



**USAID**  
FROM THE AMERICAN PEOPLE



**IREX**  
Make a Better World



# 21<sup>st</sup> Century Youth Competencies Assessment

Midline Assessment Report  
Cooperative Agreement No:  
AID-294-A-13-00004

IREX/West Bank  
Partnerships  
with Youth  
Program (PWY)

This report is made possible by the support of the American People through the United States Agency for International Development (USAID). The contents are the sole responsibility of IREX and do not necessarily reflect the views of USAID or the United States Government.

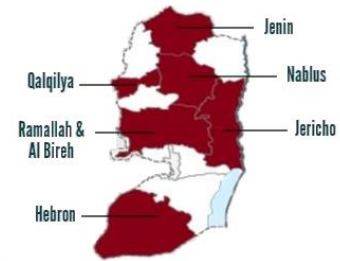
# Contents

Executive Summary .....	1
Partnerships with Youth.....	1
Midline Youth Competencies Assessment.....	1
Why Assess Youth Competencies?.....	2
Assessment Methodology .....	2
Assessment Results .....	2
Lessons Learned to Inform Ongoing Programming.....	5
Introduction .....	7
Overview.....	7
What are PWY’s 21 <sup>st</sup> Century Youth Competencies? .....	8
Why measure 21 <sup>st</sup> Century Youth Competencies?.....	9
21 <sup>st</sup> Century Youth Competencies .....	10
21 <sup>st</sup> Century Youth Competency Framework.....	10
21 <sup>st</sup> Century Youth Competency Index .....	10
Methodology.....	11
Assessment Methodology .....	11
Survey Methodology.....	12
Sampling.....	12
Survey Implementation.....	13
Research Instrument.....	13
Data Limitations.....	14
Youth in the West Bank: Findings from the Baseline Assessment.....	14
Midline Assessment Findings.....	16
Key Findings.....	16
Who are Youth at the YDRCs?.....	17
Youth Competencies Before Joining YDRCs .....	18
Youth at YDRCs Increase Their Competencies After Participating in YDRC Activities .....	19
Competency Growth by Gender .....	19
Competency Growth by Age .....	20
Competency Growth by Residence.....	21

Competency Growth by District .....	21
Competency Growth by Activity .....	22
Youth Participation and Engagement .....	23
Preparing Youth Leads to More Peaceful Communities .....	24
Youth Gain Confidence in Employment .....	26
YDRCs and Their Work with Palestinian Youth .....	27
Recruitment at the YDRCs .....	28
Summary of Findings .....	28
Recommendations .....	29
Annex I: 21 <sup>st</sup> Century Youth Competencies Assessment Questionnaire.....	31
Annex II: 21 <sup>st</sup> Century Competencies Framework .....	37

## Executive Summary

Today's generation of Palestinian youth is healthier and more educated than prior generations, and has incredible potential to become a strong force for development, accelerating growth and reducing poverty. However, Palestinian youth today still face difficult circumstances as they prepare for and move into adulthood, which may ultimately slow the momentum youth could add to economic and social development. In the West Bank and Gaza, Palestinian youth comprise 29% of the population.<sup>1</sup> The youth unemployment rate sits at 43% for youth aged 15-24 in the West Bank,<sup>2</sup> while opportunities to participate and engage in public decision-making processes, government institutions and community issues are minimal.<sup>3</sup> This leaves Palestinian youth with limited chances to develop skills and knowledge that will bring them into a successful adulthood and allow them to contribute to a stable and prosperous West Bank.








### Partnerships with Youth

IREX's Partnerships with Youth (PWY) program is a USAID-funded program that expands educational and leadership opportunities for young people aged 14-29 in the West Bank by creating sustainable hubs for youth innovation and learning, called *Youth Development Resource Centers* (YDRCs). Over the course of the five-year program, PWY supports and expands YDRCs throughout the West Bank to offer otherwise unavailable services for youth to prepare them for entry into an engaged and economically-contributing adulthood.

### Midline Youth Competencies Assessment

In spring 2015, PWY conducted a midline 21<sup>st</sup> Century Youth Competencies Assessment to ascertain how PWY affects participating youth, to develop a clear picture of youth who are served, and to inform and strengthen PWY programming in the years to come. The midline assessment follows up on the baseline youth competencies assessment that PWY conducted across the West Bank, in partnership with Arab World for Research and Development (AWRAD), in spring 2014. While the baseline assessment surveyed a representative sample of youth in all 11 West Bank governorates, PWY's midline competencies assessment surveyed youth who have participated in PWY programming at YDRCs in six

#### Key Midline Assessment Findings: Palestinian Youth at the YDRCs

-  Youth at PWY YDRCs far outstrip their peers in competency levels after participating in activities.
-  PWY reaches disadvantaged youth.
-  PWY YDRCs are unique youth serving organizations in the West Bank.
-  PWY activities help youth develop social skills to build peaceful communities.
-  PWY employability training gives youth confidence in their employment potential and a future of higher earnings.

<sup>1</sup> Abu Fasheh, Waseem. The Status of Youth in Palestine 2013. Sharek Youth Forum.

<sup>2</sup> Palestine in Figures 2014 Report. PCBS. 2015. (Note: Statistics based on youth participating in the labor market in the WBG.)

<sup>3</sup> USAID West Bank/Gaza Youth Development Policy. 2013.

governorates. PWY used the same 21<sup>st</sup> Century Youth Competencies Index to compare the competencies of youth at the YDRCs with the baseline findings for youth across the West Bank.

### Why Assess Youth Competencies?

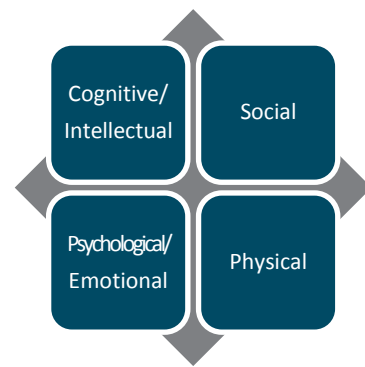
International research suggests that when youth develop greater knowledge and skills, also known as **competencies**, for becoming successful, healthy adults, they will arrive at better adult milestones, such as advanced educational attainment, greater employment, and higher levels of community participation.<sup>4</sup> By measuring competencies, PWY can better assess its contribution in helping youth realize their potential to contribute effectively to the social and economic development of a stable and prosperous West Bank. Moreover, PWY’s work around this issue comes at an essential time to help development practitioners and academics better understand youth development in the Middle East, where research on these issues is scarce and the need is high, as the region faces a youth bulge of unprecedented proportions.

**21<sup>st</sup> Century Youth Competencies**

*The skills and knowledge necessary for youth to become successful, engaged adults in today’s world.*

### Assessment Methodology

The baseline assessment provided benchmarking information about youth across the West Bank. For the baseline, PWY surveyed a representative sample of youth in all West Bank governorates on their competencies and the ways in which they interacted with their communities, and used the survey data to build a *21<sup>st</sup> Century Youth Competencies Index* that provided baseline and comparative scores for the youth population as a whole, disaggregated by demographics – age, gender, geographical location, and other factors. The midline assessment gauged how PWY programming contributed to the psychological, emotional, social, and physical competencies of **youth involved in PWY programming through the YDRCs**, looking at key competencies as predictors of successful, contributing adults. The midline assessment provides a comparative look against the baseline and offers the opportunity to measure the competencies of youth before and after their participation in activities at the YDRCs.



21<sup>st</sup> Century Youth Competency Framework - Domains

### Assessment Results

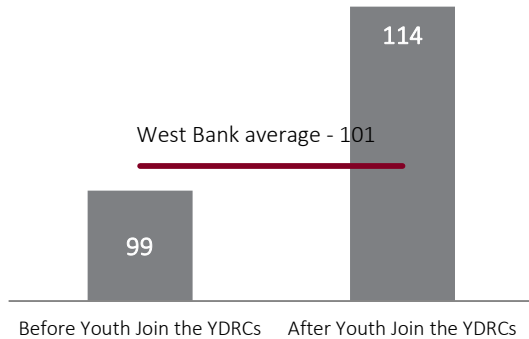
The results of the assessment proved powerful for PWY. Not only did the data offer insight into the effects of YDRC programming, but it offered clear guidance on ways to reach youth more effectively in the future.

**KEY FINDING:** Youth at PWY YDRCs far outstrip their peers in competency levels after participating in PWY activities.

<sup>4</sup> USAID. *State of the Field Report: Holistic, Cross-Sectoral Youth Development*. Washington, DC. February 2013, p.15.

## Growth in Youth Competency Levels

Youth increase their competency levels after participating in activities at the YDRCs



When PWY measured youth competencies after they participated in activities at the YDRCs, youth reported significant growth in their competency levels. After participating in PWY-supported activities, youth reported competency levels 15% higher than before participating, and 13% higher than average West Bank youth. This increase implies that the educational, leadership, and community outreach opportunities provided at PWY partner YDRCs achieve their goal: to help youth build competencies that lead to a successful adulthood.

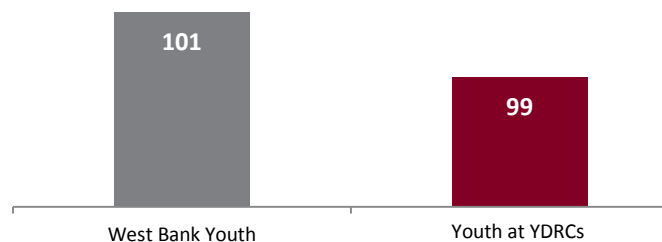
### **KEY FINDING: PWY reaches disadvantaged youth.**

Disadvantaged youth, or youth with “fewer chances to achieve goods”,<sup>5</sup> such as education, civic and economic participation, and others, are more likely to have negative life outcomes, including health issues, feeling hopeless about their future, and a higher likelihood of becoming involved in risky or destructive activities.<sup>6</sup>

While research on disadvantage and its long-term outcomes in the Middle East is scant, the 21<sup>st</sup> Century Youth Competency Index is one way to identify advantage versus disadvantage in the West Bank. If all youth had the same opportunities to develop the skills and knowledge they need for adulthood, they should have the same average competency level. However, in the midline assessment, PWY discovered that the majority of the youth arriving to the YDRCs may be disadvantaged in comparison to the average West Bank competency levels. On average, youth participating in PWY activities reported a competency index score of 99 before participating in YDRC activities – lower than the West Bank average of 101. There are data limitations to this comparison, including the lack of a direct control group and thus the inability to analyze and compare this data with statistical certainty. However, this difference may indicate that the youth attending the YDRCs have fewer opportunities to develop their

### West Bank Youth and Youth at YDRCs Competencies Compared

Before youth began activities at the YDRCs, their competencies were lower than the average West Bank youth



<sup>5</sup> Governance of Educational Trajectories in Europe (GOETE) Glossary Wiki. <http://www.goete.eu/glossary>

<sup>6</sup> Gruber, Jonathan. “Introduction: What Have We Learned about the Problems of and Prospects for Disadvantaged Youth?”. *The Problems of Disadvantaged Youth: An Economic Perspective*. University of Chicago Press. 2009. <http://www.nber.org/chapters/c0585.pdf>

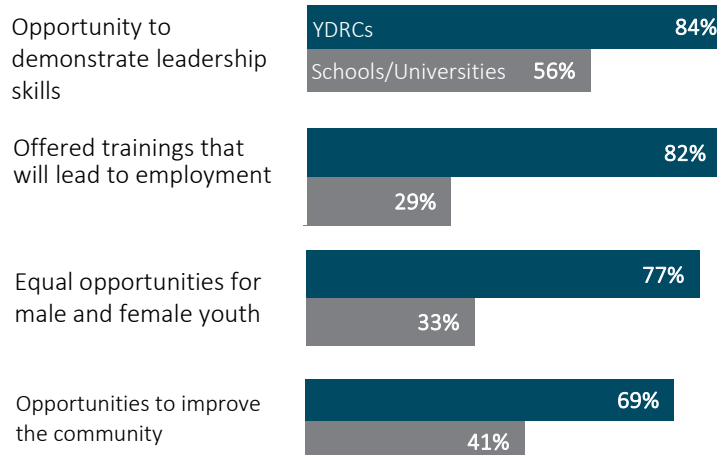
competencies, thus making them disadvantaged and more vulnerable to negative long-term effects.

**KEY FINDING: PWY YDRCs are unique youth-serving organizations in the West Bank.**

Overwhelmingly, youth asserted that PWY partner YDRCs allowed them to interact with the community (69%) and exercise leadership skills (84%) more than any other institution or organization in the West Bank. Eighty-two percent of young people surveyed identified YDRCs as an institution where they received training that prepared them for the work world, while only 29% of youth said the same of schools. Youth also believe that YDRCs contribute to gender equality, with 77% of youth indicating that males and females are treated equally at the YDRCs. Only 33% believed this was true at schools and universities.

**How YDRC Services Compare to the School Offerings**

Youth felt YDRCs offered more opportunities to develop competencies than the education system



For all other youth-serving institutions in the West Bank (youth clubs, religious institutions and other youth organizations), youth felt that they were not offered opportunities to develop capacities there, making the YDRCs distinctive service providers for West Bank youth.

**KEY FINDING: PWY activities help youth develop social skills to build peaceful communities.**

Youth with more effective social skills and tighter connections to community are less likely to resort to violence as a means of conflict resolution.<sup>7</sup> YDRCs directly offer social skills training through their leadership training programs, youth-led initiatives, and employability programming, and indirectly provide youth with these skills through activities such as sports and community outreach activities. This emphasis led to significant increases in youth competencies in these areas after YDRC participation, as noted in the table below. YDRC activities help youth build the skills necessary to create a more peaceful Palestinian future.

**Youth with social skills necessary for building peaceful communities**

Youth reported an increase in social competencies after participating in YDRC activities

Question	Youth that agree BEFORE YDRC participation	Youth that agree AFTER YDRC participation	% change	West Bank Average
<b>Social Skills</b>				
“I know how to solve personal conflicts.”	62%	92%	<b>+48%</b>	77%

<sup>7</sup> Guerra, Nancy and Williams, Kirk. “Youth Development and Violence Prevention: Core Competencies.” Southern California Center of Excellence on Youth Violence Prevention, University of California, Riverside. Winter 2002. <http://stopyouthviolence.ucr.edu/factsheets/violenceprevention.pdf>

“I know how to get along with people who are different from me.”	53%	93%	<b>+75%</b>	69%
<b>Community Connection</b>				
“I feel like I belong in my community.”	77%	90%	<b>+17%</b>	80%
“When I evaluate my relationship with my community, I believe I am an asset.”	58%	88%	<b>+51%</b>	61%
“I have the ability to make a difference in my community.”	46%	83%	<b>+80%</b>	44%

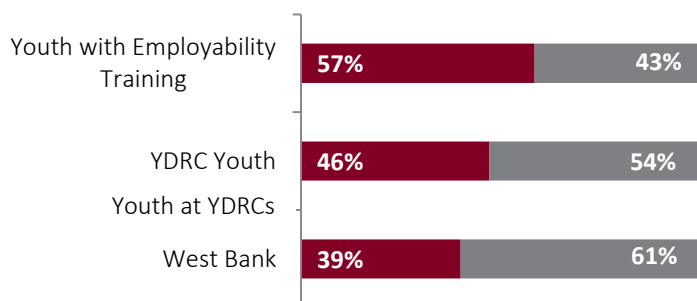
**KEY FINDING: PWY employability training gives youth confidence in their employment and a potential future of higher earnings.**

Palestinian youth face substantial difficulties on the employment front. Youth unemployment in the West Bank sits at 43% for those aged 15-24, and 30% for those aged 25-34.<sup>8</sup> Understandably, only 39% of West Bank youth reported they felt confident that they would find a job when entering the workforce during PWY’s baseline assessment. Their discouragement in future labor prospects can have a real economic effect, as studies in the United States have shown that youth with an optimistic outlook earn at higher income levels later in life.<sup>9</sup>

Youth at the YDRCs on average feel more confident about getting a job in the Palestinian workforce compared with West Bank youth overall – 46% of youth surveyed were confident that they would find a position upon entering the job market. However, youth that participated in employability training at the YDRCs have an even greater confidence in their preparation to get a job – 57% said they felt they would get a job upon entering the labor market, an increase of 46% over the West Bank average. This confidence has the potential to translate into greater economic participation for these youth and higher earnings on average throughout their lives.

**Youth at YDRCs More Confident in Job Prospects**

Youth answered the question “Do you feel confident that you will be able to find a job when you need one?”



**Lessons Learned to Inform Ongoing Programming**

In addition to findings on the positive effects of YDRC programming, the midline assessment also yielded information that will help YDRCs better target their efforts to improve youth opportunities.

**KEY FINDING: YDRCs primarily serve younger youth.**

In determining the sample for the midline assessment, PWY found that the majority of youth who participate in YDRC activities are primarily in the 14-17 and 18-25 age ranges. However, the YDRCs are also charged with serving youth aged 26-29. This age group only represents a sliver of the total YDRC

<sup>8</sup> Palestine in Figures 2014 Report. PCBS. 2015. (Note: Statistics based on youth participating in the labor market in the WBG.)

<sup>9</sup> De Neve, J. and Oswald, A. “Estimating the influence of life satisfaction and positive affect on later income using sibling fixed effects. PNAS. Vol. 109, No. 49. December 4, 2012. www.pnas.org/cgi/doi/10.1073/pnas.1211437109



youth population at 3% of youth at the YDRCs, while PWY estimates that youth aged 26-29 make up no less than 18% of the population in the West Bank.<sup>10</sup> In the future, PWY and its partner YDRCs will work to provide outreach and programming for youth of an older age range.

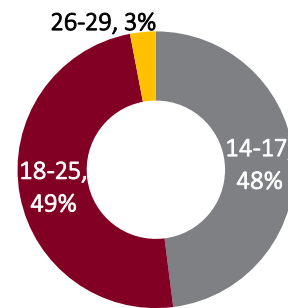
**KEY FINDING: Women and refugee youth at the YDRCs do not build skills at the same rate as other youth.**

While female youth at the YDRCs build competencies that far outstrip their peers (113 for female youth at the YDRCs compared to 100 for West Bank female youth), they consistently report lower levels of competencies than PWY male youth, who arrive at competency levels of 116.

Youth living in refugee camps are even less likely to arrive at the competency levels of the average youth at the YDRCs. Youth living in refugee camps arrive to the YDRCs with lower competency scores on average (98), and see only a 12% increase in competency index score, as opposed to other youth in the West Bank, who see a 15% increase after participating in PWY programming.

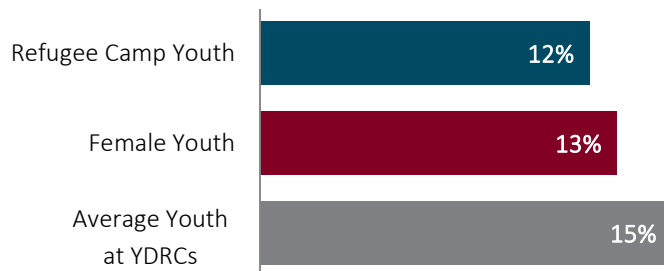
**YDRCs Serve Younger Youth**

YDRCs serve primarily youth 14-25.



**Percent Growth in Competencies After YDRC Participation**

Women and youth from refugee camps increase their competencies by a lower percentage than the average youth at a YDRC



These findings are not surprising. While females in general report less confidence in their skills, young women are often subject to a host of societal pressures that may prevent them from developing competencies at the same rate as males. Female leadership and work outside the home is often stigmatized in the West Bank, leading to fewer occasions for them to build these skills. For those living in refugee

camps, displacement is often associated with a host of social issues which limit youth opportunities, including lack of services for youth within the camps themselves.

Given that these groups continue to be at a disadvantage even after participating in YDRC activities, PWY can work to ensure that these groups receive greater encouragement and more targeted opportunities to participate and lead in activities, giving them an increased chance of building the competencies they need for healthy adulthood.

<sup>10</sup> Palestine in Figures 2014 Report. PCBS. 2015. (Note: Statistics based on youth participating in the labor market in the WBG.)

**KEY FINDING: In the poorest and most disadvantaged governorates, YDRCs may not attract those that need services the most.**

While most youth whom the YDRCs serve tend to be disadvantaged, the opposite proved true in Jericho and Jenin. Each of these governorates had competency levels well below average on the baseline assessment. However, the youth involved at the YDRCs in these governorates started with higher than average competency index scores. This higher competency level may indicate that in places where youth are most disadvantaged, they are less likely to participate in extracurricular activities. Thus, YDRCs have an added responsibility to recruit those youth who truly need their services.

For additional findings from the midline 21<sup>st</sup> Century Youth Competencies Assessment, please see the full report.

## Introduction

IREX is pleased to present the findings from the midline youth competencies assessment carried out by the Partnerships with Youth (PWY) program. This assessment established that PWY serves the youth it should be serving, its partner YDRCs provide unique opportunities in the West Bank, and, as a result, Palestinian youth are on the path to becoming more successful adults. The key findings from the assessment are outlined below and will be addressed throughout the report. Moreover, the report will investigate who the youth are that participate at the YDRCs and how YDRC programming affects them in their development. Finally, the report will examine the YDRC model and its effectiveness in the West Bank context, as compared with other youth serving groups.

## Overview

IREX's Partnerships with Youth (PWY) program is a USAID-funded project that expands educational and leadership opportunities for young people aged 14-29 in the West Bank. PWY creates sustainable hubs for youth innovation and learning, called *Youth Development Resource Centers* (YDRCs), which offer otherwise unavailable services for youth. YDRCs provide a range of relevant training courses and other activities to youth in their communities and partner with other local youth clubs to reach youth in outlying and marginalized areas. The educational and leadership offerings at YDRCs include, but are not limited to, media and ICT courses, career counseling and employability training, and leadership and community outreach opportunities; all of which are geared toward preparing youth for a successful entry into an engaged and economically-contributing adulthood.

PWY's learning agenda seeks to ascertain the impact of USAID's investments in youth development programming, specifically in the areas of education, economic growth, and community engagement for youth, and to gauge the effects of participation in YDRC activities on the development of youth. In setting its learning agenda, PWY drew on global youth development research and best practices to customize a "21<sup>st</sup> Century Youth Competency Framework" for the Palestinian context. Youth competencies are the knowledge, skills and attitudes that are predictors for long-term development outcomes: young people's future economic, civic and social participation, and emotional and physical health. PWY measured these essential competencies through a baseline assessment conducted in spring 2014, and this midline assessment one year later, to determine how participation in YDRC activities may have impacted its youth participants.

PWY surveyed youth participating at its partner YDRCs in Al Bireh, Hebron, Jenin, Jericho, Nablus and Qalqilya between October 2014 and June 2015 in order to do the following:

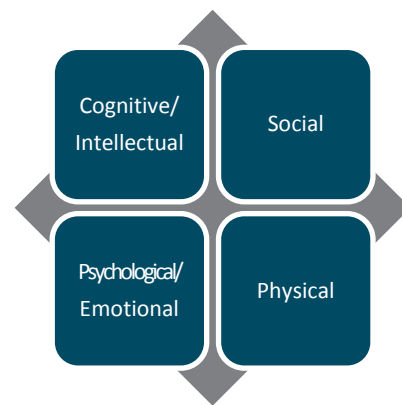
- Measure the competency levels of youth at YDRCs, to compare against baseline data *and* gauge changes in the competencies of the youth themselves before and after participation in YDRC activities;
- Identify which youth access YDRC services; and
- Establish the role YDRCs play in the lives of participating youth.

PWY will use this assessment to ascertain program impact, inform its programming priorities, assist the YDRCs in their programming focuses, and contribute to the final evaluation.

### What are PWY’s 21<sup>st</sup> Century Youth Competencies?

As stated above, IREX defines 21<sup>st</sup> Century Youth Competencies as the knowledge and skills that youth need to be prepared for economic, civic and social participation, and emotional and physical health in today’s world.<sup>11</sup> Youth competencies facilitate a successful transition from childhood to adolescence to adulthood. This holistic definition considers all domains that interact as a young person develops, including the cognitive/intellectual, social, psychological/emotional, and physical.

To adapt globally accepted youth competencies to the West Bank context, IREX reviewed international research on and best practices in positive youth development. The USG Interagency Working Group on Youth Programs defines positive youth development as “an intentional, pro-social approach that engages youth within their communities, schools, organizations, peer groups, and families in a manner that is productive and constructive; recognizes, utilizes, and enhances youths' strengths; and promotes positive outcomes for young people by providing opportunities, fostering positive relationships, and furnishing the support needed to build on their leadership strengths.”<sup>12</sup> To better define this concept and how to implement it, the National Research Council and Institute of Medicine identified positive youth development and the competencies associated with it, dividing these competencies into four key domains, highlighted in the graphic above: cognitive/intellectual, social psychological/emotional and physical.<sup>13</sup> IREX then adapted these competencies to the West Bank with the assistance of a steering group of Palestinian youth and created a competency framework around it.



**21<sup>st</sup> Century Youth Competency Framework - Domains**

<sup>11</sup> Macneil, Carole. Partnership with Youth: 21<sup>st</sup> Century Youth Competencies Framework. January 1014.

<sup>12</sup> Youth.gov. “Positive Youth Development.” <http://youth.gov/youth-topics/positive-youth-development>

<sup>13</sup> Community Programs to Promote Youth Development. ©2002 by the National Academy of Sciences, courtesy of the National Academies Press, Washington, D.C., Retrieved from <http://www.nap.edu/catalog/10022/community-programs-to-promote-youth-development>

To measure youth competency levels, PWY developed a 21<sup>st</sup> Century Youth Competency Framework, a structure that captures the four key domains, and created a 28-question survey to capture youth development in each domain.

See the sections on methodology (page 11) and PWY's 21<sup>st</sup> Century Youth Competencies (page 14) for more information on the development of the survey questionnaire and the specific competencies that PWY has defined.

### **Why measure 21<sup>st</sup> Century Youth Competencies?**

PWY created its 21<sup>st</sup> Century Youth Competencies Framework to enable the following learning activities:

- **Measure program effect on youth development.** While programs traditionally measure the number of youth reached (output), this measure does not capture the true effects of a youth development program (outcome). PWY measures both access (number of youth reached and their demographics) and *the actual effects* of the intervention on the youth it reaches. By using the youth competencies framework to survey youth on changes in their knowledge and skills, PWY attempts to capture these effects.

According to international research, when youth develop the necessary knowledge and skills for positive development at a young age, they will experience more “positive adult milestones,”<sup>14</sup> such as full economic participation (employment), civic participation, and healthy lifestyle. These outcomes generally appear far after a finite project ends. Youth competencies represent an interim outcome, or a predictor of long-term adult milestones.

- **Determine potential for scale.** If PWY is able to generalize that YDRC participation has a certain effect on specific youth demographics, it can infer the same impact to a larger group of youth with similar demographics, given the implementation process and quality of YDRC programming remain the same. PWY will continue to gauge changes in youth competencies as appropriate throughout the life of the program, to establish its effectiveness in improving youth development across the West Bank.
- **Contribute to global research on positive youth development.** Through its learning agenda, IREX hopes to contribute to global research in the field of youth development, specifically around positive youth development programming and its impact on strengthening youth competencies. While extensive research has been done in this area in North America and Europe, the rest of the world lacks robust research on positive youth development programming. By contributing to this body of work with a Palestinian-specific study, PWY will contribute to the understanding of effective practices in the Middle East and developing country contexts.

---

<sup>14</sup> Guerra, Nancy. and Olenik, C. State of the Field Report: Holistic, Cross-Sectoral Development. Washington, DC. Feb 2013.

## 21<sup>st</sup> Century Youth Competencies

### 21<sup>st</sup> Century Youth Competency Framework

As mentioned above, the 21<sup>st</sup> Century Youth Competency Framework was developed by PWY as a way to assess a young person's development. Based on extensive international research, the Framework identifies four key domains for youth development: cognitive/intellectual, social, psychological/emotional and physical. Within each of these domains, the Framework identifies seven competencies, or the skills and knowledge necessary to become a successful, engaged adult. The Framework also identifies illustrative short- and long-term outcomes of such a competency. For the full discussion of the 21<sup>st</sup> Century Youth Competency Framework, please see Annex II (page 37).

### 21<sup>st</sup> Century Youth Competency Index

The midline assessment gauges the level of competencies of youth at YDRCs in the West Bank through the 21<sup>st</sup> Century Youth Competency Index. This index aggregates a youth's response to questions about specific competencies into a single score. When initially designing the baseline assessment, PWY and AWRAD carefully selected each question in the index to represent an aspect of a competency from the 21<sup>st</sup> Century Youth Competencies Framework described above. The full list of questions on the Youth Competencies Index can be found below.

#### Questions in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century Youth Competencies Index

*Response Options: Don't Know, Strongly Disagree, Disagree, Neither, Agree, and Strongly Agree*

##### Cognitive/Intellectual Domain

- I have the skills and knowledge I need to apply for a job
- I have the knowledge I need to keep a job
- I know how to use a computer for work
- I know how to use a computer for my studies
- I know how to use a computer for leisure
- I know how to make good decisions regarding life issues using the information available to me
- I have clear plans for my future

##### Social Domain

- I have people in my life who care about me
- I know how to solve personal conflicts
- I know how to get along with people who are different than me
- I feel like I belong in my community
- I believe that I could be an effective role model for a young boy or girl in my community
- If I was placed in a leadership role, I would feel very confident
- When I evaluate my relationship with my community, I believe I am an asset

##### Psychological/Emotional Domain

- I know what my strengths are
- I believe that I am able to set reasonable goals for myself
- I believe that I am successful at meeting these goals
- I have the ability to make a difference in my community
- I believe I can work out my problems on my own
- When I think about my personal future, I frequently feel confident
- If I have an emotional challenge, I have a source of trusted support

### Physical Domain

I know how to stay healthy through nutrition and exercise  
I know how to make decisions that ensure my personal safety  
I live in a safe environment (i.e. without threat of random violence, drug use, etc.)  
I have enough information about the risks of drugs  
I am healthy at a physical level  
I know where to go to get information on sexual issues  
I have enough knowledge on how to prevent sexual diseases

The youth competencies index score consists of the aggregated numerical responses to 28 questions: seven questions per each of the four competency domains. The index weights the responses and domains equally. Each response receives a score: 0 for Don't Know, 1 for Strongly Disagree, 2 for Disagree, 3 for Neither, 4 for Agree, and 5 for Strongly Agree. The maximum index score is 140, the midpoint is 70, and the minimum score is 0. A higher index score corresponds to a higher competency level, while a lower index score corresponds to a lower competency level.

In the baseline assessment, PWY conducted statistical tests to ensure the index was a meaningful scale for analysis. The tests resulted in a Cronbach's alpha coefficient of 0.87 and interim correlations among questions between 0.2 and 0.4. The alpha coefficient suggests that the index has internal consistency and is a reliable overall measure of youth knowledge and skills. The interim correlations indicate that each question in the index measures a different competency and few if any duplicative questions exist.

## Methodology

### Assessment Methodology

PWY's **baseline assessment**, conducted in spring 2014, assessed youth competency levels across a statistically significant, representative sample of youth across age ranges (14-17, 18-25, and 26-29) in all governorates of the West Bank. IREX partnered with the Arab World for Research and Development (AWRAD) to conduct the assessment, which employed a mixed-method approach. AWRAD gathered data through a representative survey of 1,500 youth across the West Bank (at a 2.8% confidence interval and a 95% confidence level), key informant interviews of 10 youth, and focus groups involving 119 youth. Youth assisted in the design of the survey and the focus group protocol, and 35 youth enumerators carried out each of the three methods of data collection, in keeping with positive youth development practices.

IREX reported the assessment results to USAID in October 2014. The findings of the baseline assessment are presented in brief on page 14. Please see the full assessment report at <https://www.irex.org/resource/west-bank-youth-assessment>.

The **midline assessment**, conducted in spring 2015, focused on measuring the effect of the six PWY-supported YDRCs in the six governorates in which the program works. The assessment applied a quantitative approach to field-based research, gathering data via a survey of a representative sample of youth involved in YDRC activities during the past year.

To measure change in knowledge and skills, IREX both compared the midline results to the baseline and used a **retrospective post/pre-test (RPPT) methodology**, asking youth to rate their competencies in a number of areas prior to (BEFORE) joining activities at the YDRC, as well as in the present (NOW). The RPPT methodology is commonly used to capture shifts in knowledge and attitudes.<sup>15</sup> The methodology was initially created to decrease *shift bias*, or *response-shift effect*, which occurs when a respondent’s standards for response change over the course of an intervention.<sup>16</sup> The NOW and BEFORE index scores captured by the RPPT methodology allow IREX to compare change in competencies over time. The single administration nature of the methodology also saves time and prevents attrition.<sup>17</sup> While there are drawbacks to this methodology, including introducing a desire for the participants to show a learning effect (see Data Limitations section for a full analysis), given the nature of the intervention and the data IREX seeks to collect through the 21<sup>st</sup> Century Youth Competencies Index, the RPPT methodology presented the best option for the assessment.

Midline Assessment
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 360 youth surveyed across 6 YDRCs in the West Bank</li> <li>• 3 Palestinian youth enumerators conducted the survey</li> </ul>

## Survey Methodology

### Sampling

The representative survey of youth at the YDRCs utilized a simple random sampling of youth who had participated in PWY-sponsored activities at the YDRCs. By the start of this assessment, the YDRCs had served 4,601 youth in total over the life of the project. In response, for the midline assessment, IREX surveyed 360 youth, ensuring a confidence level of 95% and a confidence interval of 5. The sample adhered to an equal probability of selection design to ensure proportional representation by gender, by age and by district. Equal proportions (50%, 50%) of male and female youth were interviewed. In the age categories, 48% of youth surveyed were 14-17 years old, 49% were 18-25 years old, and 3% were 26-29 years old, in keeping with the percentage of youth participating at the YDRCs. In Al-Bireh, Hebron, Jericho and Nablus, IREX surveyed 50 youth at each YDRC, while in Qalqilya and Jenin, PWY spoke to 80 youth each. An additional number of youth were surveyed in Qalqilya and Jenin to represent the higher number of youth served at each of these YDRCs.

To select the sample, IREX randomized all participants by YDRC. Enumerators then selected the first 50 youth that appeared on the randomized list, contacting them for the survey through the YDRCs. If a particular youth was not available, enumerators contacted the next youth on the list until the requisite number of youth per YDRC took the survey.

The demographics for youth at the YDRCs, including residence and refugee status, reflected the general population of the West Bank. Other factors, such as educational level and age, proved to diverge from

<sup>15</sup> University of Wisconsin – Extension. “Quick Tips: Using the Post then Pre Design”. <http://www.uwex.edu/ces/pdande/resources/pdf/Tipsheet27.pdf>

<sup>16</sup> Howard, G.S. (1980). Response-shift bias: A problem in evaluating interventions with pre/post self reports. *Evaluation Review*, 4(1), 93-106.

<sup>17</sup> Lamb, T. (2005) “The Retrospective Pretest: An Imperfect but Useful Tool.” *The Evaluation Exchange*. XI (2). Summer 2005. Harvard Family Research Project, Harvard Graduate School of Education.

West Bank averages. Please see page 16 for a more thorough explanation of the demographic breakdown of youth at the YDRCs.

### Survey Implementation

IREX trained three Palestinian youth from the PWY staff team – the M&E Officer and two PWY fellows – as enumerators. PWY specifically chose youth enumerators to help respondents avoid undue pressure and limit their biases. Given the personal questions posed by the questionnaire in a number of potentially sensitive areas, PWY staff, in consultation with youth, determined that respondents would be more likely to give accurate responses to other youth than to adults. PWY also paid special attention to the gender of enumerators, selecting one male and two females, as staff deemed that both male and female youth may have felt more comfortable speaking with a female enumerator.

Using youth enumerators is based on best practices for positive youth development, allowing youth enumerators to contribute authentically to assessments; develop skills in meaningful situations; and set youth respondents at ease.<sup>18</sup> The enumerators adhered to international ethical principles for interviewing and conducted all interviews at the YDRCs.

### Research Instrument

The research instrument used for the midline assessment consisted of a standardized structured questionnaire with sections on:

- Basic information including gender, age, residence, refugee status and educational status;
- YDRC activity participation;
- 21<sup>st</sup> Century Youth Competencies, including cognitive/intellectual, social, psychological/emotional and physical domains; and
- Opportunities available to youth in their communities.

The questionnaire, initially developed for the baseline assessment, asked youth to rate their level of agreement with a particular statement on a Likert scale. The more a young person agreed with the statement, the higher their score. IREX/PWY then tallied the scores to form an index score that serves as a proxy for the young person's overall youth competency level.

The midline survey was altered minimally from the initial baseline survey developed by PWY and AWRAD in 2014. PWY removed several questions on the survey to focus only on 21<sup>st</sup> Century Youth Competencies, and added four items to query youth on opportunities available to them in their communities. The full list questionnaire can be found in Annex I (page 31).

The 21<sup>st</sup> Century Youth Competencies section utilized the RPPT methodology, as discussed above, asking participants to rank their competencies in a variety of areas on a scale from Strongly Agree to Strongly Disagree, with an additional option of Don't Know, totaling six possible responses in all. Below is a sample of questions from the cognitive/intellectual section of the questionnaire.

---

<sup>18</sup> Lerner, Richard M., Lerner, J. and colleagues. *The Positive Development of Youth: Comprehensive Findings from the 4-h Study of Positive Youth Development*. Tufts University Institute for Applied Research in Youth Development. 2013.



Sample Questions from PWY 21<sup>st</sup> Century Youth Competencies Questionnaire

Statement (Cognitive/ Intellectual)	Now						Before					
	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neither	Disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neither	Disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
I have the skills and knowledge I need to apply for a job												
I know how to use a computer for my studies												
I have a clear plan for my future												

**Data Limitations**

IREX acknowledges the limitations inherent in the midline 21<sup>st</sup> Century Youth Competencies Assessment. IREX limited this assessment to participants of the PWY program. The enumerators, while themselves Palestinian youth, were also PWY staff. This fact may have contributed to some bias in the survey results. While a comparison group would have been optimal, the possibility was omitted due to resource constraints.

Research on beliefs and attitudes relies on self-report methods of data collection, which carry inherent problems. Simple misunderstanding of concepts, sensitivity to personal questions, or even intentional misreporting due to social desirability may all affect self-reported data.

The use of the RPPT methodology is open to weaknesses such as the participants’ desire to show a learning effect, lack of accurate memory recall, and potentially biased responses. Recording youth changes in knowledge over time always presents challenges to data fidelity. PWY, given the context and resource limitations, chose to use this methodology specifically to ensure that it collected the most viable data possible to contribute most effectively to the research on youth in the West Bank and on youth development in general.

In measuring youth development interventions, attribution remains a challenge. In an effort to isolate the effects of participation at YDRCs, IREX compared YDRC youth competencies and competency growth to youth across the West Bank, using data collected in the baseline. When comparing these two groups, the significant increase in competencies for youth at YDRCs suggests that this increase can be attributed to program activities.

Finally, IREX acknowledges the data limitations inherent in conducting such an assessment internally. The decision to do so was made primarily based on resource limitations, coupled with the desire to create an opportunity to gauge PWY program results and use those results to inform ongoing programming. These data limitations were mitigated somewhat by having youth enumerators and using a research instrument developed by an external organization for the baseline.

**Youth in the West Bank: Findings from the Baseline Assessment**

The baseline assessment established essential information on youth in the 11 governorates in the West Bank, their economic and civic participation, and their preparation for successful adulthood. PWY used

this baseline information as a guide not only for its programming, but also for the midline assessment. By comparing midline findings on population demographics as well as youth competencies, PWY constructed a picture of who participates at the YDRCs in the six governorates served and what value they gain from their participation. Key findings that played a role in the midline assessment included:

#### KEY FINDINGS FROM BASELINE: Palestinian Youth in the West Bank

- *Low competency levels identify disadvantaged youth groups*
- *Many young people remain undecided about participating in youth organizations*

#### Low competency levels identify disadvantaged youth groups

The total average competency index score for youth across the West Bank stood at 101. However, as PWY disaggregated the data, it showed that some groups of young people have lower competencies than others. Females registered a lower competency index score than males (99 vs. 103), and – not surprisingly – younger youth had lower competency levels than older youth (98 for ages 14-19, 105 for ages 20-24, 107 for ages 25-29<sup>19</sup>).

Within the West Bank governorates, the baseline competency levels varied widely and may indicate which geographic locations are less advantaged. Bethlehem, Qalqilya, and Ramallah/Al Bireh tied for the highest competency index scores at 105, while Jericho and Jenin registered the lowest competency index scores at 90 and 96 respectively. The table below illustrates the differences in youth competencies by group, highlighting how far above or below the average competency level they fall on the index.

#### Youth Competency Index Scores by Governorate, Age and Gender

Baseline data indicates variation in competency index score, and therefore competency level, across demographics

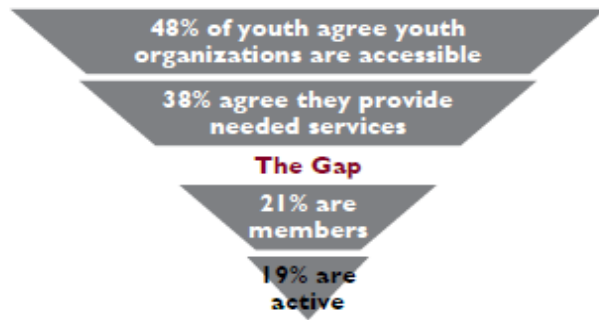
District	Male			Female			Overall
	14-19	20-24	25-29	14-19	20-24	25-29	
Overall Competency Level	98	105	109	97	101	105	101
Bethlehem	7	5	7.5	4	2	3	105
Qalqilya	3.5	-1	8	3.5	6	1	105
Ramallah & Al Bireh	2	4	5.5	2.5	0	10	105
Tulkarem	0	4	-2	4	2	-1	104
Hebron	2	6	7	-1	4	5	103
Nablus	-1.5	3	-3.5	-2	1.5	-1	102.5
Jerusalem	1	-1	0	1	-6	-2.5	101
Salfit	-7	-2.5	-7	-5	5	3	97.5
Tubas	-5	-6	-1.5	-1	-5	-5.5	97
Jenin	-3	-3.5	-9	-4	-5	-11.5	96
Jericho	-11	-9	-10	-18.5	0.5	-20	90

Index	Color	Competency Level	Difference from the Overall Competency Level
		Very High	+6 or more index points
		High	Between +2 and +6 index points
		Close to Average	Less than +/- 2 index points
		Low	Between -2 and -6 index points

<sup>19</sup> Age groups studied in the baseline assessment (14-19, 2-24, and 25-29) were based on census data from the Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics. This differs from the midline assessment, which uses age ranges specified by USAID (14-18, 19-25, and 26-29).

### Many young people remain undecided about participating in a youth organization

Young people in the West Bank reported their awareness of the existence of youth organizations and agreed that they were accessible. However, only 38% agreed that youth organizations provided the services that youth need. More concerning, only 19% of youth stated that they were active participants of a youth organization, implying that the majority of youth do not see the value in the services these organizations provide.








IRES used these findings to re-focus its PWY programming accordingly. PWY maintains gender equity in its programming and has worked to recruit an equal number of male and female youth. The program also ensures gender sensitivity in program offerings and in community relationships, and finds culturally appropriate ways for male and female youth to participate in activities together. As youth from refugee camps registered lower competency levels, PWY encouraged its partner YDRCs to focus their recruitment efforts on youth from outside of the cities, particularly those living in the camps, to provide them with more opportunities for learning and participation. Finally, as few youth tried to get involved with a youth organization or engage in their community, PWY worked with YDRC partners to offer more community outreach activities and youth-led initiatives to attract new youth and offer new experiences that help to develop key competencies needed by Palestinian youth.

### Midline Assessment Findings

As discussed earlier, the midline assessment findings have allowed PWY to compare the youth at YDRCs to the average West Bank youth, to assess how its programming affects youth, and how YDRCs stack up against other youth-serving institutions in the West Bank.

### Key Findings

#### Key Midline Assessment Findings: Palestinian Youth at the YDRCs

-  Youth at the YDRCs far outstrip their peers in competency levels after participating in PWY activities.
-  PWY reaches disadvantaged youth.
-  PWY offers unique opportunities for youth in the West Bank.
-  PWY activities help youth develop social skills to build peaceful communities.
-  PWY employability training gives youth confidence in their employment and a potential future of higher earnings.

## Who are Youth at the YDRCs?

The youth who participate in PWY programming offered by Palestinian YDRCs vary by age, educational level, residence, and refugee status in each governorate.

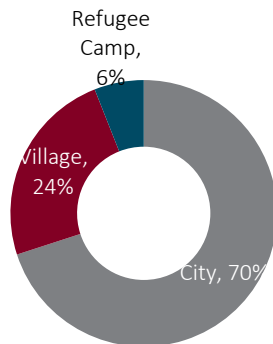
**Age:** Of the youth surveyed, 48% fell in the range of 14-17 years old, 49% in the range of 18-25 years old, and 3% in the range of 26-29 years old. PWY chose this distribution based on an analysis of the age distribution of the youth attending YDRC programming. This distribution implies that YDRCs reach primarily younger and “middle-aged” youth with their services, while older youth are less likely to participate in YDRC activities.

The greater number of younger youth served by YDRCs may point to the fact that older youth shoulder greater responsibilities, including employment and family, which prevent them from participating in community events such as YDRC activities. PWY and YDRC staff also believe this trend to be a result of YDRC programming targeting younger youth.

**Educational Level:** Of the youth surveyed, 48% attended primary school (Grades 1-9). 30% of youth surveyed were attending university, while 16% already have a bachelor’s degree. Two percent of youth surveyed were in high school, while 3% were high school graduates. One percent had not completed high school. The distribution of youth across educational levels at the YDRCs is consistent with the number of younger youth that participate at the YDRCs.

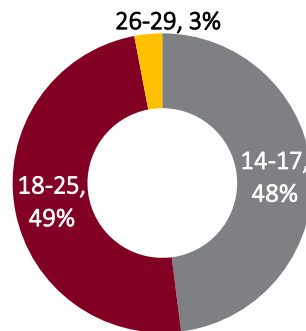
### Youth at YDRCs by Residence

PWY primarily serves a representative distribution of youth by residence



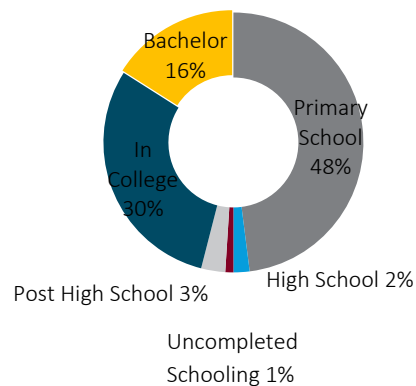
### YDRCs Serve Younger Youth

YDRCs serve primarily youth 14-25.



### Youth at YDRCs by Education Level

PWY primarily serves youth involved in the Palestinian education system



Fewer secondary school students (i.e., ages 17-18) may attend the YDRCs due to the amount of time students dedicate to preparing for the general secondary education exams in the final year of school, which absorbs free time that youth might otherwise spend at the YDRCs.

**Residence:** The youth surveyed overwhelmingly live in urban areas. The majority (70%) of youth lived in cities, while only 24% lived in villages. Six percent resided in refugee camps. The percentage of youth living in each of these residence areas is in keeping with the West Bank averages, which are represented in the adjacent chart.

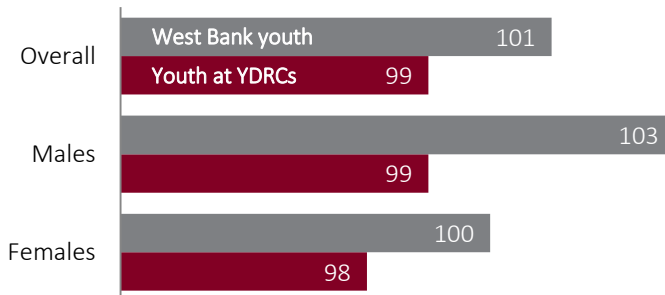
**Refugee Status:** Thirty percent (30%) of youth self-reported as refugees, in keeping with baseline findings across the West Bank, despite the fact that only 6% of youth surveyed reported living in refugee camps. This difference may indicate that many youth self-identify as refugees, despite having relocated to a new area outside of the refugee camps with stable housing and community opportunities. Further analysis of those claiming refugee status showed no difference from the average youth population at the YDRCs.

### Youth Competencies Before Joining YDRCs

On average, young people participating at the YDRCs reported a competency index score of 99 before participating in YDRC activities, as compared to the West Bank average of 101, a 2% difference. There are data limitations to this comparison, including the lack of a direct control group and thus the inability to analyze this data with statistical certainty. However, while this index score is not significantly lower, it may imply that youth arriving to the YDRCs have lower competency levels than the average youth in the West Bank. Thus, YDRCs may be serving those youth who are in need of services that build their competencies for becoming healthy adults. Further study may be necessary to determine this possibility more definitively.

**KEY FINDING**  
*PWY reaches disadvantaged youth.*

**West Bank Youth versus Youth at YDRCs Competencies**  
Youth who join YDRCs have lower competency levels than average West Bank youth before participating at YDRCs.



Disaggregation of index scores reveals specific groups that fall well below the average competency index score, marking them as youth that are disadvantaged in some way.

**Gender:** Females arrive to the YDRCs with a lower average competency level (98) than the average female youth in the West Bank (100), a 2% difference. Males who begin participating at the YDRCs have higher competencies than females at the YDRCs (99), but have lower competency levels than the average West Bank male youth (103), putting them at a 4% disadvantage in comparison.

**District:** When disaggregating the data by governorate, the competency index scores tell a more varied story. On the baseline study, the average youth competency index score in the West Bank is 101, but this varied by governorate. When analyzing scores by governorate, in four YDRCs, participating youth arrived with a lower index score than the average youth in that governorate, in Al-Bireh, Hebron, Nablus, and Qalqilya. These lower scores, as documented in the table below, signal that the youth arriving to these YDRCs may indeed be disadvantaged youth.

## Youth before YDRC participation vs. West Bank Youth

Before participating at the YDRCs, youth consistently score below West Bank youth on the Youth Competency Index, except in the most disadvantaged governorates

District	Youth at YDRCs	West Bank Youth
Qalqilya	96	105
Al Bireh	98	103
Nablus	96	102.5
Average	99	101
Hebron	101	103
Jenin	102	96
Jericho	99	90

Color	Competency Level	Index Points
Dark Blue	Very High	+6 or more index points
Light Blue	High	Between +2 and +6 index points
White	Close to Average	Less than +/- 2 index points
Light Red	Low	Between -2 and -6 index points
Dark Red	Very Low	-6 or more index points

In two governorates, however, this is not the case. In the baseline assessment, youth in **Jenin** and **Jericho** had the lowest competency index scores, at 96 and 90 respectively. In the YDRCs in these governorates, participating youth arrived to YDRC activities with higher index scores than the average youth in their governorates. Before YDRC participation, youth in Jenin reported index scores of 102 and youth in Jericho reported index scores of 99. These scores do not differ significantly from other index scores of youth in other governorates before participating in activities. This difference between youth arriving to the YDRCs and the average youth in Jenin and Jericho suggests that these YDRCs do not reach those youth that are most disadvantaged in their governorates.

## Youth at YDRCs Increase Their Competencies After Participating in YDRC Activities

After youth participated in activities at the YDRC, their reported competency levels increased significantly. Youth reported an average competency level of 114 after participating in YDRC activities, as compared to the average score of 99 before accessing opportunities at the YDRCs. This represents a 15-point growth in competency level, an increase of 15%, over one standard deviation, after completing one or more activities at YDRCs.

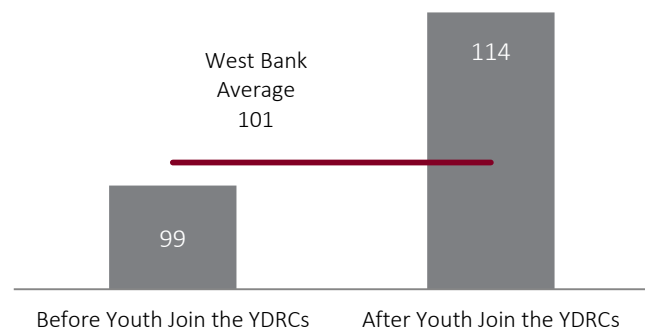
This level is also significantly different from youth across the West Bank. After participating at the YDRCs, youth reported a competency level of 13% above the average West Bank youth (101), as illustrated in the adjacent chart.

### KEY FINDING

*Youth at YDRCs far exceed their peers in competency levels after participating in YDRC activities.*

### Youth at YDRCs Competencies

Competency levels before and after participation in YDRC activities



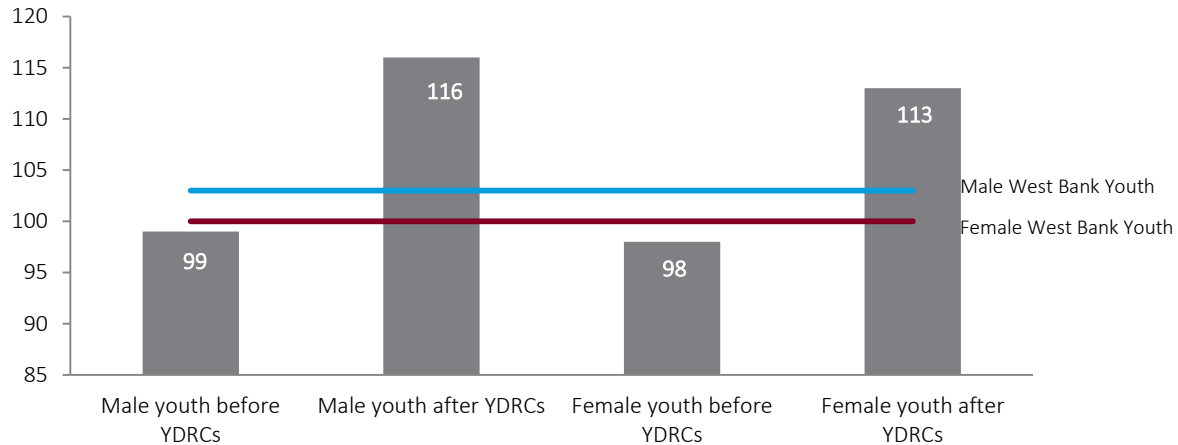
### Competency Growth by Gender

This increase in competency growth holds true across gender. However, male youth in general strengthened their competency level to a greater extent than female youth. While males reported competency levels 17 points higher after participating in YDRC activities, arriving at an average index score of 116, females reported only a 15-point competency growth, with an average index score of 113, as illustrated by the chart below. Despite the lower level of

competencies reported following YDRC participation, female youth at the YDRCs do report a higher competency level than the average West Bank female, who demonstrates a competency level of 101, or 12% lower than the average score reported by female YDRC participants.

### Youth Competencies: Before and After by Gender

Competencies before and after participation in YDRC activities, disaggregated by gender and compared with the average West Bank youth



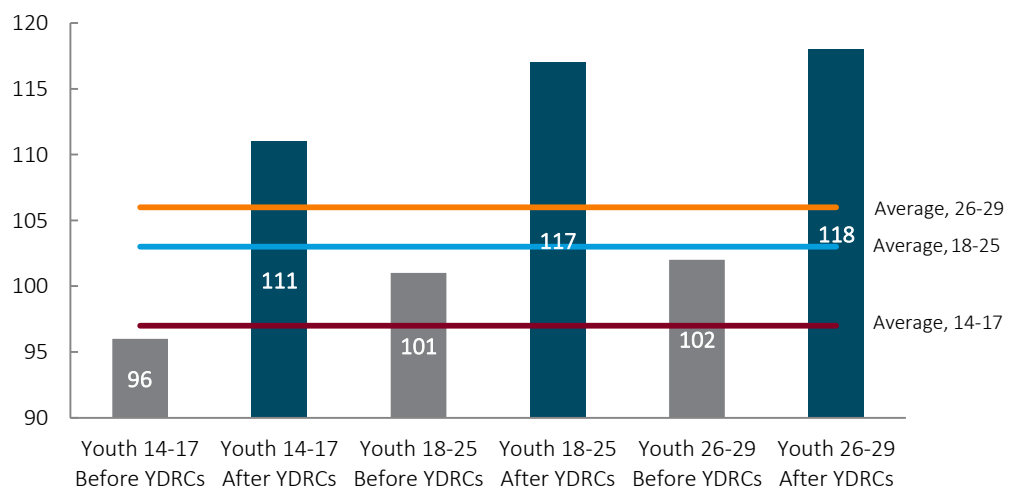
These figures clearly point to the positive impact YDRC programming has on equipping female youth for adulthood. Still, the gap between male and female youth competency levels remains. While global experience demonstrates that men generally report higher levels of confidence in their abilities than females, PWY will continue nonetheless to pay ongoing attention to this area to ensure gender equity in its programming.

### Competency Growth by Age

Youth at the YDRCs across age ranges experience similar levels of competency growth. Prior to participating in YDRC activities, every demographic group of YDRC youth reports below the average for their age for the West Bank. While 14-17 year olds have an index score (96) only one point lower than the West Bank average for their age (97), 18-25 year olds have an index score

#### Youth Competency Growth by Age Range

Youth across all age ranges increased competencies after YDRC participation



(101) two points lower than their age group average (103), and 26-29 year olds have an index score (102) four points lower than their peers across West Bank (106). However, after participating in YDRC activities, all YDRC youth surpass their peers, no matter their age range. Youth in the 14-17 age range reported a growth in the competency index score of 15 points, while youth in both the 18-25 and 26-29 age ranges reported an increase of 16 points. See the chart above for a complete picture of the change in competency scores by age group for youth at the YDRCs, as well as a comparison to the average scores for youth from across the West Bank.

### Competency Growth by Residence

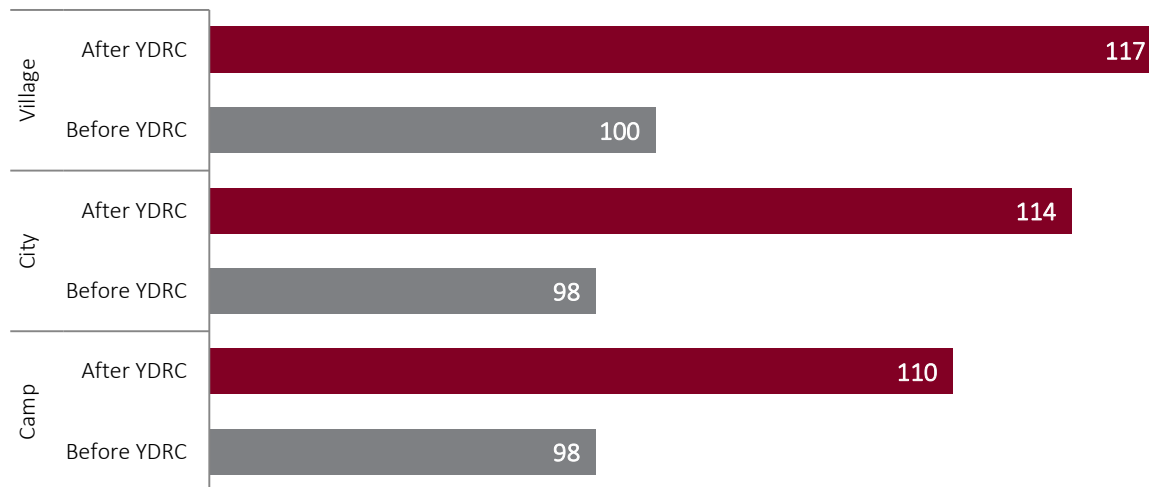
When analyzing the difference in competency growth based on residence, youth from villages started at the YDRCs with the highest competency score (100) and also demonstrated the greatest growth after participating in YDRC activities, arriving at a competency index score of 117, a 17% difference. Youth from cities (70% of those surveyed) demonstrated index scores similar to the average for all youth participating at the YDRCs. Most notably, youth from refugee camps had the same competency level as youth from cities upon entering the YDRCs (98), but experienced a

**KEY FINDING**

*Youth who live in refugee camps experience slower competency growth than other YDRC youth.*

### Youth at YDRCs Competency Growth by Residence

Youth living in refugee camps have slower growth and arrive at lower competency levels than other youth.



lower competency growth rate after participating in YDRC activities. The youth residing in refugee camps only increased their competency index score by 12%, or 13 points, despite participating in the same number of activities on average as other youth. The slower growth in index score demonstrated by youth from refugee camps may indicate that youth who live in refugee camps may need greater investment in order to develop the same competencies as other youth.<sup>20</sup>

### Competency Growth by District

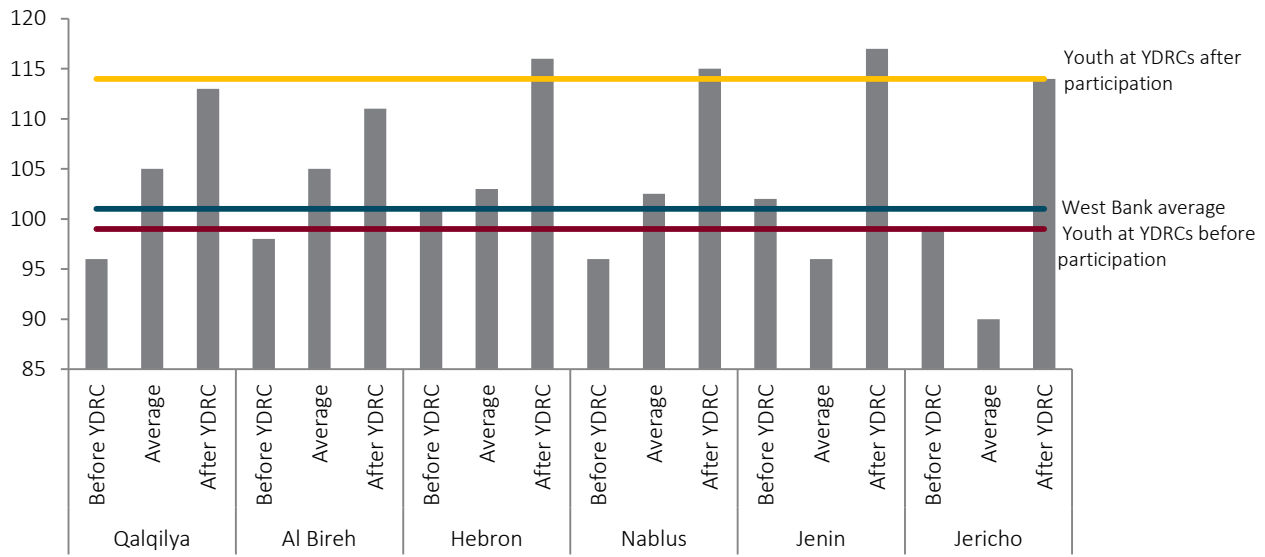
<sup>20</sup> In the West Bank, approximately 30% of youth self-identify as refugees, based on family displacement. However, only 8% of youth in the West Bank reside in refugee camps. In the PWY midline assessment, refugee status and residence were considered separately.



When examining growth in index scores by YDRC, interesting patterns emerge. As detailed in the chart below, YDRCs receive youth at different levels of competencies. Yet all youth on average had a similar increase in skills. In Hebron, Jenin and Jericho, youth all showed an average growth rate of 15 points on the competency index. Al Bireh’s youth increased their scores by only 13 points, but Qalqilya’s youth showed a greater growth in competency level, with an average increase of 17 points.

### Youth Competency Growth by District

Competency growth by district, including relevant averages



In Nablus, youth reported an index score of 96 before participating at the YDRC, and a score of 115 after taking part in YDRC activities. This represents a 19 point increase, implying that the Nablus YDRC offers services that are of great value to youth in building their competencies. Please see the chart above for a full picture of the before and after of each district, the average in that district, and the overall averages for the West Bank and before and after averages for all youth participating at the YDRCs.

### Competency Growth by Activity

#### Some activities raise youth competencies more than others.

PWY assessed the average growth in competency index scores for youth that reported participation in each activity, to better understand which activities were most effective for helping youth build competencies.

**Youth-led initiatives**, community improvement projects that are designed, supported and led by youth, were most associated with a greater competency level growth. Youth who participated in youth-led initiatives reported a competency growth of 3.9 points more than the average youth that participated in YDRC activities.

**KEY FINDING**

*Youth-led initiatives are most effective at building youth competencies.*

PWY used a multiple regression analysis to better understand which activities had the greatest effect on growth in competencies. This technique pinpoints how responses to one survey item can predict responses to other items. As reported in the table below, youth-led initiatives are associated with a statistically significant 4.46 point growth in index score ( $p < .001$ ). Participation in media training had a statistically significant effect on growth in competency levels ( $p < .05$ ) as well, and is associated with a

2.67 increase in index score. The growth in competency levels associated with other activities was not statistically significant.

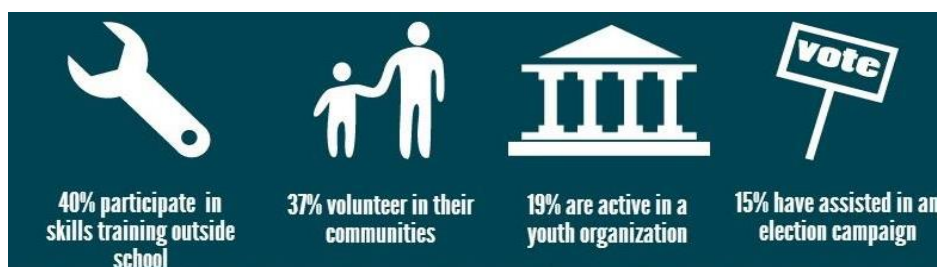
Predictors of Competency Growth by Activity			
Activity Type	Index Score Increase Associated (Coefficient)	Standard Error	p-value
<b>Youth-led Initiatives</b>	<b>4.46</b>	<b>1.24</b>	<b>0.0004***</b>
<b>Media Training</b>	<b>2.67</b>	<b>1.14</b>	<b>0.0195*</b>
ICT Training	1.92	1.16	0.0975
Leadership Training	1.46	1.17	0.2123
Sports training and activities	2.03	1.22	0.0965
Community Outreach	1.23	1.24	0.3219
Career Counseling	0.66	1.30	0.6145
Employability Training	2.37	1.25	0.0590
Other	2.08	1.26	0.0989

Adjusted R-squared: 0.134 \*1% significance level, \*\*5% significance level, N=360 youth surveyed

Youth-led initiatives are clearly the most effective activity for building competencies in youth involved in the YDRCs.

## Youth Participation and Engagement

Participation and engagement are recognized as drivers of the development of youth competencies in research conducted in the western, developed world. Studies have found that youth who engage in meaningful community activities equip themselves to interact as adults socially and psychologically, and experience more positive social outcomes, including lower incidence of addiction, improved academic performance, and higher rates of employment, among others.<sup>21</sup> While further research must be done on such interventions in Middle Eastern contexts, research currently suggests that participation and engagement contribute to positive youth development across cultural lines.<sup>22</sup>



The baseline assessment showed that youth in the West Bank have limited outlets for participation and engagement. Forty percent of youth

participate in skills training, but activity in a youth organization (19%) or engaging in the democratic process by assisting on a local election campaigns (15%) was much less frequent. Although 38% of youth agree that youth organizations offer necessary programming, only 19% of youth across the West Bank participate in this programming. And while female youth sometimes participate in skills training (37%), they participated in all other activities to a much lesser extent.

<sup>21</sup>[http://www.excellenceforchildandyoung.ca/sites/default/files/eib\\_attach/EiB\\_YouthEngagementandClinicalOutcomes\\_EN.pdf](http://www.excellenceforchildandyoung.ca/sites/default/files/eib_attach/EiB_YouthEngagementandClinicalOutcomes_EN.pdf)

<sup>22</sup> Mercy Corps. "Why Youth Fight: Making Sense of Political Violence in Sub-Saharan Africa." Mercy Corps. 2014.

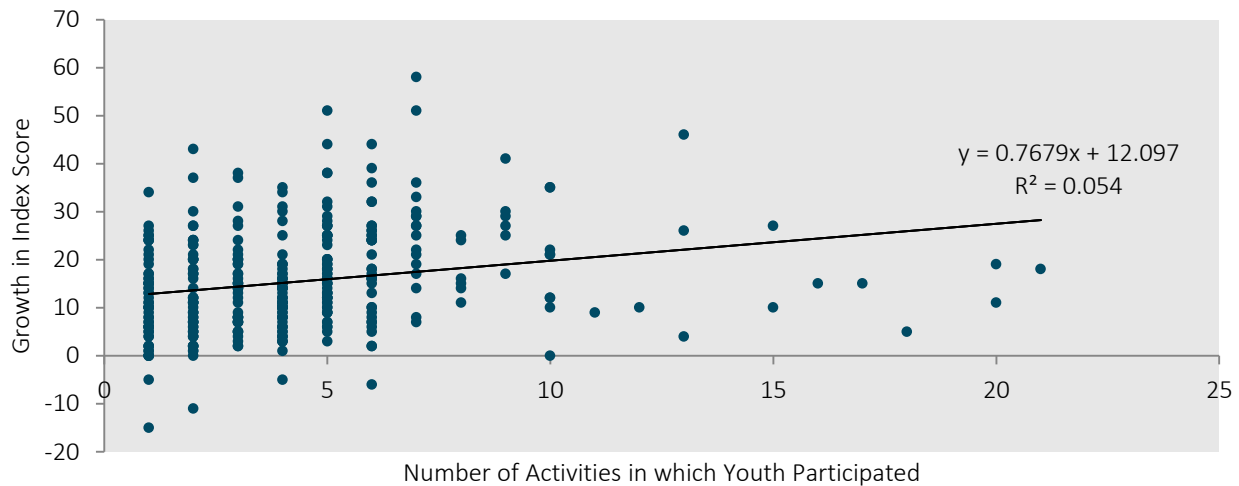
The midline assessment looked at youth participation at YDRCs by recording the level of participation in the YDRCs themselves, as measured by the number of activities in which each youth participated. On average, youth reported that they participated in four activities during the time between the baseline and midline assessments. Eighty-three percent of youth surveyed participated in two or more activities at the YDRCs, indicating that youth do in fact return and remain involved in the YDRCs. This repeat attendance of activities shows that YDRCs offer desirable opportunities for youth to increase their community participation, which is linked to improving their competencies overall.

**KEY FINDING**

*Greater participation in activities at the YDRCs leads to higher competency levels.*

### Effects of Participation in PWY Activities on Growth in Competency Level

Analysis shows a positive correlation between number of activities and competency level



Analyzing the relationship between the number of activities in which a youth participated and growth in index score, the assessment found a positive correlation between the two variables. PWY found a correlation coefficient of 0.76 (see scatterplot above), a clearly positive relationship. As a young person’s participation in activities at a YDRC increased, so did his/her competency growth.

### Preparing Youth Leads to More Peaceful Communities

While PWY is not a violence prevention program, some of its outcomes may help youth build skills to avoid violent and risky behavior, a topic of discussion in youth programming around the world. Research throughout the United States and Canada indicates that developing good social skills and close connections to one’s community are ways to help youth avoid involvement in violence.<sup>23</sup>

**KEY FINDING**

*YDRC activities help youth develop the social skills for building peaceful communities.*

<sup>23</sup> Guerra, Nancy and Williams, Kirk. “Youth Development and Violence Prevention: Core Competencies.” Southern California Center of Excellence on Youth Violence Prevention, University of California, Riverside. Winter 2002. <http://stopyouthviolence.ucr.edu/factsheets/violenceprevention.pdf>

**Social Skills.** In theory and in practice, youth with more effective social skills are less likely to resort to violence as a means of conflict resolution. In a meta-analysis on school-based violence commissioned by the U.S. Department of Justice, interventions that worked to prevent aggressive or disruptive behavior included behavioral skills, social skills, cognitive skills and counseling. Disadvantaged youth benefitted more from social skills and cognitive skills interventions.<sup>24</sup>

**Community Connections.** In settings outside of North America, connections to community have served as a protective factor against violence. Throughout the Middle East and Latin America, USAID and other organizations have attempted to combat violence through programs that allow youth to connect with each other and with their communities.<sup>25</sup> While Mercy Corps’ recent study<sup>26</sup> on political violence among youth in Sub-Saharan Africa implies that community connection is at times correlated with participation in political violence, these findings varied widely across country contexts, even within the Mercy Corps study. More studies to this end have identified connections to community, family and

**YDRC Youth Develop Skills to Build Peaceful Communities**

Questionnaire Item	Youth that agree BEFORE YDRC participation	Youth that agree AFTER YDRC participation	% change	West Bank Avg.
<b>Social Skills</b>				
“I know how to solve personal conflicts.”	62%	92%	<b>+48%</b>	77%
“I know how to get along with people who are different from me.”	53%	93%	<b>+75%</b>	69%
<b>Community Connection</b>				
“I feel like I belong in my community.”	77%	90%	<b>+17%</b>	80%
“When I evaluate my relationship with my community, I believe I am an asset.”	58%	88%	<b>+51%</b>	61%
“I have the ability to make a difference in my community.”	46%	83%	<b>+80%</b>	44%

societal protective factors as key to preventing youth violence.<sup>27</sup>

Youth programming often includes interventions that develop social skills

and build connections to community, and the YDRCs are no exception. YDRCs help to buttress the social skills and community connections of the youth who participate in YDRC activities. In turn, these youth may be better prepared to avoid violent and risky behavior. YDRCs offer social skills training in their leadership and employability programming, and indirectly train for these competencies in activities such as sports, community outreach and youth-led initiatives, thus contributing to violence prevention.

To measure an increase in social skills, PWY chose to use two of the questions as a proxy for these skills: “I know how to solve personal conflicts,” and “I know how to get along with people who are different from me.” After participating in YDRC activities, youth reported significant increases on both of these items, as noted in the adjacent table. This finding implies that YDRC activities do help youth develop the social skills necessary to avoid violence and build peaceful communities.

<sup>24</sup> <https://www.ncjrs.gov/pdffiles1/nij/grants/211376.pdf>

<sup>25</sup> <http://blog.usaid.gov/2015/05/fostering-a-sense-of-belonging-key-in-preventing-youth-violence/>

<sup>26</sup> Mercy Corps. “Why Youth Fight: Making Sense of Political Violence in Sub-Saharan Africa.” Mercy Corps. 2014.

<sup>27</sup> David-Ferdon C, Simon TR. Preventing Youth Violence: Opportunities for Action. Atlanta, GA: National Center for Injury Prevention and Control, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, 2014. <http://www.cdc.gov/violenceprevention/youthviolence/pdf/opportunities-for-action.pdf>

In the area of community connections, PWY found that while most youth participating at the YDRCs felt a sense of belonging in their communities, there was a slight increase in their sense of belonging after participating in YDRC activities. More importantly, after participating in YDRC activities, young people’s feelings of contribution to their communities jumped significantly, by as much as 80% in some cases (see table above). Again, YDRC activities helped youth build the connections to community that they needed to be successful, engaged adults, and to avoid some of the pitfalls youth confront.

## Youth Gain Confidence in Employment

Palestinian youth face difficulties on the employment front. Youth unemployment in the West Bank sits at 43% for youth aged 15-24, and at 30% for those aged 25-34.<sup>28</sup> This situation was clearly reflected in the baseline assessment, with only 39% of West Bank youth feeling confident that they would find a job when entering the workforce. While unemployment at a young age has lasting economic consequences, a bleak outlook on one’s employability and employment future may also have similar effects. Studies in the US have shown that youth with an optimistic outlook earn at a higher income level later in life,<sup>29</sup> and recent USAID-funded research has indicated that a positive self-concept is necessary for positive workforce outcomes, such as a successful job search, job retention, and higher earnings.<sup>30</sup>

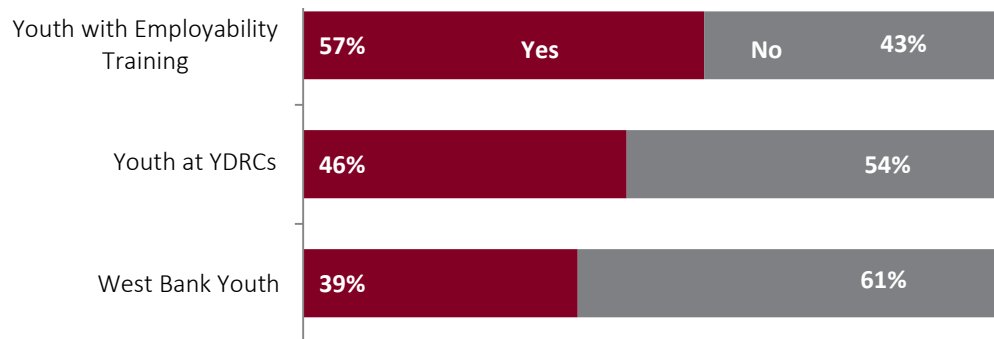
**KEY FINDING**

*PWY employability training measurably increases youth confidence in their job prospects.*

On average, employment prospects look better for youth participating at the YDRCs than for their peers across the West Bank. After participating in activities at the YDRC, 46% of youth have confidence that they will be able to get a job. This confidence increased to 57% for youth who received employability training. Also, among youth who received employability training, 51% agreed that they had the skills to keep a job; a much higher percentage than average youth in the West Bank (44%). This kind of optimism is well-founded – 51% of youth that receive employability training in the West Bank gain employment, according to baseline findings.

### Youth Confidence in Employment Prospects

Youth answered the question “Do you feel confident that you will be able to find a job when you need one?”



YDRC participation, and specifically attendance at the employability training that YDRCs provide, helps young people improve their confidence in their ability to

<sup>28</sup> Palestine in Figures 2014 Report. PCBS. 2015. (Note: Statistics based on youth participating in the labor market in the WBG.)

<sup>29</sup> De Neve, J. and Oswald, A. “Estimating the influence of life satisfaction and positive affect on later income using sibling fixed effects. PNAS. Vol. 109, No. 49. December 4, 2012. [www.pnas.org/cgi/doi/10.1073/pnas.1211437109](http://www.pnas.org/cgi/doi/10.1073/pnas.1211437109)

<sup>30</sup> Lippman, Laura, Ryberg, R., Carney, R., and Moore, K. “Workforce Connections: Key “Soft Skills” that Foster Youth Workforce Success: Toward a Consensus Across Fields.” Child Trends. Washington, DC. June 2015.

get a job. Moreover, it shows they feel that the employability training they receive at YDRCs gives them the skills needed to find a position in the Palestinian job market.

## YDRCs and Their Work with Palestinian Youth

Through this assessment, PWY has gathered data that suggests that the YDRC model is both unique and successful in the West Bank. The midline assessment questionnaire asked youth a series of questions about where they could gain and exercise skills and knowledge to become successful, engaged adults. After each question, the enumerator listed institutions and organizations, allowing youth to signal whether that institution offered them the opportunity in question. The institutions listed included: school/university, YDRC, other youth clubs (such as Islamic Club, Qalandia Club), youth organizations (such as Sharek or Injaz), religious organizations, local government, and other youth serving institutions.

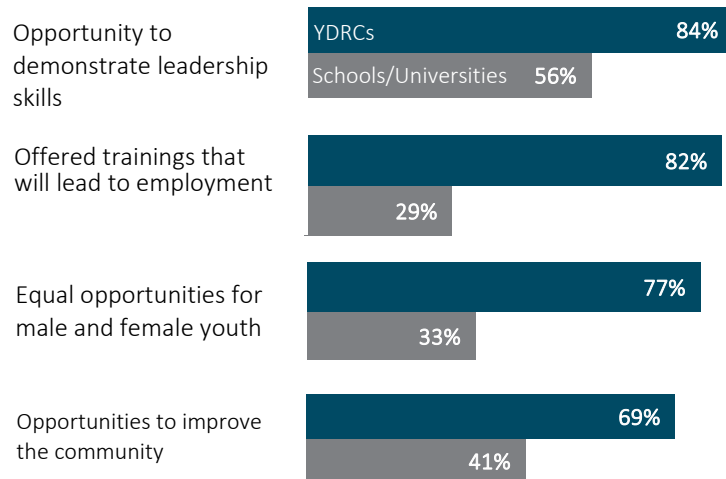
### KEY FINDING

*YDRCs offer unique opportunities to Palestinian youth to build competencies.*

Overwhelmingly, youth chose the YDRC as the institution that most often offered them the opportunity to build their competencies. The graph below features youth responses about the YDRCs compared with youth responses

### How YDRC Services Compare to School Offerings

Youth felt YDRCs offered more opportunities to develop competencies than the education system



compared with youth responses about schools/universities, the youth-serving public institution with which most youth interact regularly. When asked where they had the opportunity to demonstrate leadership skills, 84% of youth selected the YDRCs, with educational institutions trailing at 56%. When asked where they had the opportunity to improve their communities, 69% of youth indicated that the YDRCs were the only institution that allowed them to do so, with 41% selecting educational institutions. When asked what institution

provided equal opportunities to male and female youth, the majority of youth (77%) selected only the YDRCs, with only 33% affirming that schools and universities gave equal opportunities to males and females.

Specifically in the area of employment, YDRCs offer an invaluable addition to youth's lives. Of the young people surveyed, 84% identified the YDRCs as the foremost institution where they received training that prepared them for the work world. Only 29% of youth said the same of schools and universities.

For all other youth-serving organizations and institutions throughout the West Bank, only 5-10% of youth thought they received opportunities to build their competencies there. These organizations included religious organizations, local government, youth clubs and other youth serving organizations,

While the youth may have been affected by the location of where the surveys were conducted, their responses overwhelmingly indicate that the YDRCs play an important role in the lives of the youth that they serve. Disadvantaged youth who may not otherwise have the opportunity to build competencies finish their time at the YDRC better prepared for life in a wide range of areas, ready to participate socially, civically and economically, and contribute to a more peaceful West Bank.

## Recruitment at the YDRCs

To gain a better understanding of how youth arrive to the YDRCs, PWY asked youth if they had recommended the YDRC to a friend. Twenty-eight percent of youth surveyed responded affirmatively. Interestingly, 80% of the friends who received a recommendation to join activities at the YDRC did so at a later date. This impressive uptake rate suggests that personal recommendations for the YDRCs are an excellent recruitment tool and should be explored by the YDRCs for future recruitment efforts.

## Summary of Findings

**Youth at YDRCs far exceed their peers in skills and knowledge that predict positive adult outcomes.** After participating in activities, youth reported a 15% increase in competencies on average, arriving at a competency level of 114. This index score is 13% higher than the average West Bank youth. This increase in competencies occurs across demographic divisions, including age range, residence and refugee status. However, some youth increase their competencies at a lower rate than the average West Bank youth, including women and youth living in refugee camps.

**PWY reaches disadvantaged youth.** Those who arrive to participate in activities report lower competency levels than the average youth in the West Bank. This holds true across gender, age, and education levels. The YDRCs are recruiting and attracting disadvantaged youth in their governorates.

**Greater levels of participation at the YDRCs lead to higher competency levels.** Every activity in which a young person participates at the YDRCs corresponds with an increase in competency level.

**Youth-led initiatives are most effective at building competencies.** These activities are associated with a four-point increase in competencies. The nature of these initiatives, which put youth at the helm of identifying problems and implementing activities to create a positive change in their communities, allows youth to build competencies across a number of domains. This finding is particularly telling, as it demonstrates that activities that provide youth with opportunities to lead in creative ways are actually more effective in building competencies than structured training programs.

**PWY activities are effective in developing the social skills that help youth build peaceful communities in the future.** By directly and indirectly teaching social skills, and by providing specific

opportunities for youth to connect to their communities, PWY contributes to youth's ability to avoid violence and create peaceful groups in the short and longer term.

**PWY employability training gives youth confidence in their employment and a potential future of higher earnings.** Youth with PWY employability training rank higher in their confidence that they will find a job upon entering the Palestinian labor market. This kind of optimism is well-founded – 51% of youth that receive skills training in the West Bank obtain employment, according to PWY's baseline assessment. Moreover, such optimism may be connected to higher lifetime earnings.

**PWY YDRCs are unique youth-serving organizations in the West Bank.** Youth at YDRCs overwhelmingly cited the YDRCs as the organization that most contributes to their opportunities to develop competencies, including through practical leadership experiences, equal opportunities for males and females, and ways to connect to their communities. No other institutions or organizations in the West Bank offer the same kinds of opportunities.

## Recommendations

The findings of the PWY midline analysis are clear: YDRC youth programming prepares youth for the future in a unique way. Disadvantaged youth such as females, those youth in refugee camps and youth from disadvantaged areas of Palestine benefit in the same manner from the programming provided by YDRCs; however, PWY should potentially ensure a greater focus on programming for disadvantaged groups to increase their competencies at a higher rate.

In light of the findings from the midline assessments, PWY and the YDRCs can take concrete steps to expand opportunities for youth in the West Bank. Specifically, the project can capitalize on the following opportunities to provide excellent programming to Palestinian youth:

### **Ensure that YDRCs continue to reach disadvantaged youth**

In areas where youth generally have lower competency levels, such as in refugee camps and poorer districts such as Jenin and Jericho, YDRCs must make a concerted effort to reach those youth who start with lower competency levels in order to better prepare them for adulthood. The YDRCs have already gone through a review of their recruitment strategies with PWY staff to improve their recruitment of disadvantaged youth in their districts, and will continue their efforts toward this end.

### **Target the gender gap in 21<sup>st</sup> Century Youth Competencies**

YDRCs provide important opportunities for equality to young women. However, a competency gap between male and female youth still exists even after participation at YDRCs. Greater focus on female leadership and female-focused activities may allow the YDRCs to bridge this gender gap.

### **Offer more opportunities to participate in youth-led initiatives**

Youth-led initiatives clearly led all activities at the YDRCs for contributing positively to growth in competency levels. Offering more opportunities for youth to engage in these initiatives may be the best use of YDRC resources to provide youth with activities that improve their competencies.



### **Supply employability training to increase youth confidence in work skills**

Youth who specifically receive employability training are more confident in their ability to get a job and this increase in confidence is linked to future work outcomes. Continuing to capitalize on these employability services, especially for youth soon to enter the workforce, may be an important offering of the YDRCs to these youths' lives, as well as to the Palestinian economy.

### **Add programming for older youth**

As mentioned in the report, the YDRCs attract primarily younger youth, which may happen due to an emphasis on programming for younger youth at these institutions. Older youth, however, also need opportunities to build their competencies as they have fewer changes to build skills after leaving the education system. By creating programming that meets the needs of older youth, YDRCs can position themselves to provide the essential opportunities that this group needs.

### **Spread the word about the YDRCs through youth participants**

Youth are effective recruiters for the YDRCs, as 80% of youth who heard about the YDRCs from a friend joined activities soon afterwards. By capitalizing on youth networks, YDRCs can increase attendance, as well as target disadvantaged youth groups.

The challenges of working in the West Bank have impacted USAID's youth work over the years. In particular, due to external political challenges, USAID's investments have been fragmented, inhibiting the ability of its youth development programs to truly multiply their effects and ground these programs sustainably in local communities. Given the extraordinary impact that Palestinian young people have on today's stability and tomorrow's growth, a consistent stream of sufficient funding, structured with appropriate technical assistance to promote sustainability and avoid donor dependency, will yield both short- and long-term returns in violence prevention and economic stability.

## Annex I: 21<sup>st</sup> Century Youth Competencies Assessment Questionnaire

Enumerator Name: .....

Date of Interview:.....

**YDRC:** 1) Jenin Sport Club - Jenin  
Hebron 2) Palestinian Child's Home Club -  
3) Al Bireh Youth Foundation - Al Bireh 4) Qalqilia Ahli Club - Qalqilia  
5) Jabal An Nar Sports Club - Nablus 6) Good Shepherd Youth Club - Jericho

**Gender:** 1) Male 2) Female

**Precise Age:**.....

**Age Group:** 1) 14-17 2) 18-25 3) 26-29

**Type of Residence:** 1) City 2) Village 3) Refugee Camp

**What is your Refugee Status?** 1) Refugee 2) Not a Refugee

**What is current educational status?**

- 1) Still in primary school
- 2) High school graduate
- 3) School uncompleted (dropped out before completing high school)
- 4) Post High School (Diploma- Professional Degree)
- 5) College (Bachelor completed)
- 6) Bachelor uncompleted
- 7) Post Bachelor Degree

**In how many activities (unique, not sessions) have you been involved through the YDRC? \_\_\_\_\_**

Have you been involved in a **Media** activity through the YDRC? 1) Yes 2) No

Have you been involved in an **ICT** activity through the YDRC? 1) Yes 2) No

Have you been involved in a **leadership** activity through the YDRC? 1) Yes 2) No

Have you been involved in a **sports** activity through the YDRC? 1) Yes 2) No

Have you been involved in a **youth-led initiative** through the YDRC? 1) Yes 2) No

Have you been involved in a **community outreach** activity through the YDRC? 1) Yes 2) No

Have you been involved in a **Tamheed career advisory** activity through the YDRC? 1) Yes 2) No

Have you been involved in an **employability** activity through the YDRC? 1) Yes 2) No

Have you been involved in any **other type of activity** through the YDRC? 1) Yes 2) No

➤ **21st Century Youth Competencies:**

To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements?

	NOW that you have participated in YDRC's activities						BEFORE your participation in YDRC's activities					
Statement (Cognitive/Intellectual)	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
I have the skills and knowledge I need to apply for a job												
I have the knowledge I need to keep a job												
I know how to use a computer for work												
I know how to use a computer for my studies												
I know how to use a computer for leisure												
I know how to make good decisions regarding life issues using the information available to me												
I have clear plans for my future												

**To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements?**

Statement (Social)	NOW that you have participated in YDRC's activities						BEFORE your participation in YDRC's activities					
	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
I have people in my life who care about me												
I know how to solve personal conflicts												
I know how to get along with people who are different than me												
I feel like I belong in my community												
I believe that I could be an effective role model for a young boy or girl in my community												
If I were placed in a leadership role, I would feel very confident												
When I evaluate my relationship with my community, I believe I am an asset												

To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements?

Statement (Psychological/ Emotional)	NOW that you have participated in YDRC's activities						BEFORE your participation in YDRC's activities					
	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
I know what my strengths are												
I believe that I am able to set reasonable goals for myself												
I believe that I am successful at meeting these goals												
I have the ability to make a difference in my community												
I believe I can work out my problems on my own												
When I think about my personal future, I frequently feel confident												
If I have an emotional challenge, I have a source of trusted support												

To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements?

	NOW that you have participated in YDRC's activities						BEFORE your participation in YDRC's activities					
Statement	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
<b>Physical</b>												
I know how stay healthy through nutrition and exercise												
I know how to make decisions that ensure my personal safety												
I live in a safe environment (i.e. without threat of random violence, drug use, etc.)												
I have enough information about the risks of drugs												
I am healthy at a physical level												
I know where to go to get information on sexual issues												
I have enough knowledge on how to prevent sexual diseases												

**Do you believe there are sports facilities that are accessible to you?** 1) Yes 2) No

**Do you engage in any physical activity (sports, dancing, etc.)?** 1) Yes 2) No

**Do you feel confident that that you are/will be able to find a job in the Palestinian labor market when you need one?**  
 1) Yes 2) No 3) Don't know

**Regarding your employment status, are you?**

- 1) Employed full-time (including self-employment)
- 2) Employed part-time (including self-employment)
- 3) Employed in a seasonal job (including self-employment)
- 4) Unemployed and seeking work
- 5) Unemployed and not seeking work

**If you are employed, what is the nature of your current work/status?**

- 1) School student
- 2) University/college student
- 3) White collar employee (Muwatahf) in a private business
- 4) White collar employee (Muwatahf) in the public sector
- 5) White collar employee (Muwatahf) in an NGO
- 6) Worker/logistical support (construction, garage, vending, factory, agriculture, murasel, janitor etc)
- 7) House keeper
- 8) Unemployed

**In your community...**

Question	Answers (select <b>each</b> that applies)						
	School / University	YDRC	Other Youth Clubs (Islamic Club, Qalandia Club)	Youth Organizations (Sharek, Injaz)	Religious Organizations	Local Government (Municipality, Village Council)	Other Type of Provider <b>Please list</b>
Where have you had the opportunity to demonstrate your leadership skills?							
Where have you had the opportunity to improve your community?							
Where have you been offered trainings that you believe will help you find a job?							
Where do you believe provides equal opportunities to male and female youth?							

**Have you recommended the YDRC's programs to another person since you became involved?** 1) Yes 2) No

**If yes, did the person join to your knowledge?** 1) Yes 2) No 3) I don't know 4) S/he will likely do so in the future

**When you have a problem, do you believe you can go to an adult (age 30 or older) for help?**

- 1) Yes
- 2) It depends on the problem
- 3) No
- 4) Don't know

**When I have a problem, the person I trust most to ask for help is:**

- 1) A family member
- 2) A community member
- 3) A school teacher
- 4) A religious figure
- 5) A friend
- 6) I do not trust anybody to help
- 7) Don't know
- 8) Other

## Annex II: 21<sup>st</sup> Century Competencies Framework

### PARTNERSHIPS WITH YOUTH: 21ST CENTURY YOUTH COMPETENCIES FRAMEWORK

#### OVERVIEW

Over the last two decades, educators, youth workers and policy-makers throughout the world have given increased attention to the growing youth population worldwide, and to the opportunities and challenges that this growth presents across sectors, across borders, and across youth contexts. With more than half of the world's seven billion people being under the age of thirty, communities and nations are presented with a tremendous opportunity to harness the potential of young people in ways that benefit both the individual youth and the larger society.

Doing so, however, requires more than an educational reform, or a funding shift, or a few policy decisions; supporting the development of youth's potential requires a holistic and integrated approach that involves the public sector, the private sector, funders, and civil society and youth development organizations; it requires a holistic view of young people (who are not *only* students, not *only* current or future workers, not *only* current and future citizens and leaders, not *only* family members—they are all of those and more). It requires looking both within and across sectors to identify the supports and opportunities needed to ensure that all young people are well prepared for economic, civic, and social participation.

In this document, we present a “21<sup>st</sup> Century Youth Competencies Framework” that highlights the key competencies identified through years of research, practice, and policy work. The framework draws from a wide range of perspectives: both international and Palestine-based; work done in both formal and non-formal educational contexts; and both research-based and practice-based insights. The competencies that are included cut across multiple contexts, multiple cultures, and multiple ages. They are competencies that can be developed over time, from early childhood to later adulthood; they can be developed in multiple ways, through both formal and non-formal learning opportunities. They are competencies that the research suggests are critical in the positive development of young people to become productive, happy, thriving members of their society.

What do we mean by the term, “competencies”? Broadly defined, “competencies” includes both knowledge and skills or abilities: what does a person know, or know how to do? Competencies can be defined for a particular setting (for example, what are the professional competencies required for an electrician, or a computer programmer, or a

*“...A successful transition to adulthood requires much more than simply staying away from drugs, alcohol, early sexual activity, violence, and other risk behaviors...It requires that youth be equipped with a number of positive attributes and skills or competencies.”*  
(Nadeau et al 2008)



teacher?). Or, as in the case of this document, competencies can be defined more broadly to include preparation for a successful and productive transition from childhood or adolescence to adulthood, as well as from early adulthood to later adulthood. This broader definition includes the knowledge and skills needed not only for economic participation (“workforce preparedness”) but also for civic and social participation, as well as emotional and physical health. It involves a holistic view of young people and an approach that incorporates flexibility to change and adapt throughout the course of one’s lifespan.

This framework is intended to contribute to the ongoing conversations about youth and the supports and opportunities that will have a positive impact on their development, particularly for youth in Palestine. It can be used as a resource for youth workers, policy-makers, or other educators in thinking about how their work with young people can intentionally integrate the development of key competencies into their existing or new programs or directions. It can also be used by youth themselves, as they set goals and seek out opportunities to further their own learning and development.

The following document includes:

- Background information: why is it important to think about “21<sup>st</sup> Century Competencies” and what research or other work has been done to highlight “key” competencies?
- The Competencies Framework with an explanation of key concepts.
- “Next Steps”: how might those working with or on behalf of youth use this framework to enhance their work?

## BACKGROUND

An exploration and definition of 21<sup>st</sup> Century Youth Competencies is important for a number of reasons:

- From a youth perspective, identifying the knowledge and skills that young people need is a way to support their physical and emotional health, sense of connection to community, economic prospects, constructive civic engagement, and overall well-being. It is a way to support youth in fulfilling their own potential and living lives that bring them satisfaction.
- From a societal perspective, the discussion of competencies is equally important: what kinds of knowledge and skills do our fellow citizens need for our society to function well, thrive economically, and co-exist peacefully?
- From a global perspective, youth are a significant and growing percentage of the overall population worldwide. More than half of the world's seven billion people are under age 30. The population of Palestine, likewise, is a young one: approximately 40.4% of the total population are 0-14 years old (PCBS, 2013), and 29.8% of the population are between 15 and 29 years old (Abu Fasheh, 2013). Given this, investing in the development of competencies among youth is an important and strategic direction both for a nation's economic prosperity and for its social well-being.

This growing youth population can be a significant resource to a community and a country, when youth are prepared with the knowledge and skills they need to participate effectively in the social and economic fabric of their societies. When young people are prepared to enter the global economy, when they develop the skills and knowledge to participate effectively and constructively in their communities, when they are healthy and who know what to do to maintain and promote health, then not only is their own quality of life enhanced, but they also contribute to the quality of life for the population as a whole.

But which competencies are most important? To answer that, it is important to look at a range of perspectives (research, formal education, nonformal education and youth organizations, and youth themselves), and a range of cultural contexts (research and practice insights from local experience to global research and policy). For example, some have approached the questions from a "risk prevention" perspective (for example, how do we reduce the infection rates of HIV/AIDS among young people?), while others have focused on a "preparation" perspective (for example, how do we give youth the skills they need to become entrepreneurs?). While "prevention" and "preparation" perspectives are quite different in their language and orientation, what they share is a desire to see young people grow into adults who are productive, confident, physically and emotionally healthy, thriving individuals who can reach their potential. Likewise, this "21<sup>st</sup> Century Youth Competencies Framework" sees as its ultimate outcome the development of human potential.

The development of this framework is based on a review of years of research and practice insights related to positive youth development, demographic and policy reviews related to the youth population worldwide and in Palestine in particular, and conversations with young Palestinians. The evidence from both researchers and practitioners do not lead us to one, all-inclusive, irrefutable list of youth competencies. In fact, research results are a reflection of the particular questions (or context, or

population of youth) that the researchers set out to investigate. But does that mean that any list of youth competencies is simply a matter of opinion? Not necessarily.

What we find, as we look across these varied sources, are three major priorities, which are distinct but inter-related:

- A focus on youth’s successful entry into and ongoing movement within the labor market.
- A focus on youth’s ability to participate effectively in civil society, nation-building, and democracy.
- A focus on youth’s health and well-being, which not only influences the quality and quantity of their lives, but also undergirds their economic and civic participation in their community and country.

#### Focus 1: Preparation for Work:

In a 2012 Study, UNESCO estimates that unemployment rates for youth, worldwide, are two to three times higher than the rate for adults. Further, the report suggests that this disparity is even greater in the Middle East, reporting that youth unemployment throughout the region is at 25%, compared to a rate of 6% for adults (UNESCO, 2012). More specifically, in Palestine, estimates indicate that 44% of young Palestinians are unemployed (in spite of relatively high levels of secondary and post-secondary education). Thus, this focus on preparing youth to enter and succeed in the labor market takes on particular importance.

Many international reports—from ILO, UNESCO, UN-DESA, the Global Compact on Learning, and others—have highlighted the importance of preparing youth to enter and continue growing within the labor market. Preparing youth for “full and productive employment” is specifically highlighted in the UN’s Millennium Development Goals (under Goal One: Eradicate Extreme Poverty and Hunger).

*“...Education is not only about making sure all children can attend school. It is about setting young people up for life, by giving them opportunities to find decent work, earn a living, contribute to their communities and societies, and fulfill their potential. At the wider level, it is about helping countries nurture the workforce they need to grow in the global economy.”*  
UNESCO 2012, p. 3

Both youth and employers have suggested the need for more development and training in the so-called “soft skills” in order to strengthen one’s ability to succeed in the labor market: competencies such as communication, teamwork, and critical thinking are essential in today’s work environments. In fact, in a recent (2013) report on youth employability, The International Labor Organization concludes that in addition to the technical knowledge related to a particular work context, there are four broad categories of “core work skills” related to supporting youth’s entry into and success within the labor market: learning to learn; communication (oral and written); teamwork (including collaboration and leadership); and problem-solving (Brewer, 2013). Each of these four core areas is broken down into a list of specific skills

that include both intra- and inter-personal skills (for example, interpret and communicate information, listen to understand and learn, work within the culture of the group, and solve problems independently).

A framework for 21<sup>st</sup> Century Youth Competencies, then, must include preparing youth to successfully enter the labor market and to be able to move within the labor market as conditions and jobs change. More than simply helping young people “find a job,” the 21<sup>st</sup> century competencies prepare youth for productive and fulfilling work, work that draws on their strengths and abilities, along with the knowledge and skills to adapt to unforeseen changes in the labor markets of the future.

## Focus 2: Preparation for Civic Engagement

Palestinian youth exhibit low rates of involvement in civic and other societal institutions, and are less politically engaged than in previous years (Abu Fasheh, 2013). Youth themselves identified the following factors that inhibit their ability to take on leadership roles in the community: “*lack of opportunities and resources, people not accepting their ideas due to their young age, lack of team spirit, and discrimination against women*” (Nance et al, 2010, p. 47, italics added).

At the same time, however, Palestinian youth are concerned about their communities, and they volunteer at high rates. These youth are finding other outlets for dialogue and action, and using social media as a forum for debate and sharing views. Thus, the data suggest that while youth are not participating in a full range of civic activities, they do care about and are involved in their communities, and want to be involved in a wider range of activities and leadership roles.

A recent (2012) global study of by UN-Habitat of more than 1300 youth-led community initiatives showed that youth in nearly 70 developing countries were actively engaged in community development and change initiatives, willing and motivated to tackle challenging and complex issues. In these initiatives, youth performed a wide range of key leadership roles; at the same time, the study showed that they needed and wanted more support to build the skills needed for effective leadership and change.

Participation in civil society is impacted by both individual and societal or cultural factors: Are youth ready and willing to participate? And, are they provided with authentic and meaningful opportunities to do so? The barriers to participation must be addressed. There is ample evidence to suggest that among youth, “political and civic marginalization can...fuel discontent” (US AID, 2012). However, unless youth are prepared for such participation, reducing barriers alone is not enough. Inversely, unless there are authentic opportunities for participation, “preparation” has little meaning.

*“The willingness and ability to exercise [the right to vote] and other duties of citizenship are formed early in life and, once formed, tend to be durable.” (The World Bank, 2007. p. 9)*

A vibrant democracy requires an informed and active citizenry, individuals who are prepared to get involved, solve problems, make decisions, and take on leadership roles. Effective participation also requires that citizens have a belief in their own efficacy and agency, and a concern for others and for the

well-being of their community. A framework for 21<sup>st</sup> Century Youth Competencies must include preparing youth to participate effectively and constructively in their communities, to address the issues facing their communities and countries (which may also include constructively addressing the barriers to participation faced by youth and other marginalized groups), and to develop a sense of connection to others within their community. Moreover, the evidence suggests that this is a mutually reinforcing circle of benefit: as youth competencies increase, youth engagement increases; as youth are increasingly engaged, they have increased opportunities to develop competencies that enhance not only their civic participation, but all aspects of their positive development.

### Focus 3: Preparation for Physical and Psychological Health

While economic and civic participation are both extremely important goals of a 21<sup>st</sup> Century Youth Competencies Framework, they are not the only goals. From a Positive Youth Development perspective, youth are certainly current and future citizens and leaders; but they are also unique individuals, family members, part of peer networks, and likely members of numerous other groups (educational, religious, social, etc.). The research on Positive Youth Development suggests that giving young people their best opportunities to succeed requires more than just “job training” or “citizenship education”; it requires developing caring relationships and a sense of connection to community, self-efficacy, and positive self-regard. It requires physical health. It requires skills that help youth work effectively with others, such as communication, conflict resolution, and teamwork skills. And in today’s global economy and global society, it also requires skills in working across differences.

A significant and robust body of research supports the inclusion of these factors in a 21<sup>st</sup> Century Competencies Framework. Years of research and practice have demonstrated the importance of physical health as a precursor to learning and engagement; the importance of basic numeracy and literacy as a foundation for other kinds of abstract and conceptual learning; the importance of social connection as an aspect of healthy development; and/or the importance of self-confidence and self-efficacy as a companion to participation in community and work.

Groups such as Search Institute, the Global Compact on learning, Tufts University’s Institute for Applied Research in Youth Development, the Forum for Youth Investment’s “Ready by 21” initiative, the Partnership for 21<sup>st</sup> Century Skills, and CASEL (Collaborative for Academic, Social and Emotional Learning), among many others, have all developed more holistic ways to think about education and workforce preparedness. And, “mounting evidence holds that holistic or integrated youth programming can be particularly effective in addressing the complexities of youth people’s lives.” (US AID, 2012).

When a holistic approach (such as a Positive Youth Development approach) is used, we tend to see both the prevention of risky behaviors, such as drug use or early sexual behaviors, as well as an increase in “promotive” or “resilience” factors, such as longer participation in school, or improved social and psychological adjustment (Nadeau, Cunningham, Lundberg, McGinnis, 2008). Whether looking at Search Institute’s 40 Developmental Assets (which includes 20 “internal assets”, or skills and competencies), or the Six C’s Model promoted by Lerner and others at Tufts University’s Institute for Applied Research in Youth Development, or any other number of “life skills” models, what we find is a focus on seeing the

development of a young person as a process that involves multiple contexts, multiple identities, and multiple “health and resilience” factors (including physical, psychological, social and cognitive), each intersecting with and influencing the others.

When we look across these varying bodies of research and practice evidence, and across multiple cultural and organizational contexts, important themes emerge. Redundancies in results point us toward what we can consider as “key competencies”: those knowledge and skill areas that are durable across contexts, cultures, and life stages, competencies that are mutually reinforcing for entering the workforce, participating in one’s community, and living a healthy and fulfilling life. The 21<sup>st</sup> Century Youth Competencies Framework, thus, is not an all-inclusive list of every possible competency that might contribute to the quality of one’s life, but rather those competencies that research suggests are the most critical for a productive, thriving, satisfying life and livelihood.

## THE FRAMEWORK

As stated earlier, this Framework defines “competencies” broadly to include the knowledge and skills or abilities a person needs to lead a productive, fulfilling, happy and healthy life, and focuses on those competencies that cut across cultures, contexts and ages.

In the framework presented below, the 21<sup>st</sup> Century Youth Competencies are divided into four “domains”, listed in the first column:

- Cognitive/intellectual;
- Social;
- Psychological/emotional; and
- Physical.

Each domain refers to a critical aspect of positive youth development (and human development in general). Certain contexts may focus on one domain more than another. For example, schools tend to focus primarily on cognitive/intellectual development, while community-based health organizations may have physical health as their main focus. When using a Positive Youth Development approach, however, all four domains are considered and integrated, even when the organization may have a particular focus on one or two domains. For example, an ICT training program for youth, while perhaps focused on cognitive/intellectual development, will also consider whether participants feel a sense of belonging (social competency) and if they are developing a positive self-regard (psychological competency) for what they can do related to the ICT knowledge and skills they are developing. In short, a Positive Youth Development approach sees youth in a more holistic way: they are individuals, but also community members; they are future workers, but also future citizens. Because the framework below is informed by the principles of Positive Youth Development, it allows for—and reinforces—a holistic approach to working with youth.

The second column describes the specific competencies related to each domain: when we talk about intellectual competency, what specifically do we mean? Again, the list of competencies under each domain is not exhaustive; rather, it includes the key competencies that arise across multiple sources and contexts. Further, the competencies within each domain overlap and connect in multiple ways: the development of one type of competency may support—or be supported by—other competencies in that domain. Likewise, the competencies in one or several domains may combine to support the development of other competencies. For example, critical thinking, problem solving and literacy/numeracy skills (cognitive/intellectual competencies), undergird workforce readiness skills, as do collaboration and communication (social competencies). Communication and conflict resolution skills (social competencies) are essential for effective leadership, as are decision-making and critical thinking skills (cognitive/intellectual competencies). It is useful, then, to understand the framework not as a checklist of distinct and separate program components or content, but rather as a guide for thinking about the development of youth activities, policies, and/or educational programs in a more integrated, holistic way.

The third and fourth columns provide examples of short- and long-term outcomes, respectively, that are related to the competencies in each domain. The short-term outcomes are framed as examples of things

we might hear a young person say after participating in a particular program designed to develop those competencies. For example, after participating in a program designed to develop a sense of self-efficacy and connection to community, we would expect a young person to say (or agree with the statement), “I have the ability to make a difference in my community.”

The long-term competencies are framed as specific changes we might measure after an extended period of time (well after the completion of a particular program). For example, after participating in a vocational training program, we would expect to see an increased rate of employment among participants.

The short- and long-term outcomes listed in the two columns are only a few examples of the positive outcomes associated with each domain. In fact, depending on the program’s context and focus, a wide range of outcomes is possible. Further, it is not unusual to see youth experience more positive outcomes than simply those that are measured. Knowing the outcomes we can associate with each domain, and deciding which of those outcomes are the targeted outcomes for a particular program, policy or intervention is important. By defining the intended outcomes, we can develop measures to evaluate the effectiveness of our efforts to enhance that particular competency. The learning that results from these measures can both improve programs and also build the evidence for what works related to the development of 21<sup>st</sup> Century Youth Competencies.

<b>Domain</b>	<b>Competencies</b>	<b>Examples of Short-Term Outcomes</b> <i>(Youth might say...)</i>	<b>Examples of Long-Term Outcomes</b> <i>(We might see...)</i>
<b>Cognitive/ Intellectual</b>	Critical thinking Problem solving Decision making Planning Literacy/numeracy Academic achievement IT/media skills Vocational/ workplace readiness skills	I know how to make good decisions using the information available to me. I have the skills and knowledge I need to find and keep a job. I can use a computer for work and leisure.	Increased literacy rates Increased employment rate and earnings Increased rate of secondary school completion
<b>Social</b>	Communication Conflict management Collaboration/teamwork Cross-cultural competency Leadership Ability to develop and maintain healthy and supportive	I have people in my life who care about me. I know how to solve personal conflicts. I know how to get along with and work well with people who are	Evidence of collaborative projects that have positive results Increased rates of civic participation Evidence of youth



<b>Domain</b>	<b>Competencies</b>	<b>Examples of Short-Term Outcomes</b> <i>(Youth might say...)</i>	<b>Examples of Long-Term Outcomes</b> <i>(We might see...)</i>
	relationships Connection to community	different from me. I have organized activities in my organization and/ or community. I feel like I belong in my community.	leadership roles in organizations and communities
<b>Psychological/ Emotional</b>	Self-esteem Initiative/self-direction Self-efficacy Empathy/compassion	I know what my strengths and assets are. I have the ability to make a difference in my community. I can work out my problems.	Increased rates of civic participation Evidence of youth leadership roles in organizations and communities Evidence of “helping behaviors” among youth
<b>Physical</b>	Healthy decision making related to nutrition, exercise, and hygiene Avoidance of risky behaviors	I know how to stay healthy through nutrition and exercise. I know how to make decisions that ensure my personal safety.	Improved long-term health indicators (e.g., longevity, absence of disease, BMI, decreased rates of alcohol/ drug use, etc.)

## NEXT STEPS

The 21<sup>st</sup> Century Youth Competencies, described above, are those that research and practice have found to be essential for preparing young people for economic and civic participation in their communities and country, and for supporting their development as healthy, competent, confident individuals who feel a sense of connection to others and to their communities.

Moving forward, it is important to note that while the development of these competencies is not age-dependent or context-dependent, *the development process* is influenced by both age and context. That is, the development of these competencies can begin from early childhood, and can continue throughout the span of an individual's lifetime. However, the strategies and activities used to build these competencies will need to be developed in accordance with the age range and the setting of the particular group of youth concerned. The ways that a child develops certain competencies will look different from the ways that an older adult develops those same competencies. Even among different age groups of youth (for example, 14-17, 18-24, or 25-29 year olds), the opportunities to develop these competencies can, and should, look different. A 14-year old will need different kinds of opportunities for building a sense of self-efficacy than those needed by a 29-year old. The development of workplace skills will be different for someone who has never worked than it will be for someone who is already working full-time.

For example, consider the competency of collaboration/teamwork (in the social domain). A program for 14-17 year olds might enhance their teamwork skills by offering fun leadership “challenges” where small teams of youth are required to work together to complete a task (and perhaps win a prize). A group of 18-24 year old young people might enhance their teamwork skills by organizing a project to address an issue of concern in their community. In contrast, a group of 25-29 year olds might build collaboration and teamwork skills in a workplace setting, by working together on an organization-related project goal, where issues of accountability and specific job descriptions are incorporated into the task.

Just as the strategies for developing competencies are shaped or influenced by the age range of the youth involved, so are the strategies shaped by the particular context. The way that programs and activities build a particular competency within a school context, for example, will likely be different from the way that a youth association will support the development of that same competency.

Returning to the example of building collaboration/teamwork skills, a classroom science teacher might build these skills by developing a lesson around water supply and treatment processes, where small groups of students must work together to gather samples, analyze their samples and report findings. In a youth association, collaboration/teamwork skills might be enhanced through sports or other ongoing team activities. In the first example, the key competency of collaboration is likely to be combined with other competencies, such as critical thinking or problem-solving. In the second example, the key competency of collaboration might be combined with a sense of connection to community or healthy decision-making related to exercise.

The possible combinations of competencies, and the range of activities and programs that can support the development of the competencies, is nearly endless. So how can this framework be used to enhance the development of 21<sup>st</sup> Century Youth Competencies?

Rather than using the framework to create entirely new programs, youth-serving organizations might begin by considering where the opportunities exist *within their current programs* to build 21<sup>st</sup> century competencies. For example, rather than creating a “critical thinking” program, how might we incorporate activities that build critical thinking into our sports program, or our arts program? Instead of a “communication training”, how can communication skills be integrated into other (existing) offerings? How can we be intentional about developing one or more of these critical competencies as part of our current program offerings?

As one example, a youth-serving organization that offers training in media production might explore how decision making, or oral communication, or other competencies might be integrated into the media training content. While participants plan their media production, they might also learn a variety of decision-making techniques to help them navigate the multiple decisions to be made during the production process. While they raise funds needed for their production, they might learn about making developing and delivering effective presentations, thus enhancing their written and oral communication skills.

It is also important to remember that learning about a competency area is not the same thing as learning that competency. That is, *learning about* team building does not build that competency in the same way that *being engaged* in team-building activities will do. Learning “tips” for effective oral communication will not build the level of communication skills that practicing speeches or debates would do, for example. Supporting a young person’s mastery of a particular competency includes—and requires—creating opportunities for them to practice and apply that developing competency in meaningful ways.

An organization seeking to integrate 21<sup>st</sup> Century Youth Competencies into new or existing programs might ask themselves:

- What are the ages of the youth who will participate in this program? What stage of life are they in, and how will that affect the kinds of content or activities we include?
- What are the opportunities or constraints of our particular context? For example, if we are working in a school setting, do we need to connect these competencies to certain curriculum requirements? If we are working in a workforce preparation program, how will we make the connection between these competencies and the work environment?
- What do the youth in our program already know about this competency? What is their existing skill level? How do we build on what they already know or know how to do?
- Where else in our organization can youth build these competencies? What connections can we make to other programs or activities to reinforce the learning in this particular domain or competency?

While a 21<sup>st</sup> Century Youth Competency Framework—a framework that requires a holistic, long-term, multi-context approach to supporting youth development—may seem daunting, it does not necessarily

require new programs, or new policies, or even new funding. It requires, more than anything, a new approach: one that sees youth as resources rather than as problems. It requires seeing youth not only as tomorrow's contributors to the labor market, but also as today's members of and contributors to their families, communities and the larger global society. As the youth population in Palestine and throughout the world continues to increase, this shift in approach becomes increasingly important, for the benefit of both the youth and their society. It is our hope that this Framework can serve as a reference for programs, educators, and policy-makers to integrate these 21<sup>st</sup> Century Competencies into their work, and by doing so, to further enable young people to contribute economically and civically, and to thrive as individuals and members of their communities.

*Submitted by Carole MacNeil, Ph.D.  
October 29, 2013*

## REFERENCES

- Benson, P. (1997). *All Kids are Our Kids: What Communities Must Do to Raise Caring and Responsible Children and Adolescents*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass Publishers.
- Bradshaw, C. and Guerra, N. (2008). Future Directions for Research on Core Competencies. In N.G. Guerra and C.P. Bradshaw (Eds.), *Core Competencies to Prevent Problem Behaviors and Promote Positive Youth Development*. *New Directions for Child and Adolescent Development*, 122, 89-92.
- Brewer, L. (2013). *Enhancing Youth Employability: What? Why? and How? Guide to Core Work Skills*. Geneva: International Labour Office.
- CASEL (2013). *Effective Social and Emotional Learning Programs*. Chicago, IL: Collaborative for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning.
- Forum for Youth Investment (2006). *Ready by 21: Taking Aim on the Big Picture*. Washington, DC: FYI. Downloaded from: <http://forumfyi.org/files/TakingAimOnTheBigPicture.pdf>
- Guerra, N. and Olenik, C. (2013). *State of the Field Report: Holistic, Cross-Sectoral Youth Development: USAID Youth Research, Evaluation, and Learning Project*. Washington, DC: US Agency for International Development.
- Lerner, R. (2005). *Promoting Positive Youth Development: Theoretical and Empirical Bases*. White paper prepared for: Workshop on the Science of Adolescent Health and Development, National Research Council, Washington, DC. September 9, 2005. Washington, D.C.: National Academy of Sciences.
- MacNeil, C., Ragan, D. and Solberg, J. (2012). *State of the Field in Youth-Led Development: Through the Lens of the Un-Habitat's Urban Youth Fund*. Nairobi: United Nations Human Settlements Programme (UN-Habitat).
- Nadeau, S., Cunningham, W., Lundberg, M. and McGinnis, L. (2008). Programs and Policies that Promote Positive Youth Development and Prevent Risky Behaviors: An International Perspective. In N.G. Guerra and C. P. Bradshaw (Eds.), *Core Competencies to Prevent Problem Behaviors and Promote Positive Youth Development*. *New Directions for Child and Adolescent Development*, 122, 75-87.
- Nance, W., Auten, S., Hashweh, M., and Awashreh, F. (2010). *Assessment of the Youth Sector in West Bank and Gaza*. Washington, DC: US Agency for International Development.
- National Youth Employment Coalition (2005). *PEPNet Guide to Quality Standards for Youth Programs*. Washington, DC: NYEC.
- Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics: [http://www.pcbs.gov.ps/site/lang\\_en/1/default.aspx](http://www.pcbs.gov.ps/site/lang_en/1/default.aspx).

Partnership for 21<sup>st</sup> Century Skills (2013). *Framework for 21<sup>st</sup> Century Learning*. Downloaded from: <http://www.p21.org/overview>.

Robinson, J. (2011). *A Global Compact on Learning: Taking Action on Education in Developing Countries*. Washington, DC: The Brookings Institution, June, 2011.

UN-DESA (2012). *World Youth Report 2012: Youth Employment: Youth Perspectives on the Pursuit of Decent Work in Changing Times*. New York: United National Department of Economic and Social Affairs.

UNESCO (2012). *Youth and Skills: Putting Education to Work*. Paris, France: UNESCO.

United Nations (2013). *We Can End Poverty: Millennium Development Goals and Beyond 2015*. New York: United Nations. Downloaded from: [http://www.un.org/millenniumgoals/pdf/Goal\\_1\\_fs.pdf](http://www.un.org/millenniumgoals/pdf/Goal_1_fs.pdf)

US AID (2012). *Youth in Development Policy: Realizing the Demographic Opportunity*. Washington, DC: US Agency for International Development, October 2012.

Waseem Abu Fasheh (2013). *The Status of Youth in Palestine 2013: The future is knocking*. Palestine: Sharek Youth Forum.

World Bank (2007). *Youth—An Undervalued Asset: Towards a New Agenda in the Middle East and North Africa: Progress, Challenges and Way Forward*. Washington, DC: The World Bank.

World Bank (2006). *World Development Report 2007: Development and the Next Generation*. Washington, DC: The World Bank.