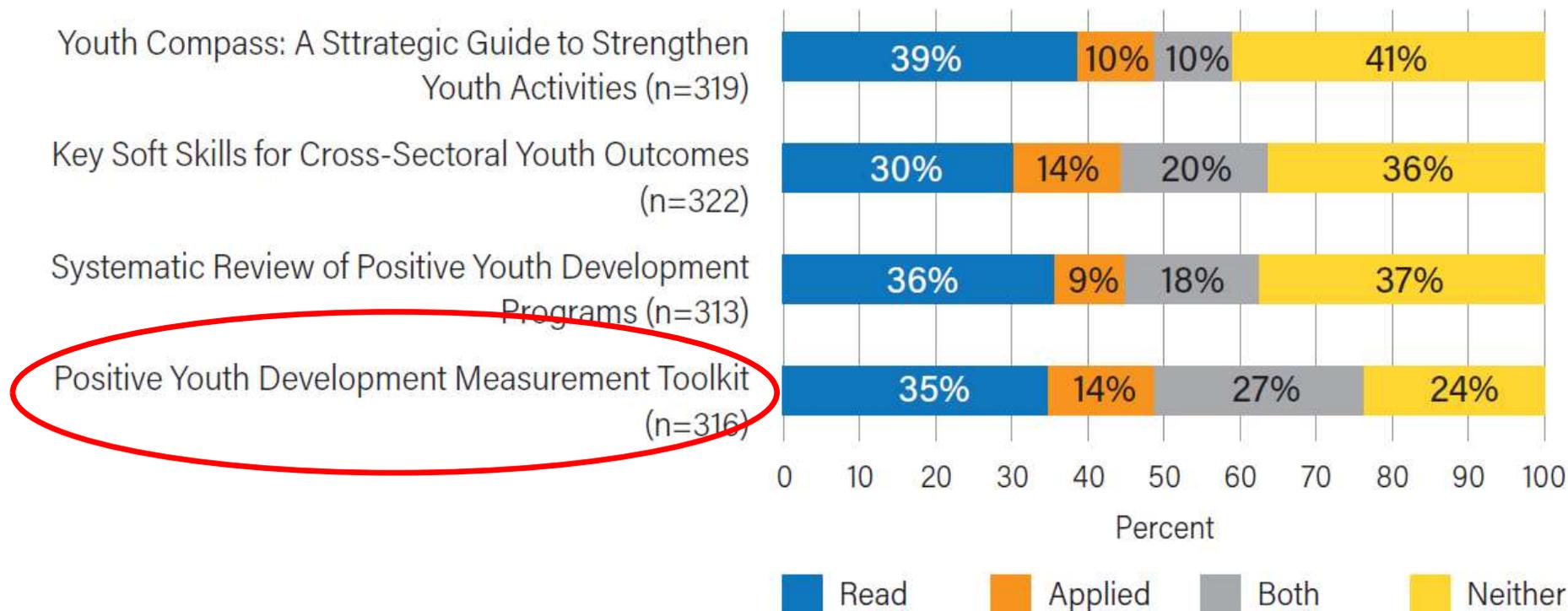
FINDING: YouthPower technical resources deemed valuable

Figure 13. Stakeholder Preference and Appreciation of YouthPower Resources and Efforts (n=258)



FINDING: YouthPower technical resources utilized

Figure 14. Use of key YouthPower-developed resources



General Recommendations: Deepening and expanding PYD

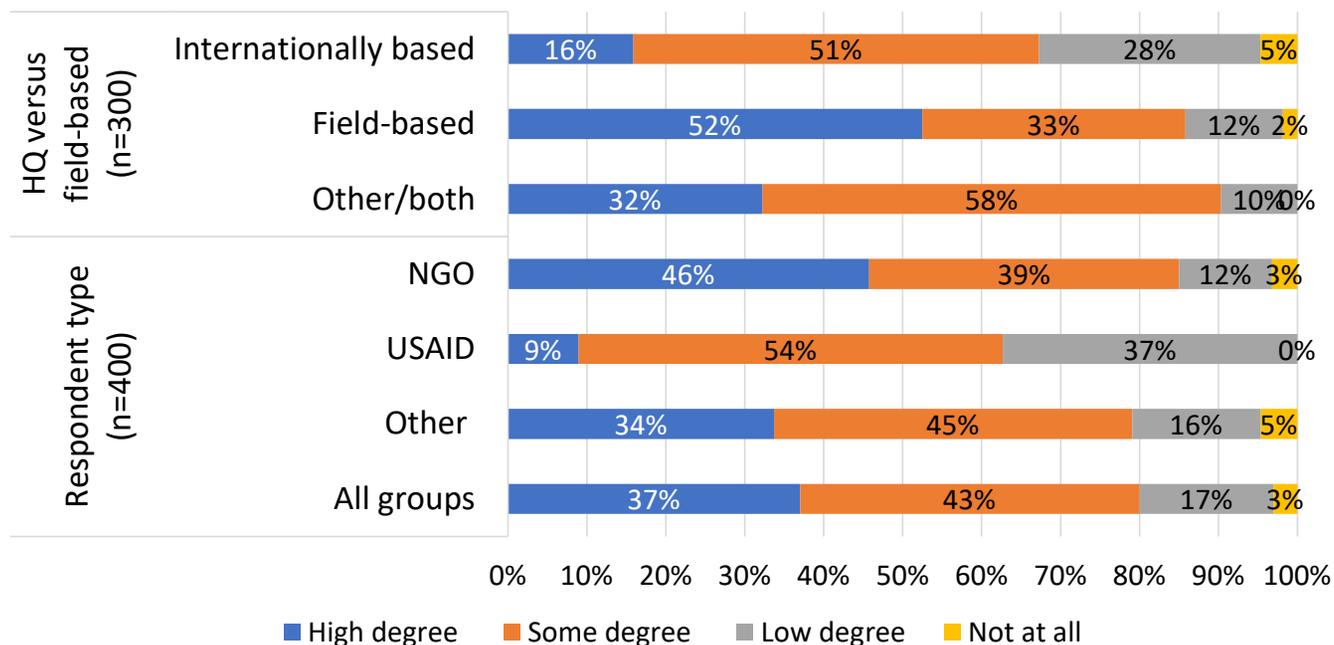
1. Tighten the **knowledge management feedback loop** between program implementation and research, evaluation, guidance.
2. Develop PYD materials that **use clearer, “everyday” language**, resonate with country contexts, and are translated into major world languages.
3. Facilitate the efficient delivery of consistent, **high-quality PYD training for country-level** governments, institutions and partners.
4. Enable **USAID Missions to gain a more accurate understanding of their own strengths and weaknesses** through peer exchange and benchmarking.

Youth Engagement



FINDINGS: Youth participation evident but more remains to be done

Figure 15. Extent to which respondents' indicated their organizations incorporated youth participation, by location and type



“Success in youth engagement is often about “balance”—making sure that young people are engaged, and they have a voice and agency to make decisions, but at the same time having the structure that’s necessary to implement a project that has targets, deliverables, and a contract.” (Key informant, USAID)

FINDING: USAID-sponsored youth engagement platforms have a special role in demonstrating the power of youth engagement.

- **Mandela Fellowship program for Young African Leaders Initiative (YALI)**
 - 4400 since 2014 from every country in sub-Saharan Africa
 - YALI Fellows as compelling examples for USAID staff to see firsthand youth leadership and the catalytic role it can have in social change
- **YouthLead**
 - International youth network and platform managed by YouthPower to consolidate and give power to the youth voice
 - Over 4,000 youth members on the YouthLead platform, with a cohort of 22 Youth Ambassadors around the world working to support youth engagement.
- **Youth engagement in USAID-funded research:**
 - Promoted in the YouthPower toolkit
 - Passages project engaged 10-14 years old to conduct research in their communities.
 - USAID respondent noted “the biggest change in attitudes around youth engagement (is seen) in youth participation in evaluations, and ...research.”

FINDING: LMIC Government efforts in youth engagement acknowledge youth importance but are limited in scope

Modalities:

- Creating national youth funds to support youth entrepreneurship (with mixed success)
- Inclusion of youth issues in constitution and national policies
- Representation of youth in national parliaments and municipal governments
- Youth Councils to engage young people in civic activities

“Policy makers and the government are cognizant of the need to engage young people to foster PYD, however, their involvement is very much still implemented as a form of tokenism to check the youth participation checkbox. A lot is left to be desired for youth engagement in policy government intervention to be meaningful”.

(Survey respondent, global)

“...Governments want to support youth. They may be less interested in supporting programs that focus on youth agency/empowerment...as they still see youth as individuals to be managed/controlled”

(Survey respondent, global)

Discussion Pause 1: Youth Engagement

- What are key challenges identified in increasing youth engagement (and making it meaningful)?
 - Balancing flexibility to engage versus need to meet program targets/deadlines
 - Tendency to view youth as risk versus assets
- What is needed for increased government buy-in? How can Missions make the case?
- How important is building the evidence around youth engagement?
 - How to do this?

Recommendations: Youth engagement

1. Co-create **practical models or mechanisms for youth engagement** at the country-level through a joint effort of USAID/Washington, USAID Missions, country governments, and established youth-led organizations.
2. Increase youth participation and leadership of PYD-related **research and evaluation** (e.g. Youth Excel, but also beyond youth programs).

Youth Systems



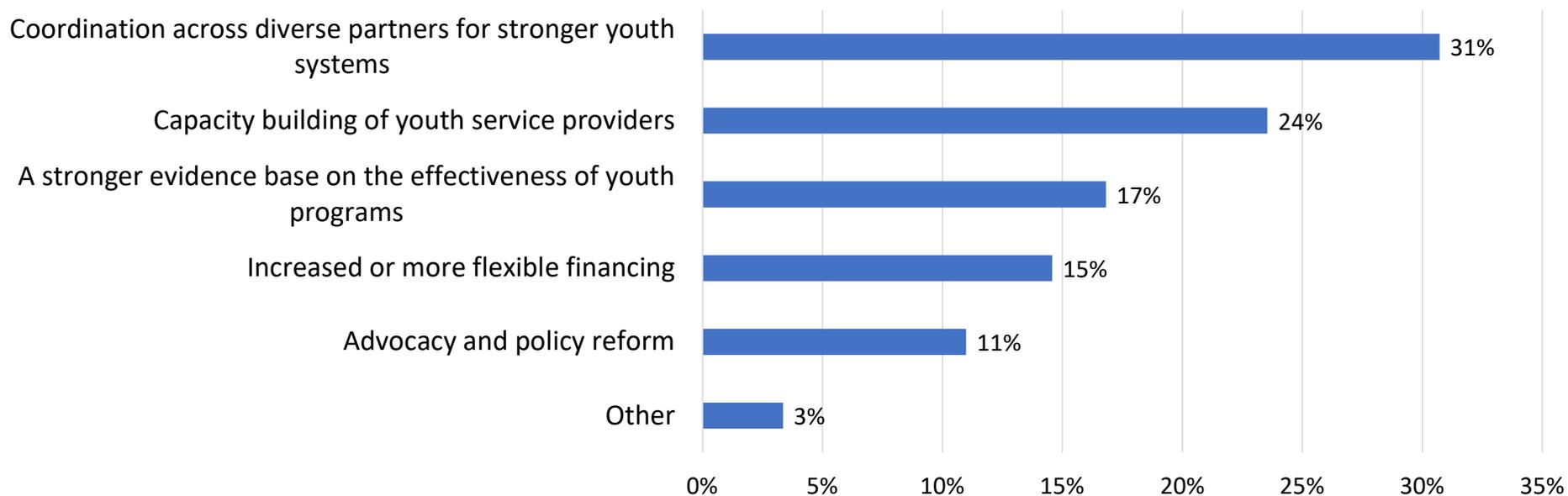
Youth systems (Enabling environment)

The entire set of individuals, groups, settings, institutions, and policies that shape the degree to which young people grow, thrive, feel safe, engaged, and heard.

Dimensions:

- Social (relationships with peers and adults),
- Normative (attitudes, norms and beliefs),
- Structural (laws, policies, programs services, and systems)
- Physical (safe, supportive, inclusive spaces).

Figure 16. Survey respondents on what is most needed to improve country-based support of PYD in LMICs



Youth systems findings



- Over-emphasis on measurable outcomes over building country youth systems. Weak “systems” lexicon.
- Capacity-building and focus on institutional relationships, but often lacking strategic focus.
- Leverage of local investment is under-developed.
- Shared standards, monitoring and evaluation for systems change are rarely the focus of dedicated attention.
- Youth policy reform and alignment are relatively rare.
- Changing roles of IPs: facilitative, bringing together diverse country-level stakeholders.
- Normative changes (mindset shifts) have been demonstrated across diverse areas.

Systems scoring matrix: Useful for reflection

Scoring Criteria	Score (0-3)	Comments
<p>1. Understanding the existing system. Taking a holistic perspective on the problem and analyzing the actors and dynamics that are holding the problem in place. If a place-based initiative, sensitivity to uniqueness of sites.</p> <p>0. (Very weak): No evidence. Focus on discrete programs or models. 1. (Weak): Rudimentary mapping or analysis of system actors and dynamics. 2. (Moderate): Moderate/good effort to map and analyze the system including nested systems. 3. (Strong): Engagement of local stakeholders to map and analyze the system.</p>		
<p>2. Bringing diverse local stakeholders together to better own the problem, share vision of a better future, and develop, commit to and coordinate solutions. Locally-led. Can be government/civil society or intra-civil society. Engage communities in an inclusive way. Breaking down stove-piping. Role of "backbone" organization is supported.</p> <p>0. (Very weak): Little evidence of partnership development. 1. (Weak): Coordinating or engagement 2 or more eco-system actors for a more effective or sustainable program. 2. (Moderate): Engaging a wide array of diverse eco-system actors. In ways that build their capacity for collective action. Emergence if a backbone organization. 3. (Strong): Deep focus on supporting <u>locally-owned</u> partnerships composed of diverse and complementary actors to make decisions about the youth in their community. Backbone organization(s) is in place.</p>		
<p>3. Improved, coordinated service delivery across the system for population-level impacts. Identifying gaps in service delivery and filling them.</p> <p>0. (Very weak): USAID-funded and implemented service delivery through fragmented providers with international partners leading. 1. (Weak): Some effort to coordinate service delivery across several partners, though with little analysis of eco-system needs (gaps, redundancies, updating). 2. (Moderate): Multiple service delivery partners working together to improve over-all support and opportunities for youth with some evidence of analysis of <u>systems</u> needs. 3. (Strong): Local stakeholders (including youth themselves) analyze eco-system for tailored responses to identified youth <u>needs</u>, and take necessary steps to provide these services. Includes significant efforts to remove system barriers and bottlenecks, and to innovate solutions.</p>		
<p>4. Shared standards, indicators, monitoring and evaluation among systems actors. Building a culture of continuous improvement and equitable research.</p> <p>0. (Very weak): No evidence. Focus only on USAID reporting requirement. 1. (Weak): Some effort to create a common set of standards, measures, and data sharing. May be missing continuous learning and adaptation. 2. (Moderate): Sharing standards, measures and data and using these actively for continuous learning at least at the institutional level. 3. (Strong): Robust shared data management system that is used for institutional continuous learning and adaption, as well as systems-level decision-making, accountability and advocacy.</p>		
<p>5. Focus on building capacity, commitment, and productive relationships among local actors, as opposed to only "the numbers."</p> <p>0. (Very weak): No evidence. USAID/IP assumes that local partners will learn and improve through "osmosis" rather than structured capacity-building and relationship building. 1. (Weak): Some effort to build capacity of individual agencies and organization but without much vision about how this contributes to systems improvement. 2. (Moderate): Multiple stakeholders benefit from collaborative capacity-building and there is attention to building networks and productive, sustainable partnerships. 3. (Strong): Local actors take responsibility to identifying, providing for and financing their own capacity-building efforts within systems partnerships.</p>		
<p>6. USAID (or international partner) role is flexible, adaptive, facilitative, and supportive to local actors' process and pace of change. Understanding of need for longer timeframe</p> <p>0. (Very weak): USAID/IP role as external funder expecting delivery of outputs with no or less attention to process. 1. (Weak): USAID demonstrates some flexibility and willingness to allow local stakeholders make key decisions about system-strengthening process. 2. (Moderate): USAID supporting key local stakeholders in building and improving their system, though USAID commitment may be shorter-term. 3. (Strong): USAID either makes a longer-term commitment to <u>locally-led</u> systems change or identifies its more limited role in supporting a clearly identified immediate for systems improvement that is requested by local stakeholders; in either case, USAID role is flexible and supportive.</p>		
<p>7. Donor collaboration and leveraged funding.</p> <p>0. (Very weak): No evidence 1. (Weak): IP expected to be aware of other donor investments, but no donor-to-donor commitment. 2. (Moderate): Some USAID to other donor shared commitment. 3. (Strong): Commitment and collaboration on shared development objectives across multiple donors, incl. USAID.</p>		
<p>8. Policy reform and alignment of strategies and implementation plans to policies.</p> <p>0. (Very weak): No evidence 1. (Weak): Some <u>ground work</u> for policy reform (i.e., research, innovation piloting, etc.), though may not be clearly linked to systems change efforts led by key stakeholders. 2. (Moderate): Policy reform—though may not clearly be evidence-based or fully grounded in practice experience by trust stakeholders. 3. (Strong): Policy reform linked to system change efforts by multi-stakeholder groups who authentically represent youth, and that is evidence-based.</p>		

Discussion Pause 2: Youth Systems

1. What do Missions and Governments need to better understand the case for youth systems strengthening?
2. How can IPs and Missions move beyond youth service delivery by systematically coordinating across stakeholders for locally-led systems strengthening?
 - How can this be incentivized and supported?
 - Feasibility of coordination across USAID investments within a country?
 - Feasibility of coordination across Ministries?
 - Feasibility of building in M&E for coordination?

Recommendations: Strengthening youth systems

1. Identify, track and support progress of **system change efforts *already locally initiated and owned***.
2. Improve knowledge of systems analytics and terminology among USAID and its partners in order to **better understand the systems dynamics** around youth development challenges.
3. Deepen understanding of and support to the role of **intermediary organizations** that play a critical role in youth systems work.
4. Explore the use of **shared monitoring and evaluation platforms** (dashboards) for systems work.
5. Avoid over-reliance on “the numbers” to evaluate the success of systems activities; **relationships are at the heart of change**.

Thank you

Additional questions and comments?

How can we continue to share and use this assessment?

Report available at <https://www.heardproject.org/evaluation-development-and-implementation/evaluation-activities/pyd-youthpower-eval/>

For comments and more information:

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Current cross-sectoral investment (supplemental)

Figure 9: Survey respondents' perceptions of the five most common cross-sectoral efforts in youth programming (n=407)

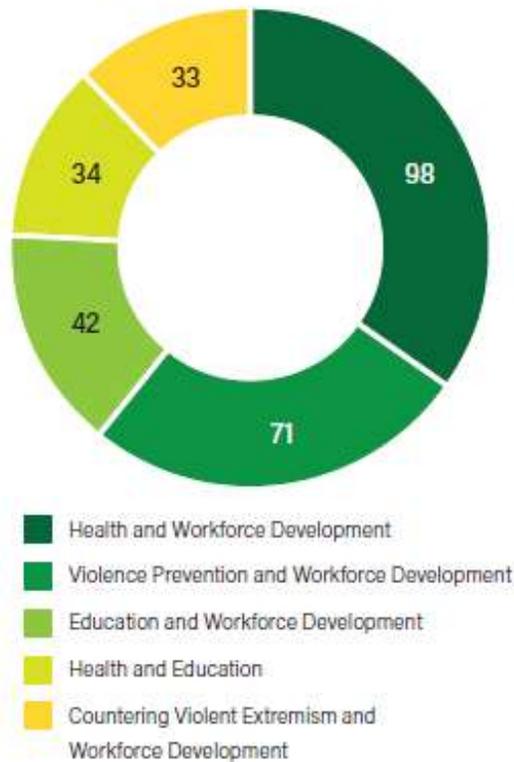
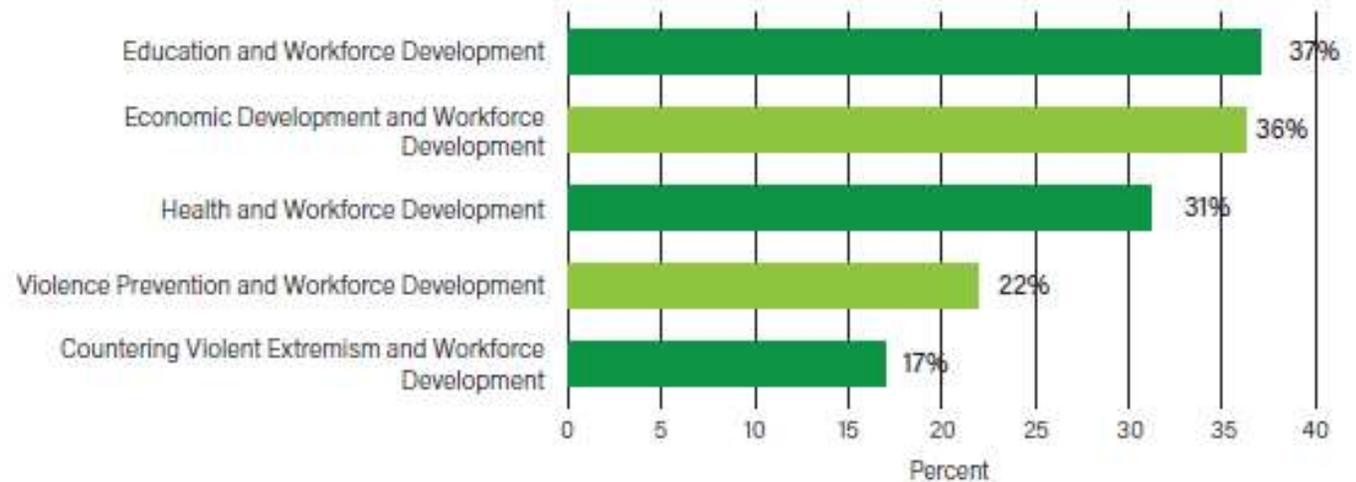


Figure 10. Survey respondent's perceptions of the five areas for cross-sectoral coordination for which increased support is most needed in youth programming (n=334)



Current cross-sectoral investment (supplemental)

“Ministries agree with PYD in principle and appreciate the youth-forward focus. However, implementing cross-sectoral approaches usually meets with resistance.” (Survey respondent, global)

“The siloing of programs within specific departments of government due to the government structures remains a key barrier to success. Ministries of health, gender & social development, and education continue to have limited cross-sector collaboration in spite of the fact that this is what is most needed.” (Survey respondent, global)

