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## LATIN AMERICA AND THE CARIBBEAN (LAC) READING EVALUATION CONTRACT

### Second Annual Central America Workforce Development Report



**August 2019**

This publication was produced for review by the United States Agency for International Development. It was prepared by Emilie Bagby, Edith Felix, Patricia Costa, Nancy Murray, and Beryl Seiler of Mathematica.

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## **DISCLAIMER**

The authors' views expressed in this publication do not necessarily reflect the views of the United States Agency for International Development or the United States Government.

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## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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## ACRONYMS

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AGAPE	<i>Asociación AGAPE de El Salvador</i> (AGAPE Association in El Salvador)
CAPUCOM	<i>Capacitación Profesional en Computación</i> (Professional Training in Computing)
CARSI	Central America Regional Security Initiative
CAYAC	Community At-Risk Youth Advisory Committees
CBS	Capacity-Building Strategy
CBT	Cognitive Behavioral Therapy
CETAA	Center for Agroforestry and Environmental Education
COMPAS-T	Comprehensive Positive Assessment Tool
CPF	Country Partnership Framework
CSO	Civil Society Organization
DAI	Development Alternatives Incorporated (DAI Global, LLC)
EF	<i>Empleando Futuros</i> (Employing Futures)
EFS	Education for Success
FADCANIC	Fundación para la Autonomía y el Desarrollo de la Costa Atlántica de Nicaragua
FPI	Full Program Intervention
FY	Fiscal Year
HDI	Human Development Index
ICA	Institutional Capacity Assessment
IT	Information Technology
ICT	Information Communications Technology
IDB	Inter-American Development Bank
IIDP	Individual Integrated Development Plan
ILA	Institutional Landscape Analysis
INATEC	<i>Instituto Nacional Tecnológico</i> (National Technology Institute)
INFOP	<i>Instituto Nacional de Formación Profesional</i> (National Vocational Training Institute)
INJUVE	<i>Instituto Nacional de la Juventud</i> (National Institute for Youth)
INSAFORP	<i>Instituto Salvadoreño de Formación Profesional</i> (Salvadoran Vocational Training Institute)
ITD	Inception to Date
KII	Key Informant Interviews
LAC	Latin America and the Caribbean
LGBTI	Lesbian Gay Bisexual Trans Intersex
LMA	Labor Market Assessment
LOP	Life of Project
M&E	Monitoring and Evaluation
MOU	Memorandum of Understanding

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NGO	Nongovernmental Organization
OCA	Organizational Capacity Assessment
OCAT	Organizational Capacity Assessment Tool
OEF	<i>Asociación para la Organización y Educación Empresarial Femenina de El Salvador</i> (Association for the Organization and Education of Women in Business of El Salvador)
PNDH	<i>Plan Nacional de Desarrollo Humano</i> (National Plan for Human Development)
RACCN	<i>Región Autónoma de la Costa Caribe Norte</i> (North Caribbean Coast Autonomous Region)
RACCS	<i>Región Autónoma de la Costa Caribe Sur</i> (South Caribbean Coast Autonomous Region)
RENET	<i>Red Nicaragüense para la Educación Técnica</i> (National Network of Technical Education)
RTC	Regional Trilateral Cooperation
SBAC	Study of Barriers to Access and Completion
SEL	Social and emotional learning
SENA	<i>Servicio Nacional de Aprendizaje</i> (National Learning Service)
TVET	Technical Vocational Education Strengthening
TVET CAT	Technical Vocational Education and Training Capacity Assessment Tool
TVET-SAY	Technical Vocational Education Strengthening for At-Risk Youth
USAID	United States Agency for International Development
USG	United States Government
VIP-RA	Violence Involved Persons Risk Assessment
WDSPA	Workforce Development Service Provider Assessment
WFD	Workforce Development

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

### A. Purpose and background of the Workforce Development Learning Agenda

Several countries in Central America continue to face major challenges to their development, including weak political and judicial systems, high levels of poverty, high unemployment rates, widespread criminal activity, and high levels of emigration. In order to support Central America in its development, the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) has made workforce development programming an important part of its comprehensive approach. Not only should workforce development training increase employment, but also it should contribute to a reduction in criminal activity in the region. Although employment may not necessarily end involvement in crimes, better employment opportunities are more likely to reduce it. Empirical evidence from 19 Latin American countries has found that a one percentage point decrease in youth unemployment leads to 0.34 less homicides per 100,000 inhabitants (Chioda 2017). Workforce development projects can support youth in finding new or better employment opportunities. The evidence suggests, however, that the most promising technical and vocational skills training programs are combined with soft skills and on-the-job training components (Bertrand et al. 2017).

Under the USAID-funded Latin America and the Caribbean (LAC) Reads Evaluation contract, the USAID LAC education team tasked Mathematica with producing a series of annual reports from 2018 to 2020 tracking progress of workforce development (WFD) investments in Central America to assist in reporting to stakeholders. These reports will facilitate USAID's reporting to Congress on the achievements of six large, multi-component USAID-funded WFD projects<sup>1</sup> expected to account for a total of \$181 million in investments in the sub-region. The six projects are occurring in the Northern Triangle countries (Guatemala, Honduras, and El Salvador) as well as Nicaragua and Jamaica (Table ES.1).

**Table ES.1. Six WFD projects included in the report**

Project name	Country	Implementing partner	Duration	Targeted youth age range
<i>Proyecto Puentes / Bridges (Bridges Guatemala)</i>	Guatemala	World Vision	2017–2022	15–24
<i>Empleando Futuros / Employing Futures (EF Honduras)</i>	Honduras	Banyan Global	2016–2021	16–30
<i>Avanza / Advance (Advance Regional)</i>	Guatemala, Honduras, and Jamaica	FHI 360	2015–2020	17–30
<i>Puentes para el Empleo / Bridges to Employment (Bridges El Salvador)</i>	El Salvador	DAI Global, LLC (DAI)	2015–2020	16–29
<i>Proyecto Aprendo y Emprendo / Technical Vocational Education Strengthening for At-Risk Youth (TVET-SAY Nicaragua)</i>	Nicaragua	Creative Associates	2015–2019	14–29
<i>Educación para el Éxito / Education for Success (EFS Nicaragua)*</i>	Nicaragua	Fundación para la Autonomía y el Desarrollo de la Costa Atlántica de Nicaragua (FADCANIC)	2010–2020	10–29

Note: Source materials from World Vision, Banyan Global, FHI 360, DAI, Creative Associates, and FADCANIC.

\* EFS Nicaragua had an anticipated completion date of March 2019 but received a 21 month extension in spring of 2019.

<sup>1</sup> USAID defines each project as an "activity" but since each project includes a variety of activities (or sub activities), in this report we use the term "project" to refer to the whole package of activities.

This annual report is the second in the series<sup>2</sup>; it provides information on the six WFD projects and their progress toward reaching their targets of training at-risk youth<sup>3</sup> so they can obtain employment. Although the projects are at different stages of implementation, all of them have rolled out their training programs and are implementing most of their planned services. Therefore, while we discuss the full project cycle from beneficiary enrollment in training activities through employment, this report focuses on beneficiaries' completion of training and notes the challenges and successes of each project up to this point.

## **B. Focus areas and methodology**

The annual reports cover select project achievements in four focus areas important to WFD programming: (1) beneficiary participation, (2) beneficiary employment or investing in employability, (3) engagement with the private sector and other actors in the labor market, and (4) WFD system strengthening. In essence, the six WFD projects are supply side interventions aimed at improving youth employability and youth employment, though all do some work with the demand side, largely the private sector, to inform training and facilitate job placement. Each focus area incorporates several common indicators that are used by all six projects to report to USAID on project success. The selection of these focus areas and indicators for reporting projects' progress was based on discussions with USAID and project implementers.

In order to understand the progress and achievements of each project for this report, we compiled quantitative and qualitative information from various sources within each of the six projects. We used key project documents and data, including monitoring and evaluation plans, work plans, and annual reports. We also collected indicator data directly from projects to facilitate reporting across all projects on common indicators. We interacted directly with project staff to ensure the data collected and reported were correct and that we appropriately understood project activities.

## **C. Findings**

Throughout their implementation, the six WFD projects together expect to enroll more than 67,000 beneficiaries in integrated skills training programs focused on helping youth develop technical/vocational and soft skills. The improved skills of beneficiaries should then lead to improved employment, with projects overall targeting 29 percent of training completers having new or better employment. Because of varying project start dates and start-up activities, fiscal year (FY) 2018 was the first year all six projects were working with beneficiaries; four projects continued the WFD activities they had begun with target beneficiaries in earlier years and Bridges Guatemala and Advance Regional began their work with beneficiaries.

**On the whole, projects are not far from meeting their initial ambitious beneficiary enrollment targets.** In FY2018, the six projects succeeded in enrolling 90 percent (18,340) of the targeted number of FY2018 beneficiaries and are one-third (35 percent) of the way to reaching their combined life of project (LOP) enrollment target (66,989).

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<sup>2</sup> See Bagby et al. 2018 for information on the first annual report.

<sup>3</sup> For the purpose of readability, when we discuss the projects as a group, we refer to their targeted beneficiaries as "at-risk youth." However, Bridges Guatemala and Advance Regional use the term "disadvantaged youth" and Bridges El Salvador uses the term "vulnerable youth."

**Overall, projects reached 50 percent of their training completion targets for FY2018 (a total of 7,923 youth), though numbers varied widely by project.** EFS Nicaragua almost reached its target completion number of 800 with a total of 799 youth completing TVET training. In FY2018, TVET-SAY Nicaragua had 276 TVET training completers, reaching 74 percent of its completion target for scholarship recipients and 59 percent of its target for partial scholarship recipients. EF Honduras reached 36 percent of its FY2018 target with a total of 651 youth completing a five-component training. Bridges El Salvador reached 42 percent of its completion target for the year, while Bridges Guatemala reached 52 percent. Target completion numbers vary across projects and years because of the variation in duration of training programs. For example, some beneficiaries enrolled in FY2018 may not complete training until FY2020. In addition, some training programs have multiple modules and require a significant time commitment by youth, thereby possibly leading to higher dropout rates. For instance, EF Honduras required youth to participate in a soft skills module first, followed by a separate technical skills module. Both Nicaragua projects also require participants to complete soft-skills training prior to or after completing technical vocational courses. Bridges El Salvador requires youth to participate in a training and internship program in order to be considered completers of the program.

Several factors contribute to the lower than anticipated completion numbers across projects. Two countries (Honduras and Nicaragua) experienced disruptions due to geopolitical conflicts in FY2018. Several projects have experienced high rates of violence that have contributed to lower access to training programs. In addition, many of the completion targets were set before the programs were fully developed. Because of these various factors, programs are currently revisiting their targets to better align with the updated program designs and realities encountered.

**The five projects with training completers in FY2018 reached 35 percent of their target employment numbers for FY2018.** In FY2018, a total of 972 youth found employment as a result of their participation in WFD programs. If we examine beneficiary employment rates for projects, the rates ranged from 2 percent for Bridges Guatemala to 100 percent for TVET-SAY Nicaragua's scholarship recipients. It is not surprising that FY2018 employment rates vary so much across projects, given the fact that that Bridges Guatemala, EF Honduras, and Bridges El Salvador have not fully ramped up their labor bridging activities. In addition, a contraction in the private sector in Nicaragua, particularly along the Caribbean Coast (where beneficiaries of EFS Nicaragua reside) led to a 16 point drop in the employment rate from FY2017 to FY2018. However, as projects graduate more youth while focusing on their labor bridging activities, we anticipate that employment numbers will increase significantly in the coming years.

**Enrollment, completion and employment numbers vary by gender.** Across projects, roughly 10 percent more females enrolled in and completed integrated skills trainings in FY2018. Out of the 17,280 beneficiaries<sup>4</sup> that projects enrolled in FY2018, 55 percent were female and 45 percent were male. These percentages indicate a substantive increase in female enrollment since FY2017, given that slightly more males than females had enrolled in FY2017. However, despite high levels of females enrolling and completing, a higher percentage of males found employment. In fact, seven percent more males than females were employed after training completion. More males than females also found employment in previous years and, compared

<sup>4</sup> Altogether projects enrolled 18,340 youth but data disaggregated by sex are only available for 17,280 beneficiaries.

to FY2017, the difference between genders is much lower in FY2018 (seven percent versus 23 percent).

**Projects continue to successfully engage with the local labor market in various ways.**

To tailor training interventions to the demands of the local labor market, all projects conducted assessments of local labor markets (LMAs) or similar studies during their first years of implementation. These assessments provided valuable information on key sectors in each country and skills demanded by potential employers, as well as employer perceptions of gaps in current training programs. A key benefit of developing these studies was also forging partnerships that could facilitate labor bridging activities such as internships, apprenticeships or other on-the-job training opportunities. In some cases, projects also used these partnerships to facilitate employment for youth. Because of the alignment between these WFD projects and private sector interests, projects were also able to secure additional funding from the private sector for project activities. In FY2018, projects obtained just under \$2 million in cash and in-kind contributions to support project objectives.

**The six projects covered in this report are also working to strengthen the WFD system by either building the capacity of local WFD service providers or improving the enabling environment for WFD.** In building local organizations' capacities, projects contribute to the sustainability of their interventions by leaving behind institutions with better-trained teachers, market-oriented curricula, and, in some cases, updated infrastructure. Thus far, projects have updated or created 64 curricula, trained more than 1400 staff and faculty, and strengthened 44 local organizations. Projects have also been strengthening national institutions that help elevate the role of WFD in improving youth outcomes. Projects have created sustainable networks with the goal of advocating for TVET programs, improved the laws around internships and strengthened institutions aimed at prioritizing TVET trainings nationally.

## **D. Summary**

Each of the six projects on which this report focuses is in progress, and all six will end between 2019 and 2022. By the end of FY2018, all projects had begun training and graduating beneficiaries from their training programs. Equipped with information from the local assessments, early findings from program completers and a better understanding of the constraints to finding employment, many of the WFD projects will focus on activities aimed at ensuring that participants complete the programs, as well as labor-bridging activities to increase the chances of employment.

Our third and final annual report in 2020 will include updated completion and employment numbers for five projects (EFS Nicaragua, TVET SAY Nicaragua, EF Honduras, Bridges Guatemala, and Bridges El Salvador). Advance Regional should also be able to report on completion rates for its first cohort of youth beneficiaries. The report will also summarize some of the labor bridging strategies that projects implemented to facilitate employment.

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## **I. INTRODUCTION**

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### **A. Purpose of the Central American WFD reports**

Many countries in Central America continue to face major challenges to their development, including weak political and judicial systems, high levels of poverty, high unemployment rates, and widespread insecurity. As a result of these conditions, the region has continued to be one of the main sources of illegal immigration and narcotics flowing into the United States. In recent years, Central America has received increased attention and financial support from U.S. policymakers, who have determined that it continues to be in the national security interest of the United States to help address the region's challenges.

The U.S. Strategy for Central America (Central America Strategy), which supports Northern Triangle countries (El Salvador, Guatemala, and Honduras), as well as Belize, Costa Rica, Nicaragua, and Panama, was first introduced by the Obama Administration in 2014, funded by Congress in FY2016, and then updated by the Trump Administration in 2017. The Central America Strategy includes three objectives: (1) promoting prosperity and regional integration, (2) strengthening governance, and (3) improving security. In particular, it seeks to reduce violence to levels such that no country in the region is ranked in the top 10 countries globally in homicide rates, reduce youth unemployment rates by half, and reduce poverty rates to below 40 percent over the next decade (Meyer 2019a). The U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) is currently implementing projects under each of the Central America Strategy's three objectives. Such projects include workforce development (WFD) programs, behavior-change counseling for youth most at risk of engaging in violent behavior, and capacity building for civil society organizations (CSOs).

Under the USAID-funded Latin America and the Caribbean (LAC) Reads Evaluation contract, the USAID LAC education team tasked Mathematica to produce a series of annual reports from 2018 to 2020 tracking the progress of WFD investments in Central America to assist in reporting on the Central America Strategy. Six of the ongoing USAID-funded WFD projects are being implemented in Central America. These projects represent an important portion of the United States Government's (USG) investment in Central America under the Central America Strategy. The reporting will cover select project achievements, chosen in consultation with USAID, in four focus areas: (1) beneficiary participation, (2) beneficiary employment or investing in employability, (3) engagement with the private sector and other actors in the labor market, and (4) WFD system strengthening. Each of the focus areas includes key indicators shared by the projects. Please see Appendix A for a summary of the link between human capital and security and how WFD development interventions can affect human capital accumulation, employment and poverty. These annual reports on the combined efforts of these WFD projects may also facilitate communication and the exchange of learnings between the existing projects. Additionally, they may inform the design and implementation of future WFD programs in LAC, in which national governments, USAID, and other donors have made a variety of investments.

This annual report is the second in the series<sup>5</sup>; it provides information on the six WFD projects and their progress toward reaching their targets of training at-risk youth<sup>6</sup> so they can obtain employment. Although the projects are at different stages of implementation, all of them have rolled out their training programs and are implementing most of their planned services. Therefore, this report focuses on beneficiaries' completion of training and notes the challenges and successes of each project up to this point. We also explore employment outcomes for those beneficiaries who have completed training programs. In addition, we discuss the progress made by the projects' efforts to strengthen WFD systems in their countries and their continued engagement with the private sector.

## **B. Overview of Central American WFD projects**

USAID selected six WFD projects across four different Central American countries—Guatemala, Honduras, El Salvador, and Nicaragua—to include in these reports.<sup>7</sup> The projects aim to increase workforce readiness and income-generating opportunities for at-risk or disadvantaged youth ages 10 to 30 in project countries by offering a variety of WFD and education-related services, as well as by working with local private and public sectors to facilitate the employment of trained youth. The projects also aim to contribute to violence and crime prevention by providing at-risk youth with soft skills (also known as life or noncognitive skills) training. All selected projects began implementation between October 2015 and April 2017 except for Education for Success (EFS) in Nicaragua,<sup>8</sup> which started in 2010 (see Table I.1). All projects are ongoing and will end between 2019 and 2022, with an expected duration of four to five years (except for EFS Nicaragua, which will have lasted nine years through its completion in March 2019).<sup>9</sup> The total amount budgeted for all six projects is \$181 million, with individual project budgets ranging from \$9 million to \$65 million.

The six WFD projects target specific geographic areas with high levels of at-risk youth or WFD institutions serving at-risk youth in the countries in which they operate. These areas are characterized by high levels of poverty, outward migration, and crime, and have been made a priority by USAID. Appendix B provides detailed information on the context in which the project are working. The target areas for Guatemala and EFS Nicaragua are primarily rural, whereas EF Honduras and Bridges El Salvador work primarily in urban communities. Technical Vocational Education and Training Strengthening for At-Risk Youth (TVET-SAY) Nicaragua covers both rural and urban areas. Advance Regional's focus areas overlap with the Bridges Guatemala and EF Honduras target municipalities, as well as covering six additional municipalities in Honduras. Appendix C provides detailed information on the project activities as

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<sup>5</sup> See Bagby et al. 2018 for information on the first annual report.

<sup>6</sup> For the purpose of readability, when we discuss the projects as a group, we refer to their targeted beneficiaries as “at-risk youth.” However, Bridges Guatemala and Advance Regional use the term “disadvantaged youth” and Bridges El Salvador uses the term “vulnerable youth.”

<sup>7</sup> One project is working with universities in three countries—Guatemala, Honduras, and Jamaica. Because the Jamaican context is so different from that of Central America, we do not discuss it in this report.

<sup>8</sup> For the purpose of this report, we are reporting EFS results only during its expansion period from 2017–2019.

<sup>9</sup> As of early 2019, USAID and Fundación para la Autonomía y el Desarrollo de la Costa Atlántica de Nicaragua (FADCANIC) were negotiating the possibility of extending the EFS project for another two years. As of the writing of this report, no decision had been made.



well as geographic coverage. The projects are also targeting certain demographic characteristics in at-risk youth; these are often also characteristics of individuals with a higher propensity to migrate. More details on targeted beneficiaries can be found in Appendix E.

For three of the projects profiled in this report, FY2018 was marked by geopolitical disruptions that affected project implementation. In November 2017 Honduras experienced civil unrest which resulted in the cancelation of several planned activities. Nicaragua also saw periods of significant instability starting in spring of 2018 resulting in major disruptions of program operations as well as a contraction in the private sector.

**Table I.1. Summary of six WFD projects in this report**

Project name	Country	Implementing partner	Duration (Calendar year)	Targeted youth age range
<i>Proyecto Puentes/Bridges</i>	Guatemala	World Vision	2017–2022	15–24
<i>Empleando Futuros/Employing Futures</i>	Honduras	Banyan Global	2016–2021	16–30
<i>Avanza/Advance Regional</i>	Guatemala, Honduras, and Jamaica	FHI 360	2015–2020	17–30
<i>Puentes para el Empleo/Bridges to Employment</i>	El Salvador	DAI Global, LLC (DAI)	2015–2020	16–29
<i>Proyecto Aprendo y Emprendo/Technical Education and Training Strengthening for At-Risk Youth</i>	Nicaragua	Creative Associates	2015–2019	14–29
<i>Educación para el Éxito/Education for Success*</i>	Nicaragua	Fundación para la Autonomía y el Desarrollo de la Costa Atlántica de Nicaragua (FADCANIC)	2010–2020	10–29

Note: Compiled from Banyan Global 2018a, Creative Associates 2018a, DAI 2018a, DAI 2018b, FHI 360 2018, FADCANIC 2018a, FADCANIC 2018b, World Vision 2018a.

\* EFS Nicaragua had an anticipated completion date of March 2019 but received a 21 month extension in the spring of 2019.

## C. Outline of report

This report is organized into five chapters. In Chapter II, we discuss the WFD focus areas covered in the report. In Chapter III, we report the findings for the first two WFD focus areas related to youth training and support services—beneficiary enrollment and completion of training, and employment. In Chapter IV, we discuss project activities related to understanding and engaging with the labor market. In Chapter V, we discuss project activities related to WFD system strengthening. Finally, in Chapter VI, we provide a brief summary of findings. The appendices of this report contain additional detail on project activities and the context in which they work.

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## II. REPORT FOCUS AREAS

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The six WFD projects in this report were designed by building on existing evidence for program implementation and previous experience from other WFD programs implemented in the same countries that both build the capacity of youth and support their ability to obtain employment. As the projects have been implemented, they also have made modifications to their activities to improve the delivery of services and achievement of project goals.

This report concentrates on four focus areas important to WFD programming that can facilitate learning across projects and contribute to learning for the Central America Strategy's WFD investments. These areas are (1) beneficiary participation, (2) beneficiary employment or investment in employability, (3) engagement with the private sector and other actors in the labor market, and (4) WFD system strengthening. Each focus area incorporates several common indicators that are used by the WFD projects included here to report on project success to USAID and which can be combined across projects to assess high level achievements of goals and objectives. These indicators were carefully selected after an extensive review of all six projects' standard and custom indicators. We based the selection of these focus areas, and the indicators on which to report progress, on discussions with USAID and project implementers (Table II.1). To understand the progress and achievements of each project for this report, we compiled quantitative and qualitative information from key project documents and data, including monitoring and evaluation plans, work plans, and annual reports. We also collected indicator data, using a template we developed to facilitate reporting on the focus areas. We interacted directly with project staff to ensure the data collected in the tool were correct and that we appropriately understood project activities and reports.<sup>10</sup>

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<sup>10</sup> We reviewed the indicator data shared by the projects for inconsistencies; however, it was beyond our scope of work to further assess the quality of the data and information shared. USAID conducts its own data quality assessments of indicator data included in project quarterly and annual reports it receives.

**Table II.1. WFD report focus area, description, and indicators**

Focus area description	WFD indicators
<b>Youth training and support services: Beneficiary participation</b>	
Number of persons enrolled in and completing WFD programs or activities	Number of beneficiaries enrolled in the WFD program and/or activity Number or percentage of beneficiaries completing the WFD program and/or activity
<b>Youth training and support services: Beneficiary employment or investment in employability</b>	
Number of persons employed, newly employed, or better employed (including better self-employment) as a result or participation in USG-funded workforce development programs	Number or percentage of beneficiaries completing a WFD program who go on to new or better employment
Number of persons in formal and/or nonformal education (may include secondary or postsecondary schooling or training programs)	Number or percentage of beneficiaries who complete, and who then progress to formal or nonformal education programs
<b>Engagement with private sector and other actors in the labor market</b>	
Alignment of WFD programs to private sector labor needs/changes in private sector practices to recruit and employ youth; partnerships formed and money leveraged to support WFD programs	Understanding private sector needs- labor market assessments Contributions received (from private sector, public sector, or other donors)
<b>WFD system strengthening</b>	
Improvement in the organizational capacity to deliver WFD services to at-risk youth in the community	Enabling environment strengthened Organizational capacity assessment (OCA) Number of new/revised WFD programs Number of WFD service providers strengthened

Note: Developed by the authors based on source materials from World Vision, Banyan Global, FHI 360, DAI, Creative Associates, and FADCANIC.

## **A. Youth training and support services**

At the core of these projects' interventions are the training and support services they provide to youth. For youth to participate, they must first be made aware of the program and meet the eligibility criteria. After that, they enroll in the training program, complete the program, and hopefully continue on with employment or additional education. Some projects collect data on this beneficiary pathway throughout the program at all points described above, whereas others report only on the numbers of beneficiaries participating, completing, and eventually finding employment. Appendix D provides detailed information on the youth training and support services provided by each project. Appendix Figure D.1 depicts the progression of youth through these programs and the projects collect data at the different key moments in the course of the training cycle.

**Beneficiary participation.** This focus area includes information on the participation of youth beneficiaries in WFD activities ranging from program recruitment to completion and includes two indicators (Table II.1). The first indicator measures the number or percentage of beneficiaries enrolled in the WFD program or activity. The second measures the number or percentage of beneficiaries completing the WFD program and/or activity. As mentioned in the

descriptions of the projects, the length and composition of each WFD training varies by project; therefore, targets for each indicator vary significantly across projects.

As beneficiaries progress through the training program, some may decide to end their participation for various reasons. Participants may decide to drop out to return to school or because they obtain employment, often referred to as positive dropout. They may also drop out of the training without continuing on a pathway of improved education or gainful employment, referred to as non-positive dropout. Only a few projects collect additional data on those who leave the training programs before completion; therefore, the current data do not allow us to group program leavers into the two dropout categories (positive, non-positive). However, some projects may collect additional data on those not completing their programs through surveys they conduct.<sup>11</sup>

**Beneficiary employment or investment in employability.** This focus area captures information on beneficiaries after WFD program completion. It captures whether program completers are employed or investing in their employability by continuing their education (Table II.1). This area relates to the Central America Strategy's focus on helping youth in the region find employment opportunities so they are less susceptible to recruitment by gangs or other criminal organizations. The first indicator measures the number or percentage of beneficiaries with new or better employment. The second measures the number or percentage of beneficiaries that continue to invest in their employability through enrollment in formal or nonformal education programs. While all projects follow up with youth who complete the WFD interventions within nine months of completion to report on employment status, only two projects currently report information related to investing in employability. Because of this time frame and the length of time beneficiaries may need to participate in their different training components, many projects will not report employment numbers until their last years of implementation. Those projects with shorter time frames from start to finish of the WFD training program will have information on employment available well before the project end date.

## **B. Engagement with private sector and other actors in labor market**

This focus area includes information on the alignment of WFD programs to the private sector's labor needs. The Central America Strategy's efforts also focus on developing partnerships between academia and the private sector, and improving the linkages between education and labor market needs.<sup>12</sup> This focus area includes two different indicators (Table II.1). The first covers learnings from the labor market assessments (LMAs) conducted by projects to understand labor market needs. The second captures information on the funds from the private sector and international donors that projects have been able to generate or obtain through cost-share programs.

<sup>11</sup> EF Honduras, EFS Nicaragua, and TVET SAY Nicaragua are following up with nongraduates. EF Honduras uses a custom indicator: "Number of EF at-risk youth participants, graduates, and nongraduates, with positive outcome beyond the standard employment indicator."

<sup>12</sup> Engagement with the private sector is featured prominently in USAID's Journey to Self-Reliance approach (USAID 2019).

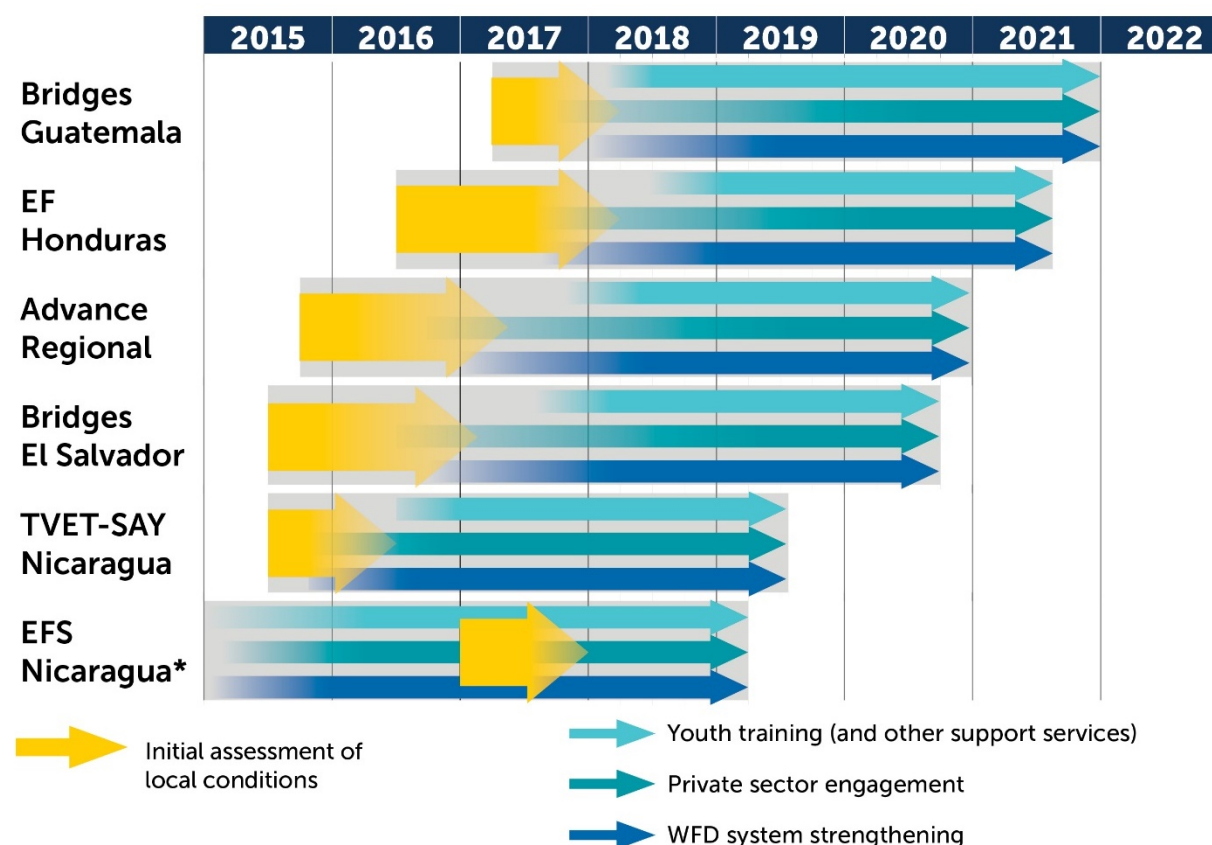
### C. WFD system strengthening

This focus area captures improvements in the WFD system by improving either the enabling environment for WFD or the capacity of WFD organizations. These organizational improvements relate to the Central America Strategy's efforts to facilitate access to quality education. This focus area includes three different indicators (Table II.1). The first indicator measures the number of service providers strengthened by the project. The second includes information on the organizational capacity assessments conducted by projects with providers. The third measures the number of WFD programs created or revised by projects.

### D. Project implementation status

Over the course of their four- to five-year contracts, the projects largely have implemented the activities in these focus areas at the same time; however, all of them started with capacity strengthening. Figure II.1 depicts the timeline along which the projects rolled out their interventions within their contract periods. Most projects phased in their activities at the same time as the initial assessments of local conditions were wrapping up, which is represented by arrows fading in at the time projects starting implementing activities.

**Figure II.1. Project rollout**



\*EFS Nicaragua conducted an initial assessment of local conditions in newly added municipalities during each of its three rollout phases, 2010, 2012, and as depicted above in 2017.

### III. YOUTH TRAINING AND SUPPORT SERVICES

Throughout their implementation, the six WFD projects combined expect to enroll more than 67,000 beneficiaries in integrated skills training programs focused on helping youth develop technical/vocational and soft life skills. Because of varying project start dates and start-up activities, fiscal year (FY) 2018 was the first year all six projects were working with beneficiaries; four projects continued the WFD activities they had begun with target beneficiaries in earlier years and Bridges Guatemala and Advance Regional began their work with beneficiaries (as shown in Figure II.1). In this section, we describe project efforts to enroll, train, and graduate beneficiaries. We also discuss advancements in employment and investing in future employment once beneficiaries complete their training programs. Appendix E provides additional information regarding the profiles of targeted beneficiaries, recruitment and eligibility screening, participation complementary programs, subgroup disaggregation of findings, and a summary of key findings to date across projects.

#### A. Enrollment in WFD training programs

In this section, we present accomplishments of the six WFD projects in enrolling beneficiaries and compare enrollment numbers to project targets for both FY2018 and life of project (LOP).<sup>13</sup> It is important to note that FY2018 accomplishments and targets are far from their LOP targets because, with the exception of EFS Nicaragua, the projects have been working with beneficiaries for three years or fewer.<sup>14</sup> Indeed, two projects just began enrolling beneficiaries in FY2018. To understand the likelihood of projects reaching their LOP enrollment targets, we also compare cumulative project accomplishments against EOP targets. As shown in Table III.1, the LOP enrollment targets vary across projects, ranging from 3,726 beneficiaries for Advance Regional to 30,000 enrollees in Bridges Guatemala's core skills curriculum, *Diplomado Emprender con Éxito*. These differences are due to project scope and intended coverage, as well as the type and duration of WFD services offered. The projects provide technical/vocational and soft skills training for widely varied durations and intensity.

**Table III.1. WFD training duration and end-of-project enrollment targets**

	Bridges Guatemala	EF Honduras	Advance Regional	Bridges El Salvador	TVET-SAY Nicaragua	EFS Nicaragua
<b>Duration</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>112 hours of <i>Diplomado Emprender con Éxito</i> completed in a period of 4 to 6 months</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Minimum of 474 hours completed in a period of six months</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Scholarships for full-time technical degree programs last 2 to 3 years</li> <li>3,726 beneficiaries (scholarship and nonscholarship participants)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Most last between 8 and 12 weeks</li> <li>Specialty courses last 6 to 9 months</li> <li>40 hours per week</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Scholarships for technical careers last 2.5 to 3 years</li> <li>Short-term trainings last 2 weeks to 4 months</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Technical/vocational training lasts 150 hours to 3 years</li> <li>Short term-trainings last 2-4 weeks</li> </ul>

<sup>13</sup> As part of its third year work plan, EF Honduras proposed updated targets for some indicators to USAID. In this report we use the older targets presented in the project's FY2018 annual report.

<sup>14</sup> Since the report focuses on USAID investments since FY2017, we agreed with EFS Nicaragua to only present LOP targets and accomplishments for its last expansion phase, covering FY2017 to FY2019.

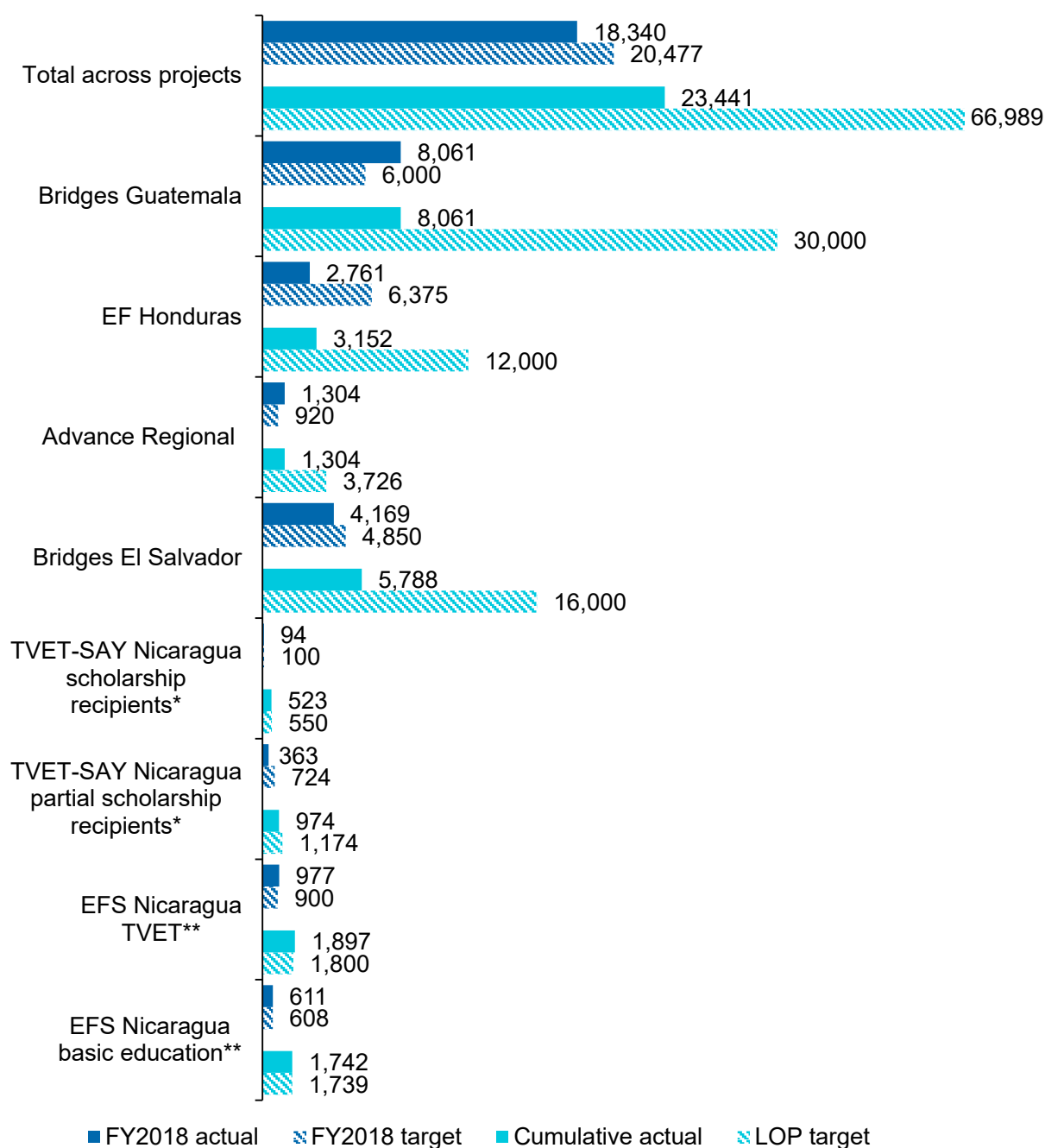
	Bridges Guatemala	EF Honduras	Advance Regional	Bridges EI Salvador	TVET-SAY Nicaragua	EFS Nicaragua
<b>LOP enrollment target (number of beneficiaries)</b>	● 30,000	● 12,000	● 3,726	● 16,000	● 990 (scholarship recipients) ● 2,010 (partial scholarship recipients)	● 1,800 (TVET) ● 1,739 (basic education)

Notes: Source materials from World Vision, Banyan Global, FHI 360, DAI, Creative Associates, and FADCANIC.

**In FY2018, the six projects succeeded in enrolling 90 percent (18,340) of the total targeted number of FY2018 beneficiaries and are one-third (35 percent) of the way to reaching the combined LOP enrollment target (66,989).** FY2018 saw a dramatic increase in projects' enrollment numbers with roughly 13,500 more enrollees in FY2018 than in the previous fiscal year. In Figure III.1, we present project FY2018 actual, FY2018 target, cumulative actual, and LOP target figures for enrollment by project.



**Figure III.1. Enrollment numbers: FY2018 actuals, FY2018 targets, cumulative actuals, and LOP targets**



Notes: Source materials from World Vision, Banyan Global, FHI 360, DAI, Creative Associates, and FADCANIC.

\* TVET-SAY Nicaragua also had 306 continuing scholarship recipients and 493 continuing partial scholarship recipients (those who first enrolled in a previous fiscal year but continued to be enrolled in FY2018)

\*\* EFS Nicaragua's LOP target for both TVET and basic education is for its last expansion phase, covering FY2017 to FY2019. In FY2018, EFS also had 46 continuing beneficiaries (those who first enrolled in a previous fiscal year but continued to be enrolled in FY2018) enrolled in TVET programs and 762 continuing beneficiaries enrolled in basic education.

**Three WFD projects—Bridges Guatemala, Advance Regional, and EFS Nicaragua—met or exceeded their FY2018 enrollment targets (Figure III.1).**

- Bridges Guatemala, in its first year enrolling beneficiaries, exceeded its FY2018 enrollment target by 34 percent (8,061 enrolled against a target of 6,000). Its success in exceeding the enrollment target is a result of the help of its community-level recruitment and registration of youth, and making its core skill curriculum highly accessible through the launch of a radio version with the same minimum hourly requirement as the in-class *Diplomado*. Guatemala's enrollment numbers include only youth who enroll in the core skills program, not those who go on to enroll in some of the technical trainings offered by the project that can last two months to two years depending on the course. For those completing alternative secondary education, the training can last up to three years.
- Strong recruitment efforts by several tertiary institutions helped Advance Regional, also in its first year of enrolling beneficiaries, exceed its enrollment target of 920 beneficiaries by 42 percent.
- By focusing on recruiting and enrolling youth from newer target communities, EFS Nicaragua reached its enrollment target of 611 new enrollees for basic education (with soft skills training components) and exceeded its enrollment target for TVET programs (with soft skills training components) by 9 percent (977 enrolled against a target of 900). Although EFS Nicaragua enrolled fewer youth than in previous years, in its last year of implementation it exceeded its LOP enrollment targets by enrolling 1,742 youth in basic education and 1,897 youth in TVET training from FY2017 to FY2018.

**Three projects—Bridges El Salvador, EF Honduras, and TVET-SAY (for scholarship recipients)—did not meet but approached their FY2018 enrollment targets (Figure III.1).** Despite not meeting their FY2018 targets, compared to FY2017, Bridges El Salvador and EF Honduras each experienced increases in enrollment. In FY2018, TVET-SAY enrolled fewer than half of the number of beneficiaries enrolled in FY2017.

- Bridges El Salvador, in its third year of working with beneficiaries, enrolled 4,169 youth (86 percent of its FY2018 target) in soft skills and/or technical/vocational training, and reached 36 percent of its LOP target. In FY2018, the project increased its course offerings to 197 different courses because it found that youth are more likely to enroll when they have a variety of courses from which to choose. However, the project still faced enrollment challenges related to youth preferring to study closer to home and their avoidance of costly and dangerous commutes.
- EF Honduras, in its first full year of working with beneficiaries, enrolled 2,761 beneficiaries (43 percent of its FY2018 target), including 75 youth at tertiary risk, and reached 26 percent of its LOP target.<sup>15</sup>

<sup>15</sup> An election crisis in Honduras, which paralyzed many activities within the country from December 2017 to January 2018, affected EF Honduras enrollment numbers by delaying project implementation. EF Honduras also experienced implementation delays because of a change in WFD service delivery models intended to streamline services.

- In Nicaragua, the political crisis that erupted in April 2018 limited scholarship funds for technical vocational and soft skills training due to a contraction in the private sector and a reduction in the program's budget, so TVET-SAY was not able to enroll as many youth as in previous years. Therefore, TVET-SAY reduced its FY2018 enrollment target from 400 to 100 scholarship recipients. In its third year of working with beneficiaries, TVET-SAY reached 95 percent and 83 percent of its LOP enrollment targets for scholarship and partial scholarship recipients, respectively. Even though many private companies were affected by the political crisis, TVET-SAY was able to secure enough matching scholarship funding from the private sector to enroll 94 scholarship recipients in short-term TVET training (94 percent of its revised target). The project also targeted providing 724 new partial scholarships in FY2018, and was able to offer partial scholarships to 363 new beneficiaries.

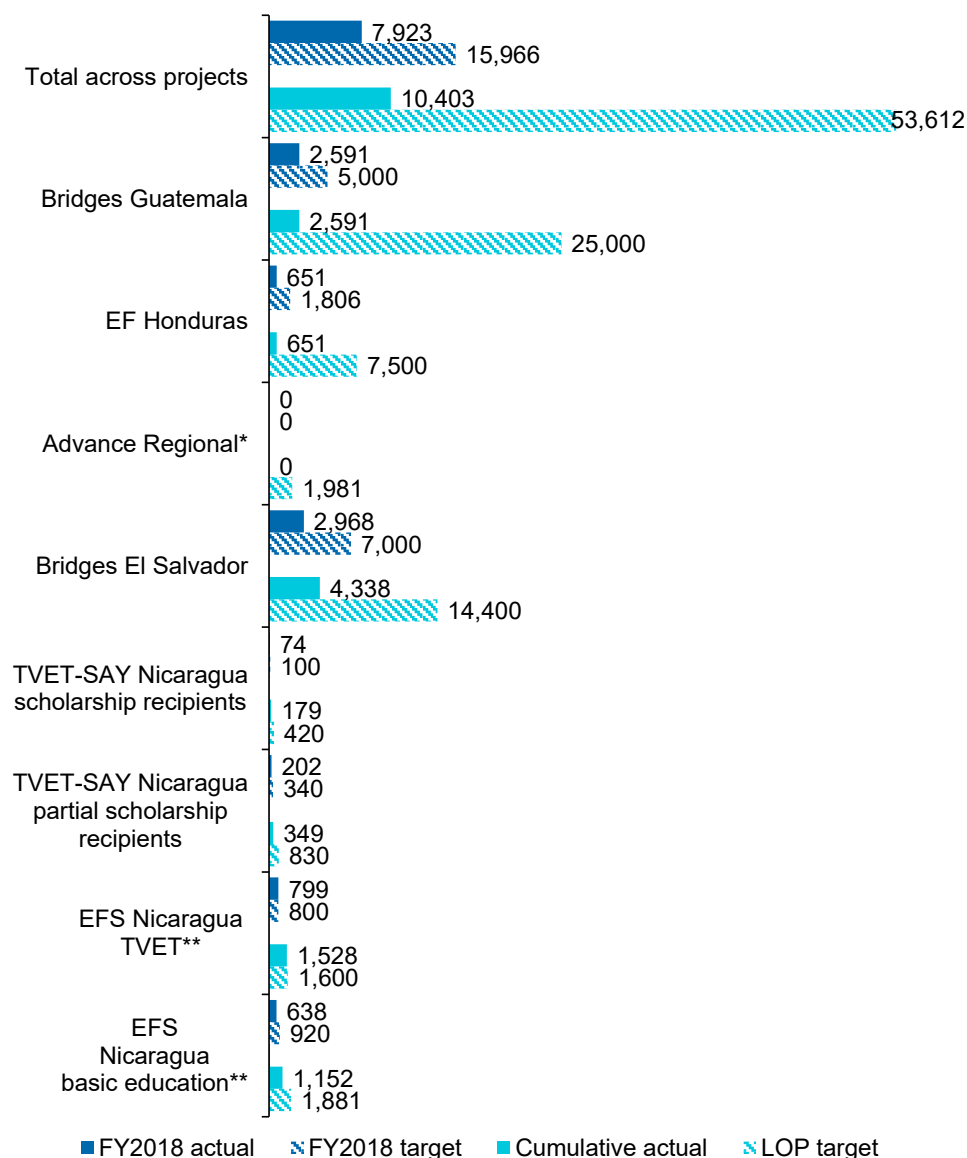
## B. Completion of WFD training programs

“Program completion” means that the beneficiary has met the completion requirements of the specific program. Except for Bridges Guatemala, the completion numbers reported in Figure III.2 and III.3 are for the USAID standard indicator “E.G.6-3: Number of individuals who complete USG-assisted workforce development programs”. Under the standard indicator, individuals do not necessarily have to receive a certification to be considered completers. To capture Bridges Guatemala's completion accomplishments related to the *Diplomado* (core skills curriculum), we report completion based on their custom indicator “number of youth completing the core skill curriculum”. For *Diplomado* completers who go on to enroll in TVET training, Bridges Guatemala tracks the number who complete this training through the standard E.G.6-3 completion indicator; we report the FY2018 number for this indicator separately in the bullets on page 15.

Completion targets vary across projects because the intensity and duration of each training program varies. For example, some beneficiaries enrolled in FY2018 may not complete training until FY2020 due to the design of the training; this situation may occur in the Advance Regional project. Projects with multiyear WFD training programs, such as Advance Regional, will report on the enrollment of a cohort of beneficiaries during one fiscal year and measure their completion and employment status two to three years later. In addition, completion requirements vary across projects. For example, Bridges El Salvador and TVET SAY Nicaragua count youth as completers only if they complete all final requirements, including an internship or on-the-job training, while as mentioned above, Bridges Guatemala counts youth as completers when they complete the core skills curriculum (*Diplomado*) and then also reports whether those who go on to enroll in TVET courses also complete this training. Also, across projects, higher completion rates are associated with shorter trainings rather than longer, more intense trainings.

**Altogether, projects expect approximately 80 percent (or 53,612) of enrolled beneficiaries to complete training programs by the time all projects are completed (Figures III.2 and III.3).** In other words, projects expect that approximately 20 percent of participants will not complete the program because they dropped out for various reasons (as discussed below). When interpreting this completion rate, it is important to note that program participants are at-risk youth who often face many financial, security, or personal obstacles to completion.

**Figure III.2. Completion numbers: FY2018 actuals, FY2018 targets, cumulative actuals, and LOP targets**



Notes: Source materials from World Vision, Banyan Global, FHI 360, DAI, Creative Associates, and FADCANIC.

\* Advance Regional does not expect to have any completion data until FY2019 or later, depending on the duration of training.

\*\* EFS Nicaragua's LOP target is for its last expansion phase, covering FY2017 to FY2019.

**In FY2018, projects reached 50 percent (7,923) of their FY2018 target completion number (and 19 percent of their LOP completion target of 53,612; Figure III.2) and 43 percent of beneficiaries who enrolled had completed their training program (Figure III.3).<sup>16</sup>** In FY2018, the target number of completers was 15,966 youth, representing 30 percent of the aggregate LOP target (Figure III.2).

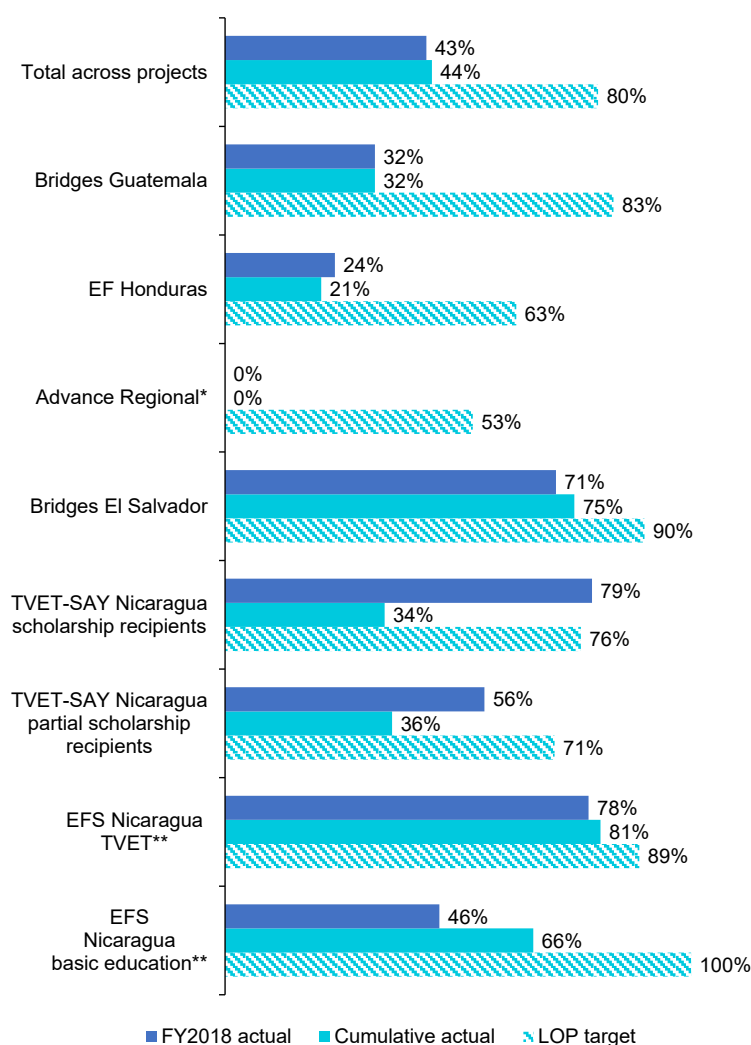
- In total, 2,591 youth (52 percent of its target) completed Bridges Guatemala's core skills curriculum (Figure III.2); the project reported a completion rate of 32 percent (Figure III.3).<sup>17</sup> Of these completers, 658 went on to complete one of the technical/vocational trainings offered by the project as reported for the standard E.G.6-3 indicator.
- In total, 651 beneficiaries (36 percent of its target; Figure III.2) completed EF Honduras's five training components (soft skills training, cognitive behavioral therapy, basic labor competencies, vocational/technical skills, and a capstone course), and reported a completion rate of 24 percent (Figure III.3).<sup>18</sup> EF Honduras experienced higher dropout rates than expected, especially during beneficiary transition from the first phase of training, which takes place within communities, to the second phase, which occurs in technical training centers.
- Advance Regional does not expect to have any technical career completers until FY2019 (Figure III.2).
- Bridges El Salvador's had 2,968 completers (Figure III.2) and achieved a completion rate of 71 percent (Figure III.3), only slightly lower than in previous years. It identified the following main dropout factors: safety issues during commutes, limited financial resources, health problems, and youth finding employment during training.
- TVET-SAY Nicaragua reached over half of its FY2018 target of 440 completers, with 74 scholarship completers (79 percent completion rate) and 202 partial scholarship completers (56 percent completion rate) (Figures III.2 and III.3). Its completion rate for scholarship recipients was significantly higher than in previous years, which could in part be due to the addition of short-term training options in FY2018.
- EFS Nicaragua had 638 basic education and 799 TVET program graduates—69 and over almost 100 percent of its target, respectively (Figure III.2). The project's completion rates of 46 percent for basic education and 78 percent for TVET training were similar to those of previous years (Figure III.3).

<sup>16</sup> We estimate the completion rate across projects as the number of beneficiaries who completed training in FY2018 over the number of beneficiaries who enrolled in training in FY2018. However, some FY2018 enrollees might not be expected to complete until FY2019 or later, so actual completion rates might be higher.

<sup>17</sup> The final completion rate for all FY2018 enrollees is likely much higher given that some enrollees were not expected to complete the core skills curriculum until FY2019.

<sup>18</sup> The EF Honduras project requires that beneficiaries complete a minimum number of hours for each of the integrated program's five components to be counted as having completed the EF training.

**Figure III.3. Completion rates: FY2018 actuals, cumulative actuals, and LOP targets**



Notes: Source materials from World Vision, Banyan Global, FHI 360, DAI, Creative Associates, and FADCANIC. Projects have only FY2018 target completion numbers, not FY2018 target completion rates. The authors calculated the LOP completion rate targets as the LOP completion target over the LOP enrollment target.

\* Advance Regional does not expect to have any completion data until FY2019 or later, depending on the duration of training.

\*\* EFS Nicaragua's LOP target is for its last expansion phase, covering FY2017 to FY2019.

**To approach their completion targets, the projects relied on a variety of new dropout reduction strategies in FY2018.** Four projects—Bridges Guatemala, TVET-SAY Nicaragua, Bridges El Salvador, and EF Honduras—made adaptations to their WFD services, including but not limited to implementing flexible programs to shorten the training program or creating new service delivery models to accommodate youth facing barriers to attending trainings in person.

- Bridges Guatemala offered a radio version of its core skills curriculum to allow youth with schedule and/or travel constraints to participate in WFD training. In this version, participants listen to the materials (the same ones covered in the in-person version) transmitted over the

radio and complete workbooks on their own. Participants have access to volunteer tutors trained by the project to assist them with their workbooks.

- Bridges El Salvador gives beneficiaries the opportunity to participate in some training courses over the weekend so they are able to work during the week. Additionally, the project created an opportunity for school dropouts to complete a grade of high school in six months through a combination of classroom instruction, independent study, and the help of tutors.
- Due to the political crisis in Nicaragua, TVET-SAY did not offer any new scholarships for two- to three-year TVET training, which it had done in previous years. Instead, the project offered new FY2018 scholarship recipients a blended learning package, which includes a mixture of in-person and online training with a duration of two to four months—significantly shorter than the two- to three-year programs offered in previous years. The blended approach included the use of *Capacitate para el Empleo*, the online platform for TVET education, developed and managed by the Carlos Slim Foundation to create opportunities for advancing education despite an insecure environment. TVET-SAY designed courses for the online platform that provided 48 hours of theoretical content and 26 hours of practical training. Through the online platform, the project offered food and beverage management, sales training, financial literacy, and citizenship education courses; they were complemented with practical training provided by teachers with support from private companies.
- Since dropout was highest when youth were transitioning through each of the five training phases, EF Honduras increased the number of fully integrated programs, meaning that rather than a one- to two-week break between each of the training phases, the phases would be offered without interruption to minimize dropout. The project created accelerated programs that responded to and were designed for the specific needs of the private sector so that youth would start their training already knowing their occupation.

In FY2018, several projects also worked to mitigate dropout risks during training by increasing communications with beneficiaries outside of the classroom and providing them with complementary support services (see Section E below for more details). Four projects—Bridges Guatemala, EF Honduras, EFS Nicaragua, and TVET-SAY Nicaragua—increased communication with beneficiaries outside of the classroom. They all used volunteers or project staff to conduct home visits with youth at risk of dropping out to encourage them to continue participating in their training programs. In response to the political crisis, TVET-SAY Nicaragua also facilitated individual and family therapy and tutoring sessions to minimize the dropout rate. Additionally, the project executed an early warning dropout alert system, which relied on group counseling sessions to identify youth at risk of dropping out. Project volunteers tasked with monitoring these sessions identified youth at risk of dropping out and often followed up with them through home visits. The dropout alert system also involved communicating and following up with youth through WhatsApp groups, especially when in-person classes were cancelled due to the political crisis.<sup>19</sup>

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<sup>19</sup> TVET-SAY Nicaragua also tried to address desertion from single mothers by providing day-care support at the service provider centers, however this was not implemented in FY2018 due to lack of funding.

## C. Employment

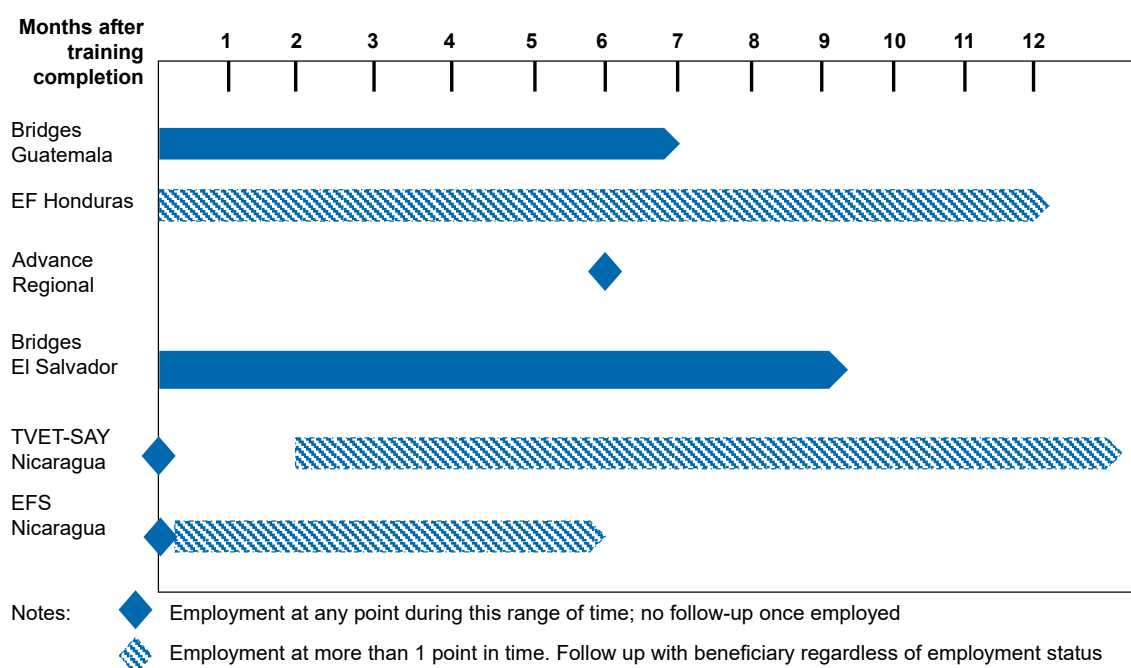
A key measure of success for the projects is new or better income-generating opportunities for youth who have completed program training. All projects report whether beneficiaries obtain new or better employment using the standard USAID indicator: “E.G.6-1: Number of individuals with new or better employment following completion of USG-assisted workforce development programs.”<sup>20</sup> “New employment” is based on a change in status from not being employed to being employed. “Better employment” is based on the beneficiary’s perception that the employment is better. Each project has its own criteria for defining whether an individual is employed. All projects consider informal employment, including self-employment, in addition to formal employment; all of them also have definitions of employment that capture under-employment, meaning that beneficiaries work less than full time. Four of the five projects with employment data in FY2018 currently collect these data through WFD training service providers.

**Measurement timing.** For most projects, employment is measured at the point at which a youth finds employment within 12 months of training completion (Figure III.4).<sup>21</sup> Bridges Guatemala and Bridges El Salvador record employment once, meaning that once a youth has reported employment, the projects do not conduct additional follow-up. For youth that remain unemployed, the project follows up with them on a continuous basis. EF Honduras, Advance Regional, TVET-SAY Nicaragua, and EFS Nicaragua all collect employment at a minimum of two points. EF Honduras follows up with all completers monthly for 12 months after completion but reports only quarterly. Advance Regional plans to record employment with all completers 6 months after completion to assess their employment status. TVET-SAY Nicaragua records employment at completion and follows up approximately two years after (but the timeframe can vary). EFS Nicaragua records employment at completion and then conducts a follow-up survey of a subsample of beneficiaries within six months after completion. Figure III.4 provides a visual depiction of when projects collect employment data. Bars represent ongoing employment data collection within a timeframe, whereas diamonds represents data collection at one specific time. Despite these differences in the timing data collection, all of the projects report employment using the standard employment indicator. For the purposes of this report we have aggregated these employment data across projects, regardless of the timing of measurement.

<sup>20</sup> USAID is currently phasing out the E.G.6-1 indicator in favor of new, better defined indicators. However, the six WFD projects covered in this report will continue to use the E.G.6-1 indicator.

<sup>21</sup> Many projects offer unemployed completers additional assistance in finding job opportunities.



**Figure III.4. Points at which projects collect and report employment data**

**Employment targets.** Projects take the local context into consideration when determining target employment numbers and rates. Setting targets for the employment indicator is based on many factors including the already high unemployment rates across Central America compounded with the additional challenges faced by at-risk youth in obtaining employment.

Although the average unemployment rate across El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras and Nicaragua is 4 percent, the average youth unemployment rate is almost double that amount at 8.1 percent (World Bank 2019e, 2019f). However, many of the WFD projects work in rural communities facing challenging economic conditions, which considerably increases the previously mentioned unemployment numbers. In the case of Guatemala, 59 percent of households were living below the national poverty line in 2015, and over half of these households were from indigenous areas, where Bridges Guatemala is implemented (World Bank 2019b). Both TVET-SAY Nicaragua and EFS Nicaragua work in the RACCS and RACCN regions, where over half of the population lives in extreme poverty (National Development Information Institute 2014).

Beyond the situational factors, the projects are also working with disadvantaged populations, and specifically at-risk youth. Results from LMAs in Honduras and El Salvador show that companies are reluctant to hire youth if they come from dangerous neighborhoods. This can be due to a concern about youth's violent tendencies, their ability to regularly report to work or because companies doubt a candidate's fitness for a job, both in terms of physical appearance and perceived skill. Insecurity can also lead to a decrease in completion rates since often youth find it is simply too dangerous to travel to training sites. Decreased completion rates also put downward pressure on employment rates. Therefore, although project targets and rates for employment may appear low, they accurately represent the demographics of beneficiaries and

contextual regional information. For more information on country context, see Annex B, and for more information on LMA results, see Annex F.

While the overall LOP target employment rate across all projects is 29 percent, target rates vary significantly for each project as follows: 16 percent for Bridges Guatemala, 50 percent for EF Honduras, 50 percent for Advance Regional, 42 percent for Bridges El Salvador, 64 percent for TVET-SAY Nicaragua, and 23 percent for EFS Nicaragua (see Figure III.5).<sup>22</sup> This variation is not only due to demographics, but is also explained in part by differences in the type and intensity of WFD services offered and the different definitions of new and better employment. EF Honduras tracks beneficiaries monthly but reports employment only after 12 months if a youth has been employed for a minimum number of hours in the previous year. Bridges Guatemala has the lowest employment rate because the number expected to find employment is derived from the total number who complete the core skills curriculum (25,000), which requires a few hours of participation in soft skills training per week to complete the curriculum in one and a half to six months, depending on each beneficiary's time commitment. Not all of these expected completers may go on to enroll in the technical/vocational courses offered by the project, and therefore may not receive technical skills. (Currently their employment numbers do not consider whether a youth has completed a TVET course.) Bridges Guatemala has also found that beneficiaries do require further training beyond the core skills curriculum to be able to find employment. EFS Nicaragua's employment rate is low because employment opportunities are more limited in the Caribbean Coast region than in other areas in Nicaragua. In this report, we estimate FY2018 employment rates as the number of completers who found new or better employment in FY2018 over the number of completers during the previous 12 months. Bridges Guatemala, Bridges El Salvador, and EF Honduras expect to enroll and complete much higher numbers of beneficiaries than the other projects.

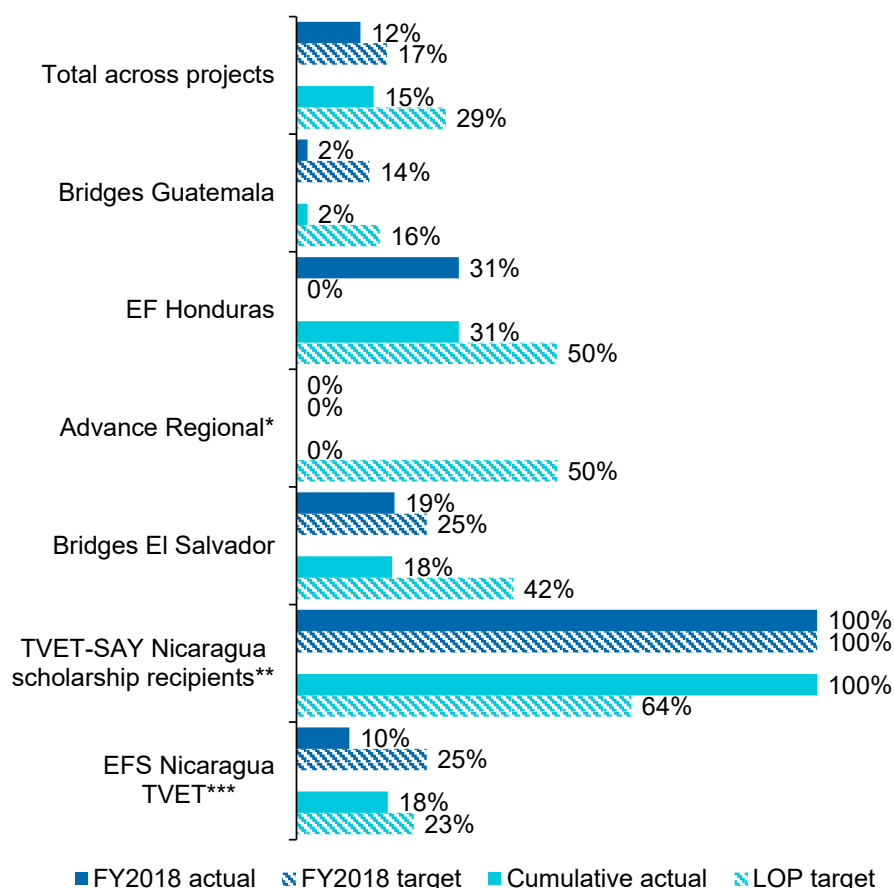
**The five projects with completers in FY2018 reported 972 employed youth within nine months of completion<sup>23</sup> against an FY2018 target of 2,770—only 35 percent of the target for the year (see Figures III.5 and III.6).** Beneficiary employment rates for projects ranged from 2 percent for Bridges Guatemala to 100 percent for TVET-SAY Nicaragua's scholarship recipients. It is not surprising that FY2018 employment rates vary so much across projects, given the differences discussed above, as well as the fact that Bridges Guatemala and EF Honduras are still early in their implementation process and are just starting to reap the benefits of their efforts in bridging work with the private sector. Employment numbers in FY2018 were not as high as expected, due to a number of factors such as civil instability, a contracted labor market, and a realization by projects that youth require networking and labor bridging support to help identify and secure jobs. Many projects are investing more in labor bridging activities and we anticipate seeing higher employment numbers in FY2019.

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<sup>22</sup> The employment rate calculations exclude TVET-SAY Nicaragua nonscholarship recipients and EFS Nicaragua basic education beneficiaries because the projects do not track these beneficiaries after they complete training.

<sup>23</sup> The employment numbers reported for FY2018 may be an underestimate of actual employment numbers because WFD service providers are updating employment numbers on a continuous basis as they track youth, and there is often a delay in this information reaching WFD projects.

**Figure III.5. Employment rates: FY2018 actuals, FY2018 targets, cumulative actuals, and LOP targets**



Notes: Source materials from World Vision, Banyan Global, FHI 360, DAI, Creative Associates, and FADCANIC. As of the writing of this report, the authors did not have confirmation of target and actual employment rates for Bridges Guatemala, EF Honduras, and TVET-SAY Nicaragua.

\* Advance Regional does not expect to have any employment data until FY2019 or later, depending on the duration of training.

\*\* TVET-SAY Nicaragua does not track employment outcomes for partial scholarship recipients.

\*\*\* EFS Nicaragua does not track employment outcomes for basic education beneficiaries. EFS Nicaragua's LOP target is for its last expansion phase, covering FY2017 to FY2019.

**In FY2018, Bridges Guatemala and EF Honduras had their first cohort of completers, with 55 (2 percent) and 203 (31 percent), respectively, finding employment within nine months of training completion.**

- Bridges Guatemala beneficiaries who found employment include some of the 658 completers of the core skills curriculum who also went on to complete a technical/vocational training program that offered them individual technical support, mentorship, or internships in different companies or entrepreneurial initiatives. In Guatemala, Bridges is still building relationships with potential employers and is also in the process of obtaining seed funds for an entrepreneur business plan. At project completion, Bridges Guatemala is targeting an employment rate of 16 percent for *Diplomado* completers. As mentioned earlier, this rate is

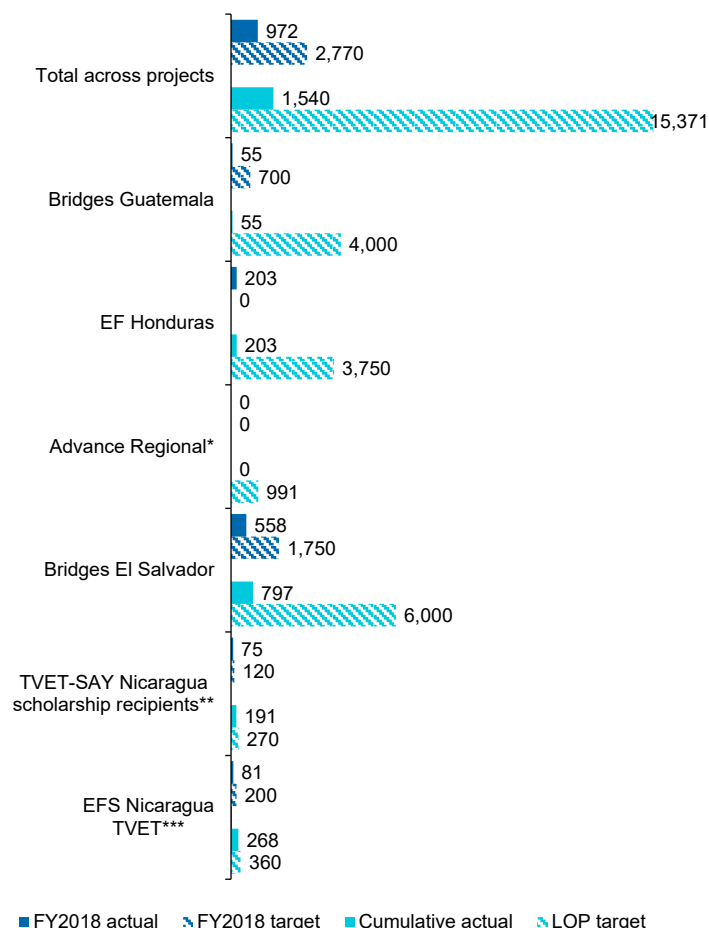
lower than other projects because *Diplomado* completers receive only a few months of soft skills training, and only a subset of these completers move on to complete technical/vocational skills training for specific occupations.

- In Honduras, the EF project is in the initial stages of reaping the benefits of its efforts in bridging activities with training centers and the private sector; with the help of these activities, it expects to reach an LOP employment rate of 50 percent. However, a key employment challenge the project faces is the continued stigmatization of youth from at-risk communities.

**The three other projects with completers in FY2018—Bridges El Salvador, TVET-Nicaragua, and EFS Nicaragua—had 558 (19 percent), 75 (100 percent), and 81 (10 percent) youth with employment within nine months of training completion.** These projects have spent at least two years engaging with the private sector to link their beneficiaries with employment opportunities.

- In FY2018, Bridges El Salvador achieved an employment rate of 19 percent through its work with the private sector, including directly aligning courses with specific occupations so youth are ready to be hired immediately after training completion. Out of the 558 completers with employment, about 1 percent found employment within seven days of completion and the remainder found employment within six months of completion. The FY2018 employment rate was slightly lower than in FY2017, which could be due to the project having more completers than in previous years. The project has increased its focus and efforts on helping youth find employment and expects that more completers will find employment in FY2019.
- The two Nicaragua projects had the added challenge of matching their beneficiaries with employment opportunities during a period of economic downturn caused by the political crisis. TVET-SAY Nicaragua was able to continue its high employment rate from previous years and find employment opportunities for all of its scholarship recipients who completed training in FY2018 (Figure III.5). EFS Nicaragua reported 3 percent of its 799 completers as employed at completion or within a month and an additional 7 percent found employment within six months of completion. The project had lower employment rates (a 16 point drop) than in previous years because close to 40 project graduates lost their jobs during the country's political crisis.

**Figure III.6. Employment numbers: FY2018 actuals, FY2018 targets, cumulative actuals, and LOP targets**



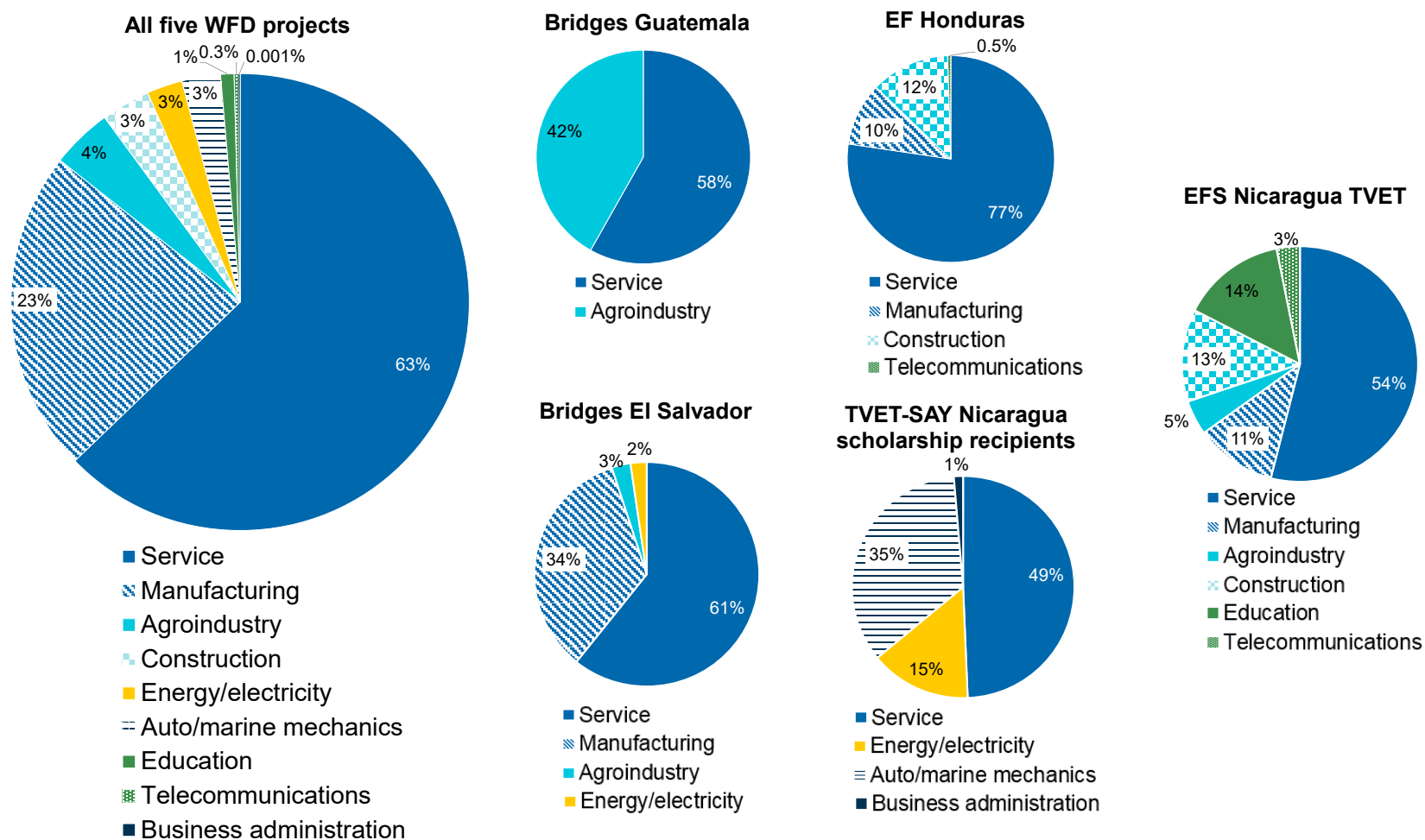
Notes: Source materials from World Vision, Banyan Global, FHI 360, DAI, Creative Associates, and FADCANIC.

\* Advance Regional does not expect to have any employment data until FY2019 or later, depending on the duration of training.

\*\* TVET-SAY Nicaragua does not track employment outcomes for partial scholarship recipients. One beneficiary with employment completed training in FY2017 but was not counted as employed until FY2018.

\*\*\* EFS Nicaragua does not track employment outcomes for basic education beneficiaries since they are not expected to find employment. EFS Nicaragua's LOP target is for its last expansion phase, covering FY2017 to FY2019.

**Although project beneficiaries found employment in FY2018 in a variety of sectors, across projects, 63 percent of completers found employment opportunities in the service sector (Figure III.7).** Many projects identified the service sector (comprising commerce, tourism, and/or services) as one of priority employment through their labor market assessments. Project beneficiaries working in this sector found jobs as waiters, cashiers, sales assistants, product promoters, and restaurant servers, among other jobs. The service sector requires a customer service orientation wherein strong soft skills are in high demand. Manufacturing was another sector with high beneficiary employment across projects. In FY2018, 23 percent of completers found employment in this sector, which includes opportunities in textiles and crafts, as well as testing, inspection, and certifications.

**Figure III.7. FY2018 employment percentages by sector**

Notes: Source materials from World Vision, Banyan Global, DAI, Creative Associates, and FADCANIC. For comparability across projects, we grouped employment in the testing, inspection, and certification industry under the manufacturing sector.

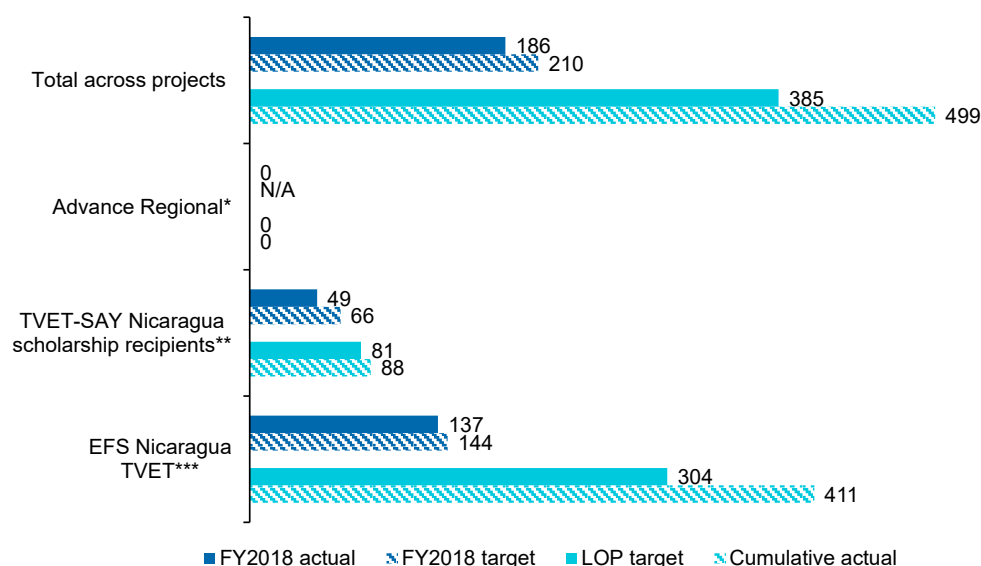
## D. Investing in employability through education

At the time of follow up with beneficiaries, TVET-SAY and EFS Nicaragua also track whether they are pursuing additional formal or informal education programs; such a pursuit would be considered a positive outcome—investing in employability—and an alternate pathway to employment. Advance Regional is also planning to track this outcome when it has its first cohort of completers in FY2019. TVET-SAY Nicaragua and EFS Nicaragua set specific targets for enrollment in other formal or informal education programs, which in FY2018 were 66 and 144 beneficiaries, respectively, and Advance has not yet set targets (Figure III.8).

**In FY2018, the two Nicaragua projects had 186 completers enrolled in education programs outside of the project.** Of the 72 TVET-SAY scholarship completers, 49 furthered their education or received other training within six months. At six months, 137 of the 799 TVET graduates supported by EFS Nicaragua were enrolled in a formal or nonformal education program.

If we combine the outcomes of employment and investing in employment for the two Nicaragua projects that track this, we find that 100 percent of TVET-SAY Nicaragua completers and 27 percent of EFS Nicaragua completers are either employed or enrolled in other education programs.

**Figure III.8. Enrollment in other education program numbers: FY2018 actuals, FY2018 targets, cumulative actuals, and LOP targets**



Notes: Source materials from World Vision, Banyan Global, FHI 360, DAI, Creative Associates, and FADCANIC.

\* Advance Regional does not expect to have any education data until FY2019 or later, depending on the duration of training.

Bridges El Salvador, Bridges Guatemala, and EF Honduras do not track whether project completers enroll in other education programs.

\*\* TVET-SAY Nicaragua does not track education outcomes for partial scholarship recipients.

\*\* EFS Nicaragua does not track education outcomes for basic education beneficiaries since they are not expected to find employment. EFS Nicaragua's LOP target is for its last expansion phase, covering FY2017 to FY2019.

N/A= Advance Regional does not have a target for the number of youth enrolled in other education programs.

## E. Beneficiary outcomes disaggregated by sex and age group

There are some differences by sex and age groups in WFD training program enrollment, completion, and subsequent employment or investment in employment. In Tables E.3 and E.4 in Appendix E, we present beneficiary findings disaggregated by sex and age groups for FY2018.

Across projects, roughly 10 percent more females enrolled in and completed integrated skills trainings in FY2018. Out of the 17,280 beneficiaries<sup>24</sup> that projects enrolled in FY2018, 55 percent were female and 45 percent were male. These percentages indicate a significant increase in female enrollment since FY2017, given that slightly more males than females had enrolled in FY2017.

- Bridges Guatemala, Advance Regional, Bridges El Salvador, EFS Nicaragua, and TVET SAY Nicaragua targeted enrolling at least an equal number of females. In FY2018, all projects enrolled at least an equal number of females in TVET training. Bridges El Salvador made a concerted effort to include more females in traditionally male-dominated industries, such as IT and electricity, and has gained ground in this effort.
- EF Honduras targeted a 60 percent male enrollment because males are the most at risk of being perpetrators of violence; in FY2018, however, only 45 percent of enrollees were male. The project is currently working on several activities aimed at mitigating this challenge, including greater use of male volunteers in recruitment and offering additional occupations that are traditionally more attractive to males.

Although more females completed training in FY2018, across projects, seven percent more males were employed after training completion. More males than females also found employment in previous years and, compared to FY2017, the difference between genders is much lower in FY2018 (seven percent versus 23 percent). Fifty-three percent of male completers (519) found employment in FY2018 compared to 47 percent of female completers (453). The projects report a variety of reasons why fewer females than males found employment, including traditionally female family obligations, such as childcare, and employment discrimination, especially in sectors traditionally dominated by males, such as construction. However, completer enrollment in other education programs, which is only reported by the two Nicaragua projects, was highest for females, with 57 percent of females (106) enrolled compared to 43 percent of males (80).

In FY2018, program enrollment was highest for youth in the 15–17 age range, whereas completion rates and employment rates were highest for those ages 25 to 30. The age group of 15–17 year olds included 35 percent of enrollees (5,973), compared to 30 percent (5,233) for those ages 20 to 24. The age group for 25–30 year olds had the highest completion rate with 55 percent of enrollees (838) completing in FY2018. This age group also had the most success in finding employment, with 26 percent of completers (222) obtaining new or better employment. Only 3 percent of completers ages 15 to 17 found new or better employment opportunities, which can be explained in part by potential employers being required or preferring to hire youth

<sup>24</sup> Altogether projects enrolled 18,340 youth but data disaggregated by sex are only available for 17,280 beneficiaries.



ages 18 and above<sup>25</sup>. Additional information is available in Appendix E. In Honduras, the EF project has decided to focus its recruitment strategies on older youth because experience has demonstrated that they are more likely to find employment. Bridges El Salvador has encouraged youth under age 18 to participate in formal education opportunities, such as flex modalities and technical high school programs offered by the project. Out of the 186 TVET-SAY Nicaragua and EFS Nicaragua completers enrolled in other education programs in FY2018, the 18 to 19 age group had the highest number (62).

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<sup>25</sup> According to the United States Department of Labor, the legal working age is similar across the region. In Guatemala, Nicaragua, and El Salvador the minimum working age is 14, and in Honduras the minimum working age is 16. However, there are additional legal limits to these legal working ages. For example, children under 16 often require parental permission and supervision from the Ministry of Labor in order to work. In addition, some countries, such as Honduras restrict the number of hours per day children can work. For example, children ages 14 and 15 can work no more than four hours per day, and children ages 16 and 17 can work no more than six hours per day. For all countries, children under the age of 18 cannot engage in work that interferes with their schooling or that is hazardous. Hazardous occupations include mining, manufacturing, construction, domestic labor, agriculture, and working in establishments where alcoholic beverages are served. This considerably restricts the opportunities for youth to get hired before the age of 18 (US DOL 2015).

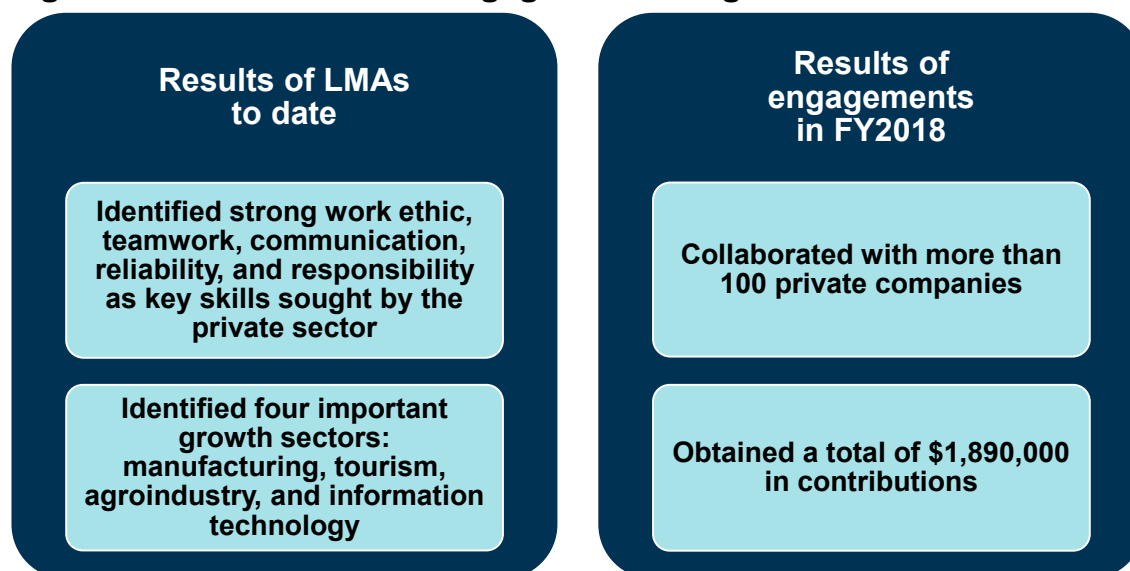
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## IV. UNDERSTANDING AND ENGAGING WITH THE LABOR MARKET

Developing and training youth in areas of interest to employers, growth industries, and competitive sectors has been an important focus of the WFD projects profiled in this report as a means of ensuring their success in helping youth find employment. As detailed in our first annual report, the projects' work in FY2017 was instrumental in assessing each country's labor market (including both the public and private sectors) to tailor their training programs appropriately and begin building relationships with the private sector. By the end of FY2017, four projects had conducted assessments of local labor markets. Two additional projects completed their assessments in FY2018 and two others updated their prior assessments. These LMAs provided additional information on key sectors in each country and the skills demanded by possible employers, as well as employer perceptions of gaps in their current training programs. In addition to generating valuable information, another outcome of these assessments was the development of links and partnerships with the private sector, which could then materialize into possible internship or employment opportunities for youth, or memorandums of understanding (MOUs) and additional sources of funds for projects.

In FY2018, the projects focused on solidifying relationships with the private sector by creating platforms for collaboration, continuing to study the private sector landscape, and designing (or adapting) programming to respond to market needs, thus increasing the chances for youth employability. The private sector also contributed monetarily to projects, indicating a shared investment in the goal of their activities. Figure IV.1 below provides a summary of some of the FY2018 projects' accomplishments related to their engagement with the private sector and other actors in the labor market.

**Figure IV.1. Private sector engagement at a glance**



### A. Understanding labor market needs

LMAs or other assessments of private sector demand for labor have been used across USAID projects, including the WFD projects, to generate evidence for tailoring them to local

conditions. Typically conducted within the first year of project implementation, LMAs provide projects with important local economic, sector, and labor information.

**As of the end of FY2018, all projects have either completed or updated these assessments.** EFS Nicaragua and Advance Regional completed LMAs in FY2015 and FY2017, respectively. TVET-SAY Nicaragua and Bridges El Salvador updated the LMAs they had completed earlier with information from FY2018. EF Honduras and Bridges Guatemala completed market assessments in FY2018. The projects have identified specific growth sectors in each country by using these assessments. Table IV.1 summarizes the sectors each project prioritized as a result of their LMAs. The projects have also identified skills that employers prioritize in hiring decisions and work with employers to understand, and in some cases change, the employers' willingness to hire at-risk youth. In Appendix F, we provide details on LMA methodologies and findings from inception to date (ITD), as well as FY2018 activities.

**Table IV.1. Growth sectors and key skills identified for each country based on results of completed and updated LMAs (Cumulative)**

EF Honduras	Bridges Guatemala	Bridges El Salvador	TVET-SAY Nicaragua	EFS Nicaragua	Advance Regional: Guatemala	Advance Regional: Honduras
SECTORS						
Information technology, service industry (tourism), manufacturing, construction	Agroindustry, service industry (tourism), information technology, and textiles	Service industry (tourism), agroindustry, manufacturing, information technology, and renewable energy	Service industry (tourism, transportation), financial services, agroindustry (particularly coffee and cocoa), information technology	Agroindustry, service industry (tourism, traditional trades), renewable energy, textiles	Agroindustry (processed foods, beverages, vegetables and legumes), textiles, service industry (tourism)	Agroindustry (coffee), textiles, service industry (tourism), health
SKILLS						
Basic skills (reading and writing), interpersonal skills (teamwork, communication, proactivity, work under pressure, verbal and written communication, honesty, and responsibility), and intrapersonal skills (reliability, problem solving, self-teaching, and leadership)	NA	Hard and soft skills, interpersonal skills (honesty, creativity, teamwork, communication, reliability, and responsibility); for the service sector, youth appearance and relationship to gangs is important; the plastics industry seeks very specialized technical skills	Hard skills, depending on type of employment; soft skills (responsibility, honesty, teamwork, and punctuality)	NA	Soft skills, innovation and creativity (for textiles), business and sales skills	Soft skills (strong work ethic); in the tourism sector, technical skills demanded vary, with multiple employers preferring youth that can be trained in house

Notes: Source materials from World Vision, Banyan Global, FHI 360, DAI, Creative Associates, and FADCANIC. Results are cumulative, reflecting all sectors identified from the projects' initial LMAs as well as any updates.

NA= not available.

## **B. Collaboration and engagement with the private sector**

**All projects recognize the importance of working with the private sector to develop links that could help youth find employment.** In FY2018, most of the projects forged or began forging new alliances with the private sector, many of which were inspired by the LMAs from previous years.

- TVET-SAY Nicaragua and EFS Nicaragua forged intra-industry networks between the agricultural and tourism sectors through organized dialogues. The projects also explored new alliances with companies and tried to leverage more cash, but dialogue was suspended due to political unrest.
- Advance Regional forged new alliances between businesses and training centers in the manufacturing, IT, tourism, agroindustry, and health services.<sup>26</sup>
- Bridges El Salvador forged new alliances with companies, particularly in the manufacturing, IT, tourism, agroindustry, and renewable energy sectors. These alliances were key to identifying employment opportunities for youth and developing training programs to create a cadre of trained youth with the skills to seek these employment opportunities.
- EF Honduras operationalized the private sector engagement strategy it had developed in FY2017 and created a new private sector engagement unit to help build alliances moving forward. These alliances were instrumental in the project's labor bridging efforts.
- Bridges Guatemala, now in its first year of full implementation, began establishing alliances with companies to promote youth employment and will continue to do so in FY2019, based on the results of the market assessment conducted in FY2018.

Continued communication with the private sector through engagement events has been key to WFD projects building and strengthening relationships with firms that can employ youth. During FY2018, three projects collaborated with the private sector through a variety of meetings or convenings, such as sector-specific events, business cafes for networking opportunities, and trainings and workshops. Advance Regional designed and hosted the Honduras Employability Forum to discuss opportunities for hiring disadvantaged youth. Bridges El Salvador co-hosted a Corporate Social Responsibility and Innovation Week, during which project staff met 42 different firms to explore internship or employment opportunities for youth. EF Honduras launched its private sector engagement strategy through three high-level events with senior-level government and private sector representatives. The project hosted meetings with the USAID/Honduras Mission director and business leaders, which helped convince some companies to consider at-risk youth for employment.

In addition to continually collaborating with the private sector, Bridges El Salvador and TVET-SAY worked with firms to adjust the work environment to be more amenable to hiring youth. Bridges El Salvador worked to modify internal human resources practices for select firms, such as certifying employees with specific technical skills and incorporating inclusive hiring practices that would facilitate youth recruitment and employment. This work included assisting companies in assessing their recruitment, hiring, employment, and retention policies so they

<sup>26</sup> Advance Regional did not sign any formal partnership agreements with businesses in FY2018.

were more inclusive, and inviting better diversity strategies and nondiscrimination policies, particularly for youth with disabilities. Bridges El Salvador also awarded grants to service providers to help the private sector strengthen their human resources policies overall. TVET-SAY Nicaragua created a platform allowing companies and training centers to communicate about internships. This platform helped forge relationships with human service directors, who visited centers to speak with youth about employment opportunities.

### **C. Monetary and in-kind contributions received by projects**

Cooperation with the private sector underpins all six of the WFD learning agenda projects. In addition to providing valuable qualitative and quantitative data that inform program design, and offering hands-on experience to youth via internships, private sector and other collaborators also provide cash or in-kind contributions to the projects. The projects have worked to obtain funds by disseminating the potential benefits the program brings to the private and public sectors, and seeking partnerships, which then are confirmed through specific MOUs with firms and associations that detail the contributions anticipated by each party signing them. All projects except for Advance Regional signed agreements with new private sector partners in FY2018. Advance Regional signed agreements with four technical tertiary institutions in FY2018 and is working to finalize agreements with the private and public sector in FY2019. These agreements mostly provided funding for new sector-relevant courses and trainings for scholarship recipients. Due to the political crisis in Nicaragua, TVET-SAY Nicaragua had to suspend or postpone some partnerships with private companies.

All projects reporting any funds leveraged received a variety of cash and in-kind contributions from both public and private sector entities. Table IV.2 summarizes the funds contributed<sup>27</sup> to each of the projects in FY2018 against their targets and provides the total amount contributed to some projects since they launched their activities. Of the \$1.5 million that Bridges El Salvador leveraged in FY2018, more than 80 percent was directly from the private sector. All private sector contributions were in kind, including venues for events and training materials. Based on its contributions to date, Bridges El Salvador seems on track to reach its target. TVET-SAY Nicaragua's contributions in FY2018 decreased significantly compared to FY2017. TVET-SAY has, however, already exceeded its LOP target. This outcome in FY2018 was likely the result of continued political instability in the country, which has affected all areas of the project. Despite these challenges and a contracted private sector, TVET-SAY received just over \$8,000 in cash contributions from the private sector, with the remaining support provided in kind, for a total value of \$67,000. Companies were more likely to provide in-kind contributions, given the effect of the political crisis on the Nicaraguan economy. In FY2018, EFS Nicaragua received a significant share (99 percent) of its contributions in kind, which is in line with FY2017. Of the \$151,000 of in-kind contributions received, the private sector contributed \$27,000 and other donors contributed \$117,000. EF Honduras, despite not having an official indicator tracking contributions until FY2018, was able to leverage almost \$100,000 in kind from the private sector. Bridges Guatemala currently does not report on contributions received but plans to begin reporting figures in FY2019. To date, Advance has more than \$2.5 million in counterpart commitments; its current LOP target for cost sharing is more than \$6 million.

<sup>27</sup> Note: "contribution" refers to both leveraged funds and cost-sharing.

**Table IV.2. FY2018 monetary and in-kind contributions received against cumulative numbers and project targets, by private and public sectors**

Time frame	Bridges Guatemala	EF Honduras	Advance Regional	Bridges EI Salvador	TVET-SAY Nicaragua	EFS Nicaragua <sup>b</sup>
FY2018	\$0	\$98,992	\$0	\$1,570,020	\$67,404	\$153,051
Cumulative	\$0	\$98,992	\$2,563,201	\$2,767,653	\$578,889	\$292,861
LOP target <sup>a</sup>	\$1,000,000	NA	\$6,170,000	\$5,000,000	\$529,250	\$180,000

Notes: Source materials from World Vision, Banyan Global, DAI, FHI360, Creative Associates, and FADCANIC.

<sup>a</sup> Bridges Guatemala and Advance Regional currently do not have a funds-leveraged indicator. Bridges Guatemala anticipates adding an indicator in FY2019. EF Honduras added a funds-leveraged indicator late in FY2017 but has not set an LOP target.

<sup>b</sup> EFS Nicaragua has used this indicator only since FY2015. Cumulative and LOP target are for FY2017 and FY2018 only.

LOP = life of project; NA = not available.



## V. WFD SYSTEM STRENGTHENING: IMPROVING THE WFD ENABLING ENVIRONMENT AND SERVICE DELIVERY

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A strong workforce development and placement system is needed to support the effectiveness and sustainability of WFD programming. The system encompasses all resources, activities, people, and public and private institutions focused on improving, expanding, and sustaining desired outcomes, as defined for the education system overall in the USG Strategy on International Basic Education 2018 (USG 2018). WFD system-strengthening activities can involve increasing the capacity of the system itself or of service providers within the system to deliver relevant and high quality services that help youth develop the skills needed for future success in the workforce. In this report, we call activities focused on strengthening the system as a whole *strengthening of the enabling environment*;<sup>28</sup> we call those focused on improving the delivery of training and job placement services by providers *service provider strengthening* (USG 2018).

Most WFD programming supported by USAID includes at least some activities aimed at enabling the environment or strengthening service providers. WFD activities focused on enabling the environment typically aim to create systemic and institutional change through policy reforms, capacity-development support to government institutions overseeing the WFD system within a country, and public-private partnerships. The service providers strengthened by WFD activities may include vocational schools or universities that are part of formal schooling and technical/vocational training offered by centers or NGOs outside of the formal education sector. WFD service provider-strengthening activities often include making curricula more demand driven, pedagogical improvements, and management or partnership capacity building (MSI 2018).

In Table V.1, we show the different activities each project is undertaking with the aim of strengthening the WFD ecosystem.

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<sup>28</sup> Some of the literature also uses *policy and systems strengthening*.

**Table V.1. WFD system strengthening activities, by type and project**

Type of organizational-strengthening activity	Bridges Guatemala	EF Honduras	Advance Regional	Bridges El Salvador	TVET-SAY Nicaragua	EFS Nicaragua
<b>Enabling environment</b>						
<i>1. National WFD policy</i>						
Assessing policy constraints to determine support				X		
Revising, updating, or creating new policies				X	X	
<i>2. National WFD institutions</i>						
Assessing capacity and needs to determine support		X			X	
Other strengthening activities for national institutions (developing skills and improving systems)		X		X	X	
<b>Service providers</b>						
Conducting organizational capacity assessments to determine support			X	X	X	X*
Revising, updating, or creating new programs	X	X	X	X	X	X
Other strengthening activities (developing skills and improving systems)	X	X	X	X	X	X

Note: Source materials from World Vision, Banyan Global, DAI, FHI360, Creative Associates, and FADCANIC.

An X Indicates the project is engaging or has engaged in the activity.

\* EFS Nicaragua assessed organizational capacities at the onset of the projects but TVET SAY Nicaragua has continued to track progress throughout the life of the project.

## **A. Enabling environment strengthening**

Since their inception, three projects have worked to improve the WFD system by supporting new policies or strengthening institutions that advocate for youth and WFD initiatives. Bridges El Salvador conducted a policy assessment in FY2017 that has guided some of its support in strengthening the enabling environment for youth such as supporting WFD laws and law that advocate for people with disabilities. TVET-SAY created RENET, a national technical/vocational education network. RENET currently includes members from private sector chambers (since its inception), private TVET centers, and nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) as part of its network. This inclusion presents a unique opportunity in Nicaragua because RENET can convene TVET centers and private sector representatives to develop improved TVET services and employment opportunities. Appendix G provides additional details on how projects assessed and strengthened their enabling environments.

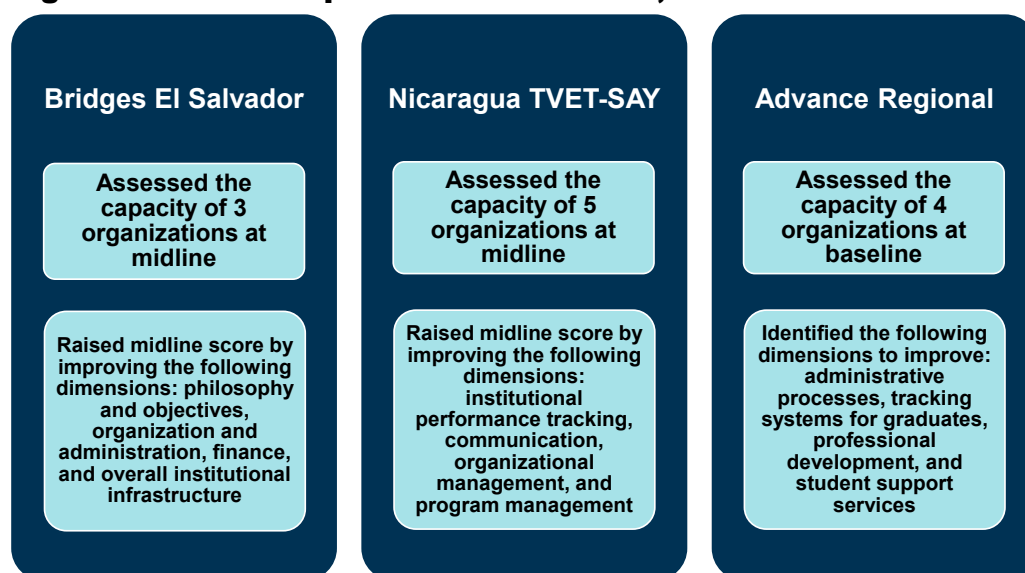
## **B. Service provider strengthening: university and training centers**

All projects deliver their WFD training through existing local organizations, which makes the capacity of these service providers instrumental to the success and sustainability of the programs. Although the capacity needs of each of these organizations vary, all projects have worked to improve curricula, training and management capacity, and administrative processes.

**Assessing capacity and/or needs through organizational capacity assessments (OCAs).**

Three projects (Advance Regional, TVET-SAY Nicaragua, and Bridges El Salvador) monitor service providers' capacity and needs at several points using an organizational capacity assessment tool (USAID 2016). By revising and creating new curricula, training teachers, and updating management systems, these assessments hopefully will show improvements by the end of the projects. By FY2018, Advance Regional had completed an initial skills and knowledge assessment of faculty and staff at each of the nine institutions. These baseline studies identified common needs, such as training in pedagogical strategies, soft skills, and effective assessment techniques. Advance Regional also completed the deep-dive institutional capacity assessment (ICA) of each university to measure technical and operational capacity in the areas of curriculum development; faculty and staff professional development; recruitment, admissions, and student support services; labor bridging services; and capacity to deliver student scholarships. The project used the ICA results to develop and implement capacity-building strategy (CBS) activities within each targeted university and degree program. Based on these results, it identified a professional development plan that will be implemented in FY2019 to enhance professional skills in encouraging student motivation, among other topics. Going forward, Advance Regional will measure progress by monitoring curriculum development and the number of faculty and staff who are trained.

In FY2018, Bridges El Salvador and TVET-SAY Nicaragua continued assessing the organizational capacity of grantee training centers by identifying the baseline capacity of each organization and then tracking improvements over time. Bridges El Salvador used the Technical Vocational Education and Training Capacity Assessment Tool (TVET CAT) to measure the degree to which an organization meets a series of best practice standards in a variety of capacity areas. Assessments are conducted twice with each WFD service provider—one to serve as a baseline and the second to measure improvements. The baseline results guide the technical assistance and support that Bridges El Salvador provides. Additionally, the project supports CSOs working with vulnerable youth through the USAID's OCA to determine the baseline capacity of each CSO and identify areas that need improvement. In FY2018, Bridges El Salvador conducted the second assessments for three training centers, each showing improvements in different areas. Improvement was particularly visible in the following categories: philosophy and objectives, organization and administration, finance, and overall institutional infrastructure. In FY2018, TVET-SAY Nicaragua evaluated five training centers and surpassed its OCA target by improving institutional performance tracking, communication, organizational management, and program management. Figure V.1 provides a summary of service provider improvements based on OCA results in FY2018. Appendix G provides additional details on OCA methodology and findings, as well as a summary of the progress to date around strengthening programs and service providers.

**Figure V.1. Service provider OCA results, FY2018**

**Revising, updating, or creating new WFD programs.** All programs continued to revise, update, or create new WFD programs for service providers. Table V.2 summarizes project results for this indicator. The projects helped design new curricula tailored to the needs of employers and the labor market. Appendix G provides additional details on the types of programs these projects supported.

**Table V.2. FY2018 new, revised, or accredited programs against cumulative numbers and project targets**

Progress to date (FY2018 numbers compared to targets)	Bridges Guatemala	EF Honduras	Advance Regional	Bridges El Salvador	TVET-SAY Nicaragua	EFS Nicaragua
Number of new, revised, or accredited programs <sup>a</sup> (FY2018)	4	13	9	0	3	8
Number of new, revised, or accredited programs (cumulative)	6	16	9	18	15	NA
Target number of new, revised, or accredited programs	18	TBD	21	12	32	NA

Notes: Source materials from World Vision, Banyan Global, FHI 360, DAI, Creative Associates, and FADCANIC.

<sup>a</sup> This indicator varies by project. For Bridges Guatemala, it is “number of technical courses developed.” For EF Honduras, it is “number of new or revised training curricula (with market relevance) developed with USG support.” For Advance Regional, it is “number of USG-supported tertiary programs with curricula revised with private and/or public sector employers’ input or on the basis of market research.” For Bridges El Salvador, it is “number of new industry-recognized certifications and/or accreditations developed.”

NA = not available.

**Other strengthening activities for service providers.** Many of the projects provide constant technical assistance to service providers throughout the project life cycle. This assistance includes developing skills through professional development for staff and faculty, and enhancing systems by improving infrastructure, operations and administration, communications,

and financial and data management. Together, these activities have helped strengthen 44 service providers to date. See Table V.3 for more information on the numbers of service providers strengthened. Figure V.2 provides a summary of some project accomplishments in strengthening service providers, both in FY2018 and cumulative. For more information on other service provider-strengthening activities, please see Appendix G.

**Table V.3. FY2018, cumulative, and project targets for service providers strengthened**

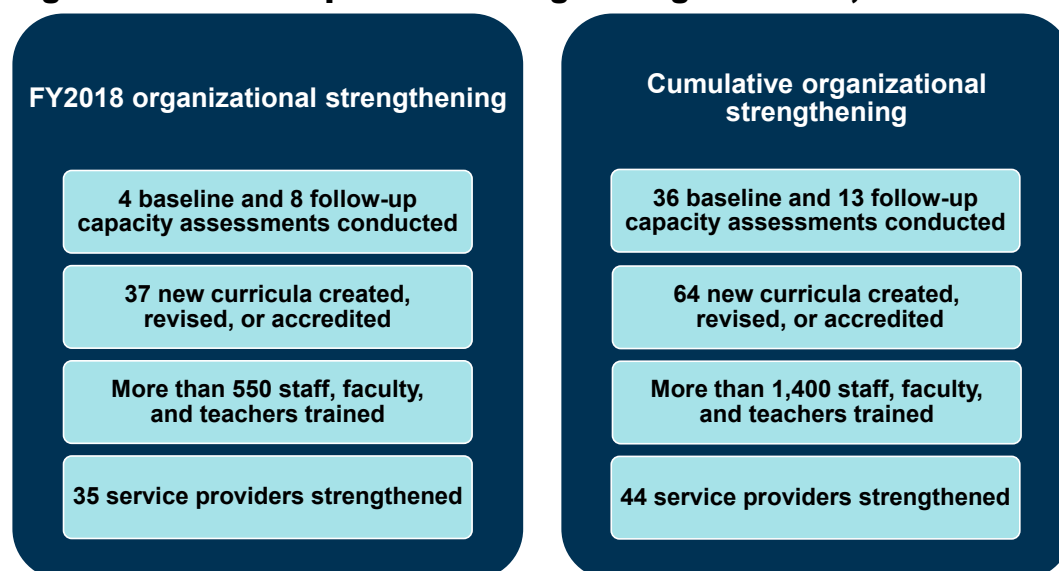
Number of providers strengthened	Bridges Guatemala	EF Honduras	Advance Regional	Bridges El Salvador	TVET-SAY Nicaragua	EFS Nicaragua
FY2018 numbers of providers strengthened <sup>a</sup>	11	NA	5	11	8	NA
Cumulative numbers of providers strengthened <sup>a</sup>	11	NA	9	16	8	NA
Target numbers of providers strengthened	25	NA	9	20	8	NA

Notes: Source materials from World Vision, Banyan Global, FHI 360, DAI, Creative Associates, and FADCANIC.

<sup>a</sup> This indicator varies by project. For Bridges Guatemala, it corresponds to “number of education service providers trained by Puentes Project.” For Bridges El Salvador, this indicator maps to “workforce development service providers strengthened by USG effort.” For TVET-SAY Nicaragua, this indicator is tracked by number of TVETs supported.

NA = not available.

**Figure V.2. Service provider strengthening activities, FY2018 and cumulative**



Note: EFS Nicaragua is not included in these total counts since it does not have a contractual agreement to strengthen service providers.

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## VI. SUMMARY

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Each of the six projects on which this report focuses works in very challenging environments where insecurity is rampant and opportunities for advancement are hard to come by. In addition, the target beneficiaries often have limited skills and education attainment levels. Despite these downward pressures, to date, the six WFD projects have designed multi-component programs that train youth in skills the private sector demands. Projects are continually updating their training programs to increase their retention numbers and ensure that beneficiaries graduate with job-readiness skills. In an effort to create successful programs adapted to the context but that also reflect the needs of employers, projects have developed a range of assessments and tools that could be applied to future WFD interventions. Appendix H provides a list of the tools and assessments the projects have either developed or used.

As of FY2018, over 23,000 youth had enrolled in USAID-funded WFD programs across the six projects profiled in this report. Over 10,000 had completed the training, and many more were expected to complete the multi-disciplinary programs in the coming years. In parallel to training disadvantaged youth, projects are working closely with the private sector to influence the design of these training programs, provide internship or other job training opportunities, and serve as ultimate employers for these youth. As of FY2018, roughly 1,500 youth found employment in a variety of sectors and we anticipate that this number will continue to grow exponentially as projects invest more in labor bridging activities and employers realize that youth trained through these WFD programs are employment ready.

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## **APPENDIX A:**

## **LITERATURE**

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In this appendix, we summarize the link between human capital and security and how WFD development interventions can affect human capital accumulation, employment and poverty.

### **A. Link between human capital and security**

Youth unemployment and crime are consistently and positively related. Empirical evidence has found that a one percentage point decrease in youth unemployment leads to 0.34 less homicides per 100,000 inhabitants (Chioda 2017). Although employment may not necessarily end involvement in criminal activities, better employment opportunities are more likely to reduce it (Chioda 2017). Better employment with a higher income discourages youth from participating in crime by increasing the cost of engaging in criminal behavior instead of earning a formal income (Lochner and Moretti 2004). Therefore, human capital investments can discourage participation in criminal behavior by increasing the prospects of youth finding better employment opportunities.

Education plays a crucial role as a form of investment in human capital. A better education can help youth find higher quality employment, while also giving them the opportunity to engage in positive activities instead of criminal ones. The empirical literature finds a highly negative correlation between measures of crime and education (Ewert and Wildhagen 2011; Carvalho and Soares 2016). Formal education can influence crime and violence through cognitive development (the construction of thought processes such as problem solving and decision making), as well as noncognitive (related to motivation, integrity, and interpersonal interaction including personal attributes such as temperament and attitudes) and emotional development. For example, school-based social and emotional learning (SEL) programs promote a variety of noncognitive skills, such as skills to recognize and manage emotions, establish positive relationships, and make responsible decisions. There exists compelling evidence of a strong association between noncognitive development and positive youth outcomes, including reduced crime and violence (Gutman and Schoon 2013). To find employment, youth must also be equipped with the skills needed and valued in the labor market. Thus, a policy priority of Central American countries is providing youth with such skills through WFD training programs.

### **B. Overview of the evidence of how WFD interventions can affect human capital accumulation, employment, and poverty**

Youth unemployment is a critical global challenge. There is broad consensus in the literature that early joblessness has long-lasting consequences, not only for individuals and their families, but also for societies as a whole. Research indicates that prolonged or repeated periods of early joblessness can impose a lifetime earnings penalty of up to 20 percent and lead to more joblessness later in life (Gregg and Tominey 2005). Disconnected youth are also more vulnerable to suffering from poor physical and mental health and to becoming involved in the consumption and trade of drugs, crime, and possibly even terrorism (International Monetary Fund 2012; Ali 2013). The global scale and long-lasting consequences of youth unemployment have resulted in the rollout of many youth WFD programs around the world. Some of those programs have focused mainly on the provision of technical and cognitive (thought processes) skills, but an increasing number include a variety of complementary components such as life skills and on-the-job trainings.

The current literature on WFD programs examines the effects of multicomponent programs. A review of 54 studies published between 2001 and 2012 found positive results from performance evaluations of specific multicomponent vocational training programs, especially for countries from Latin America and the Caribbean, echoing findings from the World Bank (Almeida et al. 2012) that integrated programs combining on-the-job training, classroom components, skills training, and counseling are the most effective (Olenik 2013). This section provides a summary of the evidence on these different components.

Most of the existing literature explores the effects of WFD interventions on skills improvements and labor market outcomes. WFD interventions typically measure improvements in cognitive skills through assessments administered before and after the interventions and improvements in noncognitive skills through self-reported surveys or observer reports (Kautz et al. 2014). For labor market outcomes, evaluations of WFD interventions typically focus on short-term employment and earnings measures, since conducting longer-term follow-ups is more difficult. Some WFD interventions also conduct labor market assessments (LMAs) to understand what skills employers are looking for, and target interventions to those skills (Bertrand et al. 2017).

Security outcomes such as violence prevention and crime reduction are additional long-term impacts of interest for WFD interventions targeting youth living in high-crime areas. However, given the difficulty of an intervention having immediate effects on these outcomes, there is limited evidence related to the effects of WFD programming on such outcomes.

**Technical and vocational skills training.** Technical and vocational skills training is a core component of most WFD programs. Aside from formal primary and secondary schooling, these types of training commonly incorporate programming to facilitate cognitive skills development. The trainings typically attempt to compensate for low-quality or incomplete formal education, and teach trade-specific skills. The evidence indicates that employers pay high premiums to contract workers with higher academic skills (Tyler 2004). However, the literature has only found positive results for classroom-based technical and vocational skills trainings alone in very specific cases. In the U.S., Schochet and colleagues (2001 and 2008) conducted a randomized evaluation of Jobs Corps, a national training program providing general education, social skills, and parenting and health education, along with vocational training. They found improvements in educational attainment, employment rates, and earnings; however, results for most participants faded after the first few years. While, the evaluation of Job Corps also found reductions in arrests, convictions, and incarceration time, rigorous evaluations of two similar programs, the National Guard Youth ChalleNGE and YouthBuild, did not find any effects on violence and crime outcomes (Millenky et al. 2011 and Miller et al. 2018). Maitra and Mani's (2017) study of a vocational education program for young women in India found slightly positive effects on employment (wage and self-employment and earnings). Most recently, McKenzie (2017) reviewed 12 studies on the impact of vocational training program. The review found that only three studies (out of nine) saw a statistically significant impact on employment and two studies (out of nine) found a statistically significant impact on earnings. There is also mixed evidence on the effects of providing training vouchers on employment outcomes, with results varying by the program's target populations (Huber et al. 2018; Görlitz and Tamm 2016; Kaplan et al. 2015).

**On-the-job training.** The most promising technical and vocational skills training programs are combined with on-the-job training components (Bertrand et al. 2017). Technical and vocational training programs with apprenticeships or internships had some positive effects on employment, but it is unclear which program component or combination of components is responsible for the positive effects. A randomized evaluation of *Jóvenes en Acción* in Colombia found that three months of classroom training followed by a three-month apprenticeship increased the probability of employment and led to higher wages (Attanasio et al. 2011). In the Dominican Republic, a randomized evaluation of the *Juventud y Empleo* program found that job training combined with a short-term internship had positive impacts on wages one year after the training, but no effects on employment (Card et al. 2011). A modified version of the *Juventud y Empleo* program that provided better internship placement support found increases in the probability of men working in the formal sector (Ibarraran et al. 2014). Existing evidence also suggests the more successful programs are those that involve the private sector in curriculum and training-methods development or in providing internships or apprenticeships (Hirshleifer et al. 2014; Chakravarty et al. 2016).

**Life or soft skills training.** Another key best practice of WFD interventions is to complement technical and vocational training with noncognitive skills development. There is a growing body of evidence from developed countries on the effectiveness of soft skills interventions; unfortunately, there is not a clear consensus on which soft skills are most critical for success in which labor markets. Kautz et al. (2014) define noncognitive skills as “the personal attributes not thought to be measured by IQ tests or achievement tests. These attributes go by many names in the literature, including soft skills, noncognitive abilities, character skills, and socioemotional skills.” Evidence on the importance of noncognitive skills for success in the labor market comes from employer surveys and roundtables (Kautz et al. 2014). Kluve et al. (2016) found no clear evidence on a connection between soft skills and better labor outcomes among young people worldwide. The existing literature includes programs that found a positive correlation between life or transferable skills and various employment-related outcomes for youth, especially TVET programs that combined technical and vocational training with training on transferable skills (Kautz et al. 2014; Rankin et al. 2015; Tripney et al. 2013). A recent review that focuses on poor and fragile states found that investments in soft skills during early adulthood seem very promising, especially when combined with investments in technical and vocational skills (Blattman and Ralston 2015).

**Cognitive behavior therapy (CBT).** In addition to life or soft skills training, WFD programs often also include cognitive behavior therapy (CBT). Most of the evidence on the effects of CBT interventions arises from observational and non-experimental studies and the outcomes are mostly confined to behavioral indicators or reported behavior, therefore additional research is needed in order to understand the effect of CBT as a part of WFD programming. Below we summarize the rigorous evidence showing CBT’s positive effects on behavior outcomes. Hoffman et al. (2012) define modern CBT as “a family of interventions that combine a variety of cognitive, behavioral, and emotion-focused techniques.” CBT has been effective for the treatment of anxiety disorders, somatoform disorders, bulimia, anger and control problems, general stress disorders, and criminal behaviors (Hofmann et al. 2012). In the case of developing countries, Blattman and Ralston (2015) have argued that CBT has potential as a tool to improve employment outcomes, particularly when coupled with technical and life skills training. One rigorous evaluation of an eight-week CBT intervention in Liberia found that those receiving the

therapy experienced a reduction in antisocial behaviors, but only those who received both therapy and a \$200 cash grant had a persistent reduction (Blattman et al. 2015). Cook et al. (2014) implemented a randomized evaluation of a Chicago Public Schools program offering academic and social-cognitive training to disadvantaged male youth. The study found significant increases in math test scores, higher expected graduation rates, and a large (but not statistically significant) reduction in criminal behavior during the program year (Cook et al. 2014). The Job Corps and ChalleNGe residential programs for at-risk youth in the United States also included social and character skills components, but their evaluations found only short-term effects on crime and earnings (Schochet et al. 2008; Millenky et al. 2012).

**Self-employment interventions.** WFD programs often also offer interventions intended to help youth obtain self-employment, either in the formal or informal sector. Cash or credit programs combined with training have been shown to be effective, although usually only in the short term. Self-employment interventions are important in Central America given the prevalence of small businesses (*microempresas*) and the high rates of employment in the informal sector. These interventions include entrepreneurship and business skills training, as well as the provision of initial capital to start a business. Blattman et al. (2016) looked at the impact of providing vocational training and seed capital to groups of poor, unemployed youths in rural Uganda to help them become self-employed artisans. Compared to youth in the control group, grant recipients were twice as likely to be engaged in a skilled trade as nonrecipients were, and had substantially higher earnings (38 percent) and work hours (17 percent). Blattman and Ralston (2015) review found that “capital-centric” programs, defined as interventions providing “hand-outs” such as start-up grants, cash infusions, and in-kind capital transfers, can cost-effectively stimulate self-employment and relieve credit constraints, sometimes in combination with skills training, mentoring, or other services (Banerjee et al. 2015; Bandiera et al. 2013; Fafchamps et al. 2011).

**Evidence gaps.** The existing literature on the effects of WFD interventions in developing countries has several important gaps. Overall, there is an important knowledge gap regarding what combinations of services are most effective at improving employment and wages and in what contexts specific combinations are effective. Moreover, there is a lack of evidence on the effect of WFD interventions on intermediate outcomes, including behavior, knowledge, and attitudes, as well as longer-term outcomes of interest in addition to employment and income, such as crime and violence prevention.

There are also gaps related to the evidence on the effects of different WFD components:

**Technical and vocational skills training.** Few of the existing evaluations collected information beyond one year after training, so there is limited knowledge about longer-term effects.

**On-the-job training.** The existing evidence does not disentangle the effects of apprenticeships or internships from other WFD program components.

**Life or soft skills training.** Evidence on the effectiveness of soft skills training is limited and mixed; therefore, there is a need to explore the potential of this training in developing countries, especially when combined with the provision of technical skills.

**CBT.** As yet, there is no evidence that CBT programs affect employment outcomes, even when they are combined with other WFD components; more evidence is also needed on whether they can be generalized to other developing countries and groups of at-risk youth.

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## **APPENDIX B:**

### **CONTEXT IN WHICH THE SIX WFD PROJECTS ARE WORKING**

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In this appendix, we describe the context of the Central American countries where the six WFD projects covered in this report are working—Guatemala, Honduras, El Salvador, and Nicaragua. For each country, we discuss the socio-economic context as well as development assistance in the region.

## **A. Socio-economic context of WFD project countries**

**El Salvador.** El Salvador has a human development index (HDI) of 0.674 and is considered a “medium human development” country, ranking 121st in the world out of 189 countries (UNDP). El Salvador has historically enjoyed healthy levels of growth, but in the last five years, annual GDP growth averaged 2.3 percent, making it one of the countries with the lowest growth in Central America (World Bank 2019a). Although poverty levels have decreased since 2007, El Salvador reflects modest poverty reduction and high rural poverty. In 2016, 32% percent of households were living below the national poverty line. In education, youth ages 15 to 24 completed an average of 9.3 years of schooling in 2017 (ECLAC). The lower secondary school completion rate was 78 percent in 2017 and the upper secondary school completion rate was just 27 percent in 2013 for adults ages 25 and older (World Bank 2017a, 2018). Out of 192 countries, El Salvador has the highest intentional homicide rate (unlawful death purposefully inflicted on a person by another person), at 83 per 100,000 inhabitants in 2016 (World Bank 2016). Overall unemployment is at 4.5 percent and youth unemployment is 10 percent (World Bank 2019e, 2019f). In 2015, El Salvador had 1,436,000 emigrants, representing 23 percent of its population (slightly higher than the 2010 percentage).

**Guatemala.** Guatemala is a “medium human development” country with an HDI of 0.65 and ranks 127th in the world out of 189 countries (UNDP). The country is the largest economy in Central America and has experienced one of the strongest economic performances in the region, with 3 percent economic growth in 2016 and 2.8 percent growth in 2017. In spite of this, the country has some of the highest levels of inequality in the region. In 2015, 59 percent of households were living below the national poverty line; over half of these poor households were from indigenous areas (World Bank 2019b). Educational attainment for youth averaged only 7.2 years in 2014 (ECLAC). The completion rate was 63 percent in lower secondary school in 2016 and 27 percent in upper secondary for adults ages 25 and older in 2014 (World Bank 2017a, 2018). Guatemala also faces significant crime and violence levels, with 27 intentional homicides per 100,000 inhabitants in 2016 (ranking 15th globally) (World Bank 2016). Overall unemployment in the country stood at 2.7 percent in 2018, and youth unemployment was at 5.6 percent in 2018 (World Bank 2019e, 2019f). Guatemala’s emigrant population in 2015 was 1,018,000, which is approximately 6 percent of its population (the same percentage as the previous measure in 2010).

**Honduras.** Honduras has an HDI of 0.617 and is also considered a “medium human development” country, with a world rank of 133 out of 189 countries (UNDP). In 2017, Honduras’ economy grew by 4.8 percent and by 3.5 percent in 2018. Despite this favorable growth, poverty levels remain a major challenge in the country with 63 percent of households living in poverty in 2016 (World Bank 2019c). Another challenge is educational attainment, which in 2017 averaged 8.4 years for youth ages 15 to 24 (ECLAC). Secondary completion also remains low, at 47 percent for lower secondary and 25 percent for upper secondary among adults ages 25 and older in 2016 (World Bank 2017a, 2018). The country has one of the highest

homicide rates in the world, with 57 intentional homicides per 100,000 inhabitants in 2016 (ranking 2nd globally) (World Bank 2016). Overall unemployment was 4.4 percent in 2018, and youth unemployment was 8.1 percent in 2018 (World Bank 2019e, 2019f). In 2015, Honduras had 649,000 emigrants, representing 7 percent of its population (the same percentage as in 2010).

**Nicaragua.** Nicaragua has an HDI of 0.658 and is considered a “medium human development” country, with a world rank of 124 of 189 countries (UNDP). Although economic growth in Nicaragua is among the highest in Central America, with 4.5 percent in 2017, the country is suffered a contraction of 3.8 percent in 2018 due to social and political unrest. Although the country has made progress in decreasing poverty levels, close to 25 percent of the population lived in poverty (World Bank 2019d). Nicaragua’s RACCN and RACCS are its poorest regions, with more than half of their populations living in extreme poverty (National Development Information Institute 2014). In 2014, Nicaraguan youth averaged 8.2 years of schooling (ECLAC). The lower secondary school completion rate was 90 percent in 2015 (World 2018). When compared to other Central American countries, Nicaragua has a lower homicide rate, with 7.4 homicides per 100,000 inhabitants in 2016 (ranking 73rd globally) (World Bank 2016). However, homicides rates at the sub-national level vary significantly. For example, the RACCS and RACCN had 28 and 20 homicides per 100,000 inhabitants respectively (OSAC 2018). This also does not take into consideration the political crisis in the country in 2018. Since 2017, the country’s unemployment rate has remained below 5 percent, but Nicaragua had a youth unemployment rate of 8.8 percent in 2018 (World Bank 2019e, World Bank 2019f). In 2015, Nicaragua had 639,000 emigrants, 10.5 percent of its population (a percentage similar to the one in 2010).

## **B. Development activities in Central America**

To address the socio-economic challenges faced by these countries, national governments and other international actors are currently financing a wide range of activities. These activities include interventions intended to stimulate economic sectors, develop human capital, improve security, and strengthen government institutions.

### **1. National governments**

Each of the countries covered by the six WFD projects has a national or multilateral development plan that began between 2012 through 2015 and guides the actions taken within the country to facilitate economic development. All plans in the region include activities to stimulate economic opportunity, develop human capital, and improve security and governance. In 2014, the governments of the Northern Triangle countries (El Salvador, Guatemala, and Honduras) agreed on the guidelines of a regional plan called the Plan of the Alliance for Prosperity in the Northern Triangle that includes specific guidelines for undertaking joint and simultaneous measures in the medium term to improve each country’s development conditions. Northern Triangle governments are teaming with the private sector and the international community to support the plan’s financing and execution. The plan’s strategic actions have the following aims: (1) stimulate the productive sector to create economic opportunities, (2) develop opportunities for the people of each country, (3) improve public safety and enhance access to the legal system, and (4) strengthen institutions to increase people’s trust in the state. In Nicaragua, the government updated its development priorities in the 2018–2021 National Plan for Human

Development (*Programa Nacional de Desarrollo Humano*, or PNDH).<sup>29</sup> The strategic plan consists of 18 guidelines for the productive and social transformation of the country, including efforts to encourage economic sector productivity, increase investments, and provide assistance to at-risk youth.

## 2. Multilateral and other non-U.S. international donors

Numerous international actors are financing development projects in the region that cover a breadth of activities focused on human capital development, security, infrastructure improvements, private sector growth, and climate change. The Inter-American Development Bank (IDB) represents the main source of multilateral financing in the LAC region and has a partnership with each country to support key areas of development, covering social inclusion, human capital investments, public finance strengthening, private sector productivity, and infrastructure improvements. The World Bank also has a Country Partnership Framework (CPF) with each country (World Bank 2017b). In the region, it focuses on economic strengthening, improving infrastructure, and investing in human capital. Additionally, several European actors are financing development efforts in the region. For example, the European Union's 2014–2020 Regional Programme for Latin America includes over one billion USD in assistance, with a focus in Central America on security and the rule of law, climate change and disaster management, and regional economic integration.<sup>30</sup> Other key European actors in the LAC region include the Spanish Agency for International Cooperation and Development, the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation, and the Luxembourg Development Cooperation, with varying levels of investment

## 3. U.S. assistance to Central America

U.S. assistance to Central America, and its associated funding levels, have shifted depending on the strategic interests and other U.S. objectives of each administration. The U.S. Strategy for Central America was developed by the Obama Administration as a whole government initiative to provide an overarching framework and facilitate coordination for all U.S. government efforts in Central America- including the existing Central America Regional Security Initiative (CARSI). The Trump administration has continued to support the Central America Strategy and its three main lines of action (prosperity, governance and security) though the priority has shifted from improving governance and economic growth to improving the rule of law and security. The Trump Administration's updated Central America Strategy intends to foster an environment that decreases illegal immigration by combating rampant crime and violence, addressing corruption and impunity, disrupting the activities of transnational criminal organizations, and providing greater economic opportunity. Congress has appropriated approximately \$1.4 billion for the first two years of the Central America Strategy (FY2016 and FY2017), with approximately \$1.1 billion allocated to the Northern Triangle countries or to multi-country programs that included

<sup>29</sup> The government of Nicaragua updated the original PNDH covering development priorities through 2012 to 2016.

<sup>30</sup> The Programme consists of two components. The first is the Continental Programme, which focuses on security, good governance, inclusive and sustainable human development, environmental sustainability and climate change, and higher education in Central America, Mexico, Argentina, Bolivia, Brazil, Chile, Colombia, Cuba, Ecuador, Paraguay, Peru, Uruguay, and Venezuela. The second component is the Sub-Regional Programme for Central America, which focuses on security and rule of law, climate change and disaster management, and regional economic integration.

them (CRS, 2019b). Geographically, the Northern Triangle countries of El Salvador, Guatemala and Honduras, receive most of the funds.

In addition to bilateral aid, the U.S. government has supported Central America's security efforts through CARSI since FY2008 as a part of the Central America strategy. The activities funded by CARSI fall under three broad categories: (1) narcotics interdiction and law enforcement support, (2) institutional capacity building focused on the long-term capacity of law enforcement and justice sector institutions, and (3) prevention programs targeting the conditions that make communities vulnerable to crime and violence. Several of the WFD projects covered in this report receive some CARSI funding, as they are designed to contribute not only to positive training and employment outcomes, but also to violence prevention.

**APPENDIX C:**  
**WFD PROJECT DESCRIPTIONS**

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## A. WFD projects support the Central America Strategy

USAID currently funds a diverse set of activities related to workforce development under the Central America Strategy's prosperity pillar. This pillar includes both demand- and supply-side interventions for increasing employment in Central American countries. Demand-side interventions focus on supporting enterprise growth and productivity to create more employment opportunities (Fox and Kaul 2017). Supply-side interventions are designed to improve the skills and workplace preparedness of youth so they are more marketable to employers, by both working directly with youth, as well as with businesses and training centers to ensure the alignment of youth WFD programs with their labor force needs. Supply-side interventions may also offer labor market bridging support to help youth find new or better employment. The WFD activities funded by USAID are important supply-side interventions for addressing Central America's youth unemployment challenge; USAID has other projects related to the demand side, primarily economic growth projects, that are not discussed in this report.

USAID's WFD activities also support the Central America Strategy's security pillar by aiming to improve citizen security in Central America. To achieve this goal, many WFD activities in Central America target youth who are susceptible to violence and crime. Most of the WFD projects included in this report target youth at risk of violence and/or living in high crime areas. Through WFD training, at-risk youth can improve their technical/vocational and soft skills to help find new or better employment. New or better employment opportunities can reduce at-risk youth's susceptibility to violence and criminal behavior (Jacob and Lefgren 2003 and Lochner and Moretti 2004). Moreover, the soft skill trainings offered by WFD projects can also contribute to increases in protective behaviors, such as volunteering and involvement in politics or local community activities (Miller et al. 2018).

## B. Project locations and activities

Within each country, the WFD projects prioritize interventions in areas that USAID has indicated are target geographies. Below is a summary of where each of the interventions take place.

*Proyecto Puentes* (Bridges Guatemala) is implemented in the Western Highlands of Guatemala within the following five departments: Quetzaltenango, Huehuetenango, Totonicapán, Quiché, and San Marcos—due to high poverty and high rates of migration.

In Honduras, the *Empleando Futuros* or Employing Futures Project (EF Honduras) targets high-crime areas in the following five municipalities: Tegucigalpa, San Pedro Sula, Choloma, La Ceiba, and Tela.

The LAC Regional Workforce Development Program called *Avanza* (Advance Regional) is working with universities in Guatemala, Honduras, and Jamaica. In Guatemala, Advance Regional is prioritizing the same departments as Bridges Guatemala. In Honduras, it is targeting the same areas as EF Honduras, as well as the following six departments: Ocotepeque, Copan, Santa Barbara, Lempira, Intibuca, and La Paz.

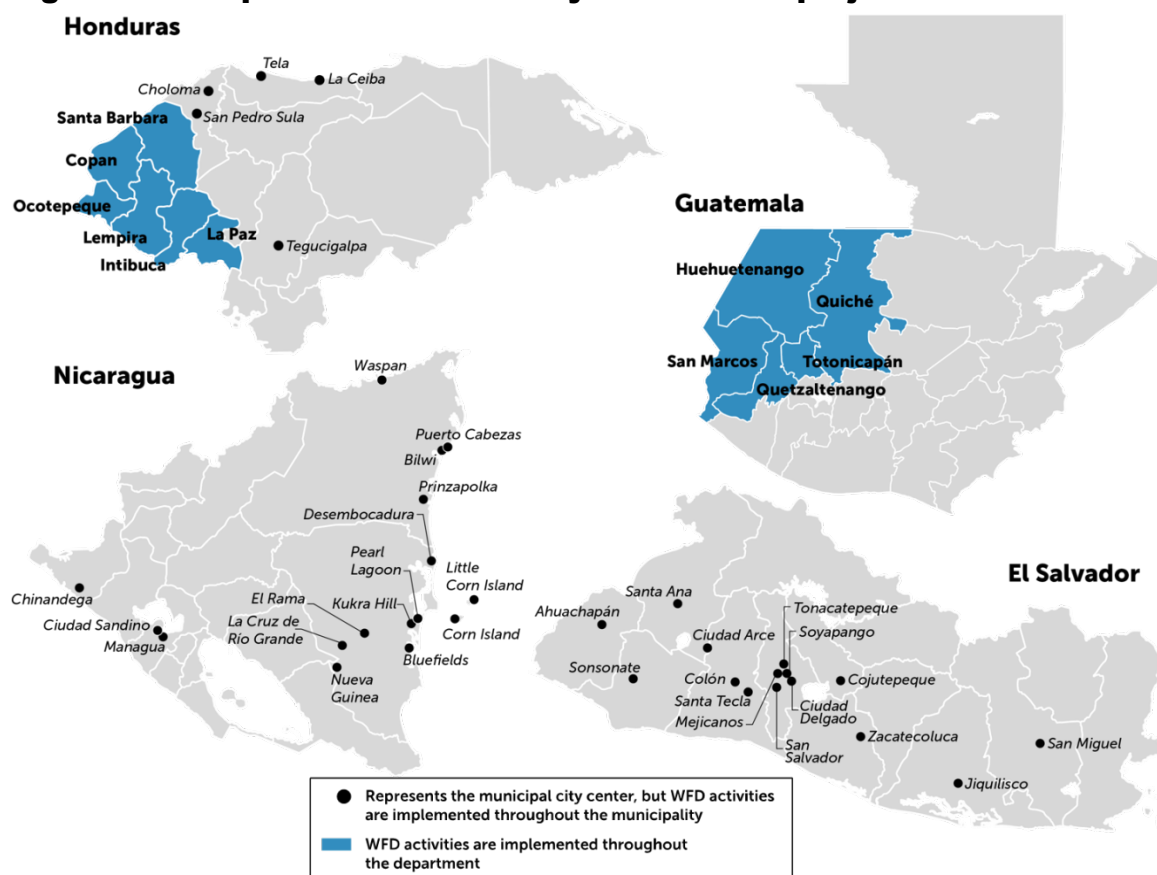
In El Salvador, the *Puentes para el Empleo* or Bridges to Employment Project (Bridges El Salvador) is being implemented within the following 15 high-crime municipalities: Ahuachapán,

Ciudad Arce, Ciudad Delgado, Cojutepeque, Colón, Jiquilisco, Mejicanos, San Miguel, San Salvador, Santa Ana, Santa Tecla, Sonsonate, Soyapango, Tonacatepeque, and Zacatecoluca.

In Nicaragua, *Proyecto Aprendo y Emprendo* or the Technical Vocational Education Strengthening for At-Risk Youth project (TVET-SAY Nicaragua) is working in five municipalities of Nicaragua's South Caribbean Coast Autonomous Region (RACCS) — Bluefields, Corn Island, Little Corn Island, Nueva Guinea, and El Rama; two municipalities in Nicaragua's North Caribbean Coast Autonomous Region (RACCN) — Waspan and Bilwi; and three municipalities in the Pacific region—Managua, Ciudad Sandino, and Chinandega. These are the municipalities where crime and violence are the highest.

The *Educación para el Éxito* or Education for Success Project in Nicaragua (EFS Nicaragua) was originally implemented in three municipalities of Nicaragua's RACCS—Bluefields, Kukra Hill, and Pearl Lagoon—from 2010 to 2013. During its second phase (2013 to 2016), the project expanded to two additional municipalities in the region (Corn Island and Desembocadura de Rio Grande), and in its third phase (2017 to 2019), it expanded to three more municipalities (Puerto Cabezas, Prinzapolka, and Waspan) in Nicaragua's RACCN. Like TVET-SAY Nicaragua, these are the municipalities where crime and violence is the highest.

**Figure C.1. Map of areas covered by the six WFD projects**



Notes: Developed by authors based on source materials from World Vision, Banyan Global, FHI 360, DAI, Creative Associates, and FADCANIC. The maps of Honduras and Guatemala show WFD activities for EF Honduras and Advance Regional. The map of Nicaragua shows WFD activities for TVET-SAY Nicaragua and EFS Nicaragua.

**C. Overview of each project's goals, objectives, activities, and implementation status**

This section provides an overview of the project goals and implementation status. Table C.1. summarizes each project's activities.

**Table C.1. Summary of each project's activities to support youth**

WFD activity categories	Bridges Guatemala	EF Honduras	Advance Regional	Bridges El Salvador	TVET-SAY Nicaragua	EFS Nicaragua
<b>Technical/vocational skills training</b>	Technical/vocational modules	Technical/vocational skills Soft skills training	Technical/vocational training skills Labor bridging soft skills	Technical skills training Soft skills training	Career tracks with innovative soft skills training Entrepreneurship training	Technical/vocational training Soft skills training Integrated scholarship package
<b>Soft skills training</b>	Core skills curriculum (known as the <i>Diplomado</i> )	Technical/vocational skills Soft skills training	Technical/vocational training skills Labor bridging soft skills	Technical skills training Soft skills training	Career tracks with innovative soft skills training Entrepreneurship training	Technical/vocational training Soft skills training Integrated scholarship package
<b>Duration of training</b>	112 hours over the course of 4 to 6 months for Diplomado. Duration of vocational modules varies	Minimum 474 hours completed in a period of six months	Full-time technical degree programs last 2 to 3 years (varies by degree)	Varies by course. Most courses last between 8 and 12 weeks. Specialty courses last 6 to 9 months	Scholarships for technical careers last 2.5 to 3 years Short-term trainings last 2 weeks to 4 months	Technical/vocational training lasts 150 hours to 3 years
<b>Mentoring and counseling for soft skills</b>	Mentoring	Individual Integrated Development Plan (IIDP) Community and peer mentors	N/A	Mentoring Psychosocial assistance	Collective counseling Individual and group psycho-social counseling	Peer mentoring Individual and group psycho-social counseling
<b>On-the-job training, labor bridging, and internships</b>	Internships and apprenticeships	Internships and job shadowing	Mentorship Internships	Internships	Roundtables with private sector Internships and apprenticeships	Internships
<b>Financial and in-kind support</b>	Vouchers Conditional cash transfers	N/A	Local and U.S. academic scholarship programs	Financial support for WFD training	Grants/scholarships for technical/vocational training Entrepreneur seed capital	Primary and secondary school scholarships Technical/vocational training scholarships Entrepreneurial seed funds

Note: All projects except for Bridges Guatemala have integrated technical/vocational skills and soft/ skills training.

N/A = not applicable.

## 1. Bridges Guatemala

**Goals and objectives.** The project's goal is to improve the quality of life of youth ages 15 to 24 in the Western Highlands of Guatemala through increased employment, education, and general well-being. Bridges aims to empower youth by giving them access to information, knowledge, and skills, and facilitating connections to possible income-generating opportunities. The project focuses its activities on (1) improving cognitive, soft, and entrepreneurial skills of youth; (2) providing more employment and entrepreneurship opportunities; and (3) reducing barriers to accessing social services (World Vision 2017a, 2017b).

**Implementation status.** The Bridges Guatemala project began in FY2017 and is now working with over 100 communities in 15 municipalities to establish centers that can train youth. In FY2017, the project focused on start-up activities, including designing a core skills curriculum called *Diplomado Emprender con Exito (Diplomado)* based on the collective experience of the Bridges consortium. The *Diplomado* involves courses aimed at improving soft skills as well as skills needed to find a job or start a business. All youth must complete the 112 hours required to finish the *Diplomado* prior to participating in any Bridges-supported activities such as additional technical/vocational training. FY2018 was focused on piloting the *Diplomado* to assess if any design changes were necessary. As part of this pilot year, Bridges Guatemala began training their first two cohorts of beneficiaries in 15 municipalities. The first cohort has graduated, while the second cohort is expected to graduate in FY2019. A total of 2,591 youth have completed the *Diplomado* to date. The project continued consolidating relationships with the public and private sector and began equipping Municipal Youth Centers, which serve as safe places for youth to take the *Diplomado* and receive additional support. To help strengthen the capacity of youth who complete the *Diplomado*, Bridges solidified its Strategy for Youth Networks (*Redes Juveniles*), which promotes the active participation of youth who have graduated from the program by connecting them to additional training and leadership opportunities (World Vision 2018a).

In FY2018, Bridges Guatemala also focused on developing several specialized courses in agriculture, finance and administration, and extension services to provide additional technical/vocational training opportunities to *Diplomado* graduates. The agriculture course entitled "Agriculture under Protected Conditions" enrolled its first youth in September 2018. Bridges Guatemala anticipates that 1,800 youth will enroll. Bridges finished designing the other two courses, but will officially enroll graduates in FY2019 (World Vision 2018a).

## 2. Employing Futures Honduras

**Goals and objectives.** The overall goal of EF Honduras is to increase employment and protective factors for at-risk youth ages 16 to 30. EF Honduras has three specific project objectives: (1) provide youth at primary, secondary, and tertiary risk<sup>31</sup> with comprehensive WFD services with improved job placement and self-employment rates; (2) strengthen the institutional capacity of the national TVET institution, *Instituto Nacional de Formación Profesional*

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<sup>31</sup> Youth at primary risk are those who, despite living in areas with high levels of violence, exhibit few signs in thoughts or actions related to violent behavior, or who have a large number of protective assets, such as a strong family or positive peer group. Youth at secondary risk are those who exhibit signs in either thoughts or actions related to violent behavior, or who do not have protective assets. Youth at tertiary risk are those who have already engaged in criminal or violent behavior. See Guzman et al. (2017) for a detailed description.

(INFOP),<sup>32</sup> to provide quality technical/vocational training and governance and to effectively align training and governance with private sector needs; and (3) provide youth at tertiary risk with services that lead to improved legal income generation (Banyan Global 2016a).

**Implementation status.** EF Honduras began in FY2016, and has now graduated its first cohort of trainees. In FY2017, EF's first full year of implementation focused on having the necessary structures in place to launch training activities. It designed the training program, identified and signed agreements with local organizations responsible for implementing the training program, and conducted needed assessments to understand the labor market and capacity constraints. FY2018 is the first full year the program trained at-risk youth in all five target municipalities. Six hundred fifty-one youth graduated as part of EF Honduras' first cohort and the project began training the first cohort of tertiary prevention youth—youth who in addition to being considered at-risk, have also been in conflict with the law and may require additional support. The project also completed and disseminated its first labor market assessment (LMA), launched its private sector engagement strategy, and conducted two mid-line assessments of INFOP in FY2018. The political crisis that started in November 2017 significantly impacted the project and caused delays and suspensions of certain training programs (Banyan Global 2018a).

### 3. Advance Regional

**Goals and objectives.** The project's goal is to increase employment opportunities among disadvantaged youth ages 17 to 30. To achieve this goal, the project focuses on (1) improving the quality of technical skills training at the tertiary education level and (2) facilitating access to tertiary education in Honduras, Guatemala, and Jamaica (FHI 360 2016, 2017a).<sup>33</sup>

**Implementation status.** In FY2018, the Advance Regional project was in its third year of implementation and started training its first cohort of Full Program Intervention (FPI) beneficiaries—youth who enrolled in 2018 and benefit from new and revised curriculum, improved institutional processes and scholarships. Before working with beneficiaries, Advance completed an extensive analysis to understand local markets and employment opportunities in each country to design programs that would maximize the employment opportunity for youth. Advance also assessed the capacity of each of the nine universities it is collaborating with (three in each country) and is working to improve the content of training provided to students to focus on textile, tourism, and agribusiness based on sectors identified in country-specific market assessments. Once all the assessments were finalized, in FY2018 the project began working with the first cohort for FPIs. The project also designed and launched the Advance scholarships program, which covers tuition, food, lodging, and transportation for select students. This project is unique in that all training programs are offered through universities (as opposed to TVET centers) and training programs are multi-year academic programs (FHI 360 2018).

<sup>32</sup> INFOP is an autonomous institution tasked with governing and regulating non-formal technical/vocational training in Honduras. INFOP also runs several training centers throughout the country.

<sup>33</sup> Advance Regional is similar to other WFD projects in that it focused on disadvantaged youth as beneficiaries; the primary difference is the focus on postsecondary technical degrees.

#### 4. Bridges to Employment El Salvador

**Goals and objectives.** The central goal of the Bridges El Salvador project is to increase and improve employment of vulnerable youth ages 16 to 29 living in the country's high-crime municipalities. The project has three objectives: (1) improve the enabling environment for youth WFD and employment through better laws and hiring practices, (2) improve the quality of WFD services that effectively respond to market demand to insert vulnerable youth into targeted economic sectors, and (3) improve workforce readiness of targeted at-risk youth. The project focuses on working with employers and developing youth skills needed for the high-growth sectors of agroindustry, manufacturing, information communications technology (ICT), tourism, and renewable energy. (DAI 2018c, 2018d).

**Implementation status.** In FY2018, the Bridges El Salvador project was in its third implementation year and second year of training beneficiaries and placing them in jobs. In its first two years of implementation, Bridges focused on designing a training program that responded to the needs of the formal labor market, recruiting specialized training centers able to deliver the training that Bridges designed, and building a network of private sector partners that could not only provide feedback into the design of the training program, but also serve as possible future employers. In FY2018, the Bridges El Salvador staff prioritized strengthening its links to the private sector to help beneficiaries who complete their program find possible employment opportunities. In FY2018, Bridges supported over 197 technical/vocational and soft skills courses in 20 different training centers, and expanded the geographic reach of the program from 8 to 15 prioritized municipalities. To date, more than 4,300 youth have completed courses. In FY2018, Bridges El Salvador also improved the institutional capacity of 11 training centers, fostered alliances between training centers and companies, and assisted municipalities in updating their youth policies to improve the enabling environment for youth employment (DAI 2018a, 2018b).

#### 5. Technical Vocational Education Strengthening for At-Risk Youth Nicaragua

**Goals and objectives.** The project's main objective is to expand opportunities in technical/vocational training, entrepreneurship, soft skills training for strengthening resilience and violence prevention, and job placement for at-risk youth ages 14 to 29 living in the Caribbean Coast. The project's activities focus on (1) improving collaboration and information sharing among centers by establishing or strengthening a network of training centers, (2) strengthening private TVET centers, (3) improving perceptions of TVET programs through public awareness campaigns, and (4) providing integrated attention to at-risk youth from the Caribbean Coast by expanding opportunities in technical/vocational training, entrepreneurship, resilience strengthening, soft skills, individual psycho-social counseling, violence prevention, and job placement (Creative Associates 2017, 2018b).

**Implementation status.** In FY2018, the TVET-SAY Nicaragua project was in its third implementation year and in its second full year working with beneficiaries. In FY2018, TVET-SAY Nicaragua continued awarding scholarships for technical/vocational training in 18 municipalities. To date, 179 scholarship recipients and 349 partial scholarship recipients have completed courses. FY2019 will be TVET-SAY's final implementation year. To strengthen the enabling environment for TVET the project also helped create the *Red Nicaragüense para la Educación Técnica* (RENET) in 2016, a network of technical education stakeholders including

CSOs (Civil Society Organizations), private sector companies, universities, and TVET centers. As of the end of FY2018, RENET is comprised of 57 organizations and TVET-SAY continues to work to strengthen this network. The political and societal unrest that started in April 2018 in response to government reforms significantly impacted TVET-SAY's implementation plans, causing it to move its main offices out of Managua. The crisis also contracted private sector investment, thereby affecting some private sector alliances the project had set up. This created financial constraints for some of its training programs. The project developed mitigation strategies to be able to continue working with affected beneficiaries, such as creating a blended course approach that included in-person and online training for those that could not attend training in person, as well as providing options for shorter training courses (Creative Associates 2018a).

## 6. Education for Success Nicaragua

**Goals and objectives.** The project's goal is to assist at-risk youth ages 10 to 29 through an integrated program that helps them develop and use educational and soft skills needed for a productive life of work, service, and professional development. The EFS Nicaragua provides support through the formal education system as well as through technical/vocational training institutions (FADCANIC 2014a, 2016a).

**Implementation status.** The EFS Nicaragua project began in 2010 and is now working with beneficiaries in 8 municipalities in Nicaragua's RACCS and RACCN, after several rounds of regional expansion. To date, over 1,500 youth have completed TVET training in its last expansion phase (FY2017 to FY2019). FY2019 is the project's final year of implementation, however, the project is looking to receive an extension. In FY2018, EFS Nicaragua continued training primary and secondary learners, strengthening individual counseling, and improving community support for youth enrolled in the program. The political crisis that started in April 2018 significantly impacted the project, making it harder to engage with the private sector and find employment for youth. In addition, some employed youth lost their jobs and some training programs had to be rescheduled (FADCANIC 2018a, 2018b).



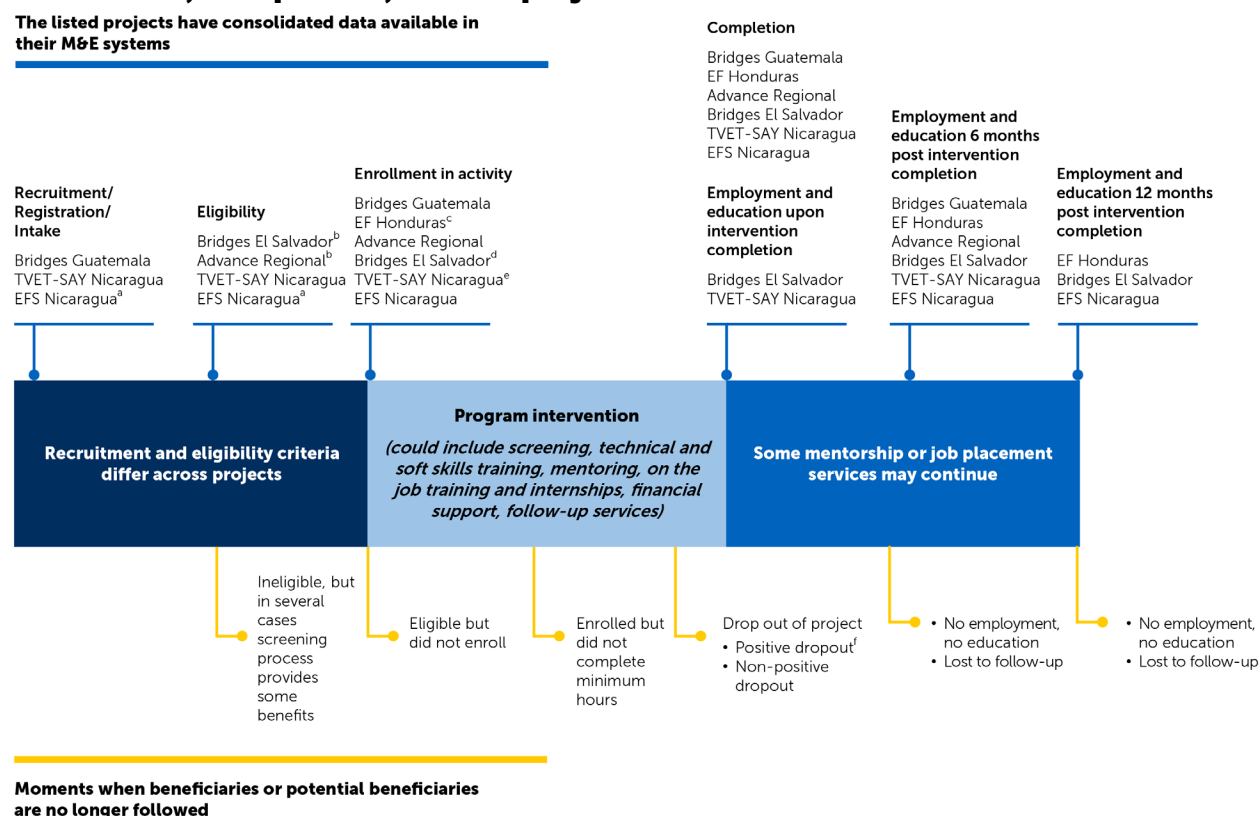
## **APPENDIX D:**

### **DESCRIPTION OF YOUTH TRAINING AND SUPPORT SERVICES**

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In this appendix, we provide additional information about youth training and support services that each project provides to complement the information shared in section II of the main report. In Figure D.1, we illustrate this progression of beneficiary participation in youth WFD training programs whose goals are for youth to obtain gainful employment. We note where each of the six projects tracks information in this process, which will inform our discussion in this report.

**Figure D.1. Beneficiary progression through WFD training programs, including key moments when projects collect data for their M&E systems on enrollment, completion, and employment**



<sup>a</sup> Plans to have consolidated data available in their M&E system for FY2018 activities

<sup>b</sup> Eligibility screening is part of the recruitment process

<sup>c</sup> Risk-assessment and 24 minimum hours of participation

<sup>d</sup> 16 minimum hours of participation

<sup>e</sup> One full week of participation

<sup>f</sup> Only EF Honduras has consolidated data on positive dropouts

## A. Description of youth training and support services

The six projects covered in this report follow an integrated approach to Workforce Development (WFD). Each project is implementing a package of diverse activities. Many of the activities across the projects have similar features, but they are all tailored to the context and needs of their target population. In this report, we group the different types of beneficiary-level activities implemented by projects into activity categories (see Table D.1). We use these activity categories to report on the number of beneficiaries that receive different types of activities across projects.

1. **Eligibility screening.** This activity category relates to the beneficiary recruitment activities implemented by projects. It includes any activities involving the application of tools, psychometric tests, or interviews to assess eligibility to participate in the program or activity.
2. **Training: Classroom time**
  - a. **Technical or vocational skills training.** This category includes any classroom activities teaching a technical and/or vocational skills curriculum. The technical or vocational skills training offered by projects may take the form of a classroom-based program, component, or module.
  - b. **Soft or life skills training.** This category relates to activities teaching beneficiaries soft or life skills. These skills are taught in a classroom-like setting, through multidisciplinary activities such as sports and arts, or through cognitive behavioral therapy interventions.
  - c. **Integrated skills.** The activities included in this category are classroom-based trainings with a curriculum that integrates the teaching of technical or vocational skills with soft or life skills. The integrated curriculum may be for a program, component, and/or module.
3. **Other support services**
  - a. **Mentoring and counseling for life skills.** This activity category covers any mentorship and counseling services, including cognitive behavioral therapy, offered to beneficiaries. Some projects use peer mentors, whereas others use community mentors. The counseling services offered by projects may be in individual or group sessions.
  - b. **On-the-job training, labor bridging, and internships.** This activity category relates to employment-bridging activities that give WFD program participants the opportunity to gain on-the-job skills and help them obtain employment. Relevant project activities include apprenticeships, internships, and job-readiness sessions or events.
  - c. **Financial and in-kind support.** This activity category focuses on support in the form of scholarships or vouchers offered by projects to beneficiaries to help them participate in WFD project activities or return to school. Seed capital funds for entrepreneur beneficiaries are also part of this category.

**Table D.1. Mapping of project activities to beneficiary activity categories, by project**

WFD activity categories	Bridges Guatemala	EF Honduras	Advance Regional	Bridges El Salvador	TVET-SAY Nicaragua	EFS Nicaragua
Eligibility screening	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Only Diplomado eligibility requirements are for youth to be ages 15 to 24 and from the geographic areas targeted by the project.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Violence Involved Persons Risk Assessment (VIP-RA) to determine program services</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Scholarship eligibility of program enrollees</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Psychometric test or interview to assess eligibility to participate in the program</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Form A-1 of Comprehensive Positive Assessment Tool (COMPAS-T), interview, and remedial course grade to assess eligibility to participate in the program</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Scholarship eligibility of program enrollees</li> </ul>
Technical/vocational skills training	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Technical vocational modules</li> <li>Entrepreneurship vocational module</li> <li>In-person ICT course</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Vocational/technical skills component</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Not applicable; implemented together with soft and life skills so categorized under integrated training</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Technical skills training</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Career tracks</li> <li>Entrepreneurship training</li> <li>Blended courses</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Technical and vocational training at Wawashang and INATEC centers</li> <li>Short-term technical and vocational training (apprentice level)</li> <li>Integrated scholarship package</li> <li>(financial support, after-school tutoring and homework clubs, and peer mentoring)               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Elementary</li> <li>Secondary</li> </ul> </li> <li>Accelerated primary</li> </ul>
Soft and life skills training	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Core skills curriculum</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Life skills training component</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Labor bridging soft skills</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Life skills training</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Life skills training</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Life skills training</li> </ul>
Integrated skills (technical, soft, and life) training	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Not applicable</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Induction (participate min. of 24 hours)</li> <li>Basic labor competencies component</li> <li>Capstone course component</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Tertiary technical education (technical, soft, and life)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Technical and life skills training</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Not applicable</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Not applicable</li> </ul>
Mentoring and counseling for life skills	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Volunteer tutors at youth meeting spaces called <i>Puntos CREA</i></li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Individual Integrated Development Plan (IIDP)</li> <li>Community mentors</li> <li>Cognitive behavioral therapy (CBT)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Not applicable</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Tutors for flexible education programs</li> <li>Referrals to psychosocial assistance</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Collective counseling on preventing the most frequent forms of violence</li> <li>Individual and group psycho-social counseling</li> <li>Mentoring by members of TVET-SAY's Youth Advisory Council</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>EFS life skills education program               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>After-school tutoring and homework clubs (formal education)</li> <li>Peer mentoring (formal education)</li> <li>Individual and group psycho-social counseling</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
On-the-job training, labor bridging, and internships	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Internships and apprenticeships</li> <li>Group visits to enterprises</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Bridging strategy (internships and job shadowing)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Labor-bridging mentorship</li> <li>Internships</li> <li>Visits to potential employers, career outreach events, and professional congresses</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Internships</li> <li>Job-readiness sessions</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Roundtables with private sector</li> <li>Internships and apprenticeships</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Internships</li> </ul>

Table D.1 (*continued*)

WFD activity categories	Bridges Guatemala	EF Honduras	Advance Regional	Bridges El Salvador	TVET-SAY Nicaragua	EFS Nicaragua
Financial and in-kind support	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Vocational training vouchers</li> <li>• Vouchers to return to school</li> <li>• Vouchers for internships</li> <li>• Seed funds to pursue business plan</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Not applicable</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Local scholarship program</li> <li>• U.S. scholarship program</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Financial support to participate in WFD training</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Grants/scholarships for vocational technical training</li> <li>• Entrepreneur seed capital</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Elementary scholarships</li> <li>• Secondary scholarships</li> <li>• Accelerated primary scholarships</li> <li>• Scholarships as part of Wawashang and INATEC technical and vocational training</li> <li>• EFS youth entrepreneurial seed funds (for technical/ vocational completers only)</li> </ul>

Note: Developed by authors based on source materials from World Vision, Banyan Global, FHI 360, DAI, Creative Associates, and FADCANIC.

## **B. Services provided by project**

### **1. Bridges Guatemala**

Bridges Guatemala is conducting several activities including (1) building the capacity of WFD service providers; (2) working with WFD service providers so that 25,000 youth can finalize the core skills curriculum training in soft and life skills that are in demand by employers; and (3) work with youth in job placement and with employers to engage youth. As a part of the training, youth beneficiaries will participate in approximately six hours a week for six months in a core soft and life skill training curriculum called, the *Diplomado Emprender con Éxito*. After completing the core skills curriculum, beneficiaries can choose to enroll in technical courses offered by the project's implementing partners. Beneficiaries may also choose to continue their primary, middle, or high school education after completing the core skills curriculum (World Vision 2017a, 2017b).

### **2. Employing Futures Honduras**

To achieve its project objectives, EF Honduras is conducting several different activities including (1) strengthening the institutional capacity of INFOP; (2) partnering with local service providers to offer comprehensive WFD services to the project's youth beneficiaries, with the following standard components: (a) life skills training, (b) cognitive behavioral therapy, (c) basic labor competencies, (d) vocational/technical skills, and (e) a capstone course; (3) offering youth at tertiary risk individualized components through an integrated development plan<sup>34</sup>; (4) strengthening and creating entrepreneurship and livelihood programs for beneficiaries; (5) providing post-training entrepreneurship support to interested youth participants, including support to develop business plans and obtain access to finance, and mentoring<sup>35</sup>; and (6) implementing a labor bridging strategy with the following components: (a) internships, apprenticeships, on-the-job training, job shadowing, or some other form of supervised practical experience, (b) continued mentoring or accompaniment, (c) involvement in youth support groups, (d) career counseling and job placement services, and (e) follow-on support offered beyond employment, including on-site visits and continued access to career services and group. The approximate duration of the comprehensive WFD training program is a minimum of 474 hours completed in a period of about six months; the project aims to have 7,500 youth complete the training (Banyan Global 2016a).

### **3. Advance Regional**

Advance Regional focuses on strengthening the institutional capacity of select technical tertiary institutions in Honduras, Guatemala, and Jamaica. Youth beneficiaries of Advance Regional receive services through these educational institutions, with a focus on disadvantaged youth. The project's core activities include: (1) working with institutions to update curriculum and pedagogy for 2 and 3-year technical training programs to better respond to local labor market demands; (2) providing enhanced professional development opportunities and training for faculty and non-academic staff; (3) strengthening labor bridging activities within partner institutions, including career service offerings for students and partnerships with private sector

<sup>34</sup> EF Honduras is using the Violence Involved Persons Risk Assessment (VIP-RA) to help determine which interventions each beneficiary should receive.

<sup>35</sup> EF Honduras' entrepreneurship and livelihood support activities are still under development.

businesses; (4) improving access to target degree programs by strengthening recruitment, admissions, and student services (including academic and non-academic supports like mentoring programs), and (5) providing a subset of disadvantaged youth beneficiaries scholarships to attend selected degree programs. (FHI 360 2016, 2017a).

#### 4. Bridges to Employment El Salvador

Bridges El Salvador is implementing a variety of activities to achieve its project objectives including (1) engaging the private sector through its support of private firms in the development of internal policy improvement plans intended to increase youth hiring and its work with employers and associations to establish, identify, and/or improve training programs that cover the needs of the four-high growing sectors; (2) contracting with WFD service providers to implement employment training programs based on the *empresa-centro* model, which includes training in a center plus real-world experience for beneficiaries through an internship; (3) improving life skills curricula and training service providers in their adoption and application; (4) facilitating access to career counseling and mentoring services for beneficiaries including (a) providing a brochure on career opportunities, (b) developing “business cafes” for sharing knowledge and creating peer networks, and (c) holding job orientation sessions that will include counseling on labor market demand, mentoring with recruitment managers, and registering on online job databases; (5) selecting and developing some service providers as “one-stop shop” activity hubs to coordinate WFD services, including additional training, information on job fairs, resume writing, interview preparation, among others<sup>36</sup>; and (6) training tutors for flexible education programs allowing youth to complete their high school education through a flexible modality. With the exception of some specialty courses that may last six to nine months, all other technical and soft trainings last between 8 and 12 weeks. Bridges El Salvador hopes to graduate 14,400 youth before the program ends in 2020. All youth participating in technical and soft skills trainings receive stipends (\$5 to \$7 per day) to be used for transportation, food, and child care (DAI 2018c, 2018d).

#### 5. Technical Vocational Education Strengthening for At-Risk Youth Nicaragua

To achieve its main objective, TVET-SAY Nicaragua is implementing several different activities including (1) strengthening the capacity of eight private TVET centers, including expanding course offering, integrating in the curricula an innovative life skills training approach, and improving the quality of trainings and career services to facilitate job placement<sup>37</sup>; (2) providing at-risk youth with scholarships to participate in two and a half- to three-year technical careers offered by the eight private TVET centers or two- to four-month blended learning courses combining in-person and online technical training; (3) establishing private sector alliances to offer scholarship funding for participation in the eight centers, help the centers better

<sup>36</sup> Each service provider is evaluated on an ongoing basis through the technical vocational education and training capacity assessment tool (TVET-CAT). The project used results from the initial TVET-CAT to develop a customized capacity-building plan for each service provider.

<sup>37</sup> TVET-SAY Nicaragua adjusted the USAID OCA tool to include the evaluation of vocational centers and their engagement with the demand side, leading to organizational capacity assessment tool (OCA-T). The OCA-T is designed to measure and strengthen the capacity of TVETs to provide WFD services tailored to the critical needs of at-risk youth. The project used results from a baseline OCA-T to create individualized action plans for each center, and will update the capacity assessments annually.



align their course offerings with youth labor market demand, and provide employment opportunities; and (4) improving collaboration and exchange amongst training centers through the establishment of national, regional, and sectorial networks. TVET-SAY Nicaragua worked with USAID to develop the Comprehensive Positive Assessment Tool (COMPAS-T) to identify at-risk youth to be offered scholarships and to measure their level of risk before and after participating in trainings.<sup>38</sup> They hope to graduate over 1,000 scholarship beneficiaries from technical careers by the end of the project in 2019 (Creative Associates 2017, 2018b).

## **6. Education for Success Nicaragua**

The EFS Nicaragua project is implementing a variety of WFD activities including: (1) providing at-risk youth ages 10 to 24 with primary and secondary school scholarship; (2) offering scholarship recipients, as well as additional beneficiaries participating in the formal education system, a comprehensive package of wraparound and life skills training including (a) life skills education, (b) access to after-school tutoring and homework clubs, (c) peer mentoring, and (d) psycho-social counseling; (3) providing life skills training and scholarships for participation in technical vocational training offered by certified institutions to at-risk youth ages 16 to 29 in the following two different modalities (with a duration of 120 hours to two years): (a) basic secondary technical degrees and (b) apprentice-level community-based technical courses; (4) offering EFS Life Skills Education program to youth in both modalities to complement the technical trainings; (5) providing select youth in the technical vocational programs psychological counseling; (6) offering EFS youth entrepreneurial seed funding to select youth who have completed technical vocational training; (7) training parents, teachers, and community volunteers to support program beneficiaries; (8) creating links with the private sector to identify employment opportunities for youth who have completed technical and vocational skills training; and (9) strengthening the institutional capacity of FADCANIC (FADCANIC 2014, 2016a).

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<sup>38</sup> The COMPAS-T measures 12 risk factors and five protective factors. TVET-SAY administers the COMPAS-T to beneficiaries, before and after training completion, as well as six months after completion. The tool includes an early warning system useful for identifying beneficiaries who need individual counseling.

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**APPENDIX E:**  
**DETAILS ON BENEFICIARY FINDINGS**

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In this appendix we provide more details and findings on program beneficiaries. We first describe who the target beneficiaries are and how each project defines vulnerable and/or at-risk youth. We then give more details and findings on recruitment and enrollment of beneficiaries. These efforts are time-consuming and resource-intensive, because projects need to work to identify target youth that may show interest, capacity, and interest to participate in and complete these programs. We then provide a detailed summary of other services that youth receive as part of their participation on these programs such as mentoring, coaching, or labor bridging. These services help reinforce training objectives and may also contribute to completion and employment numbers. We then also provide additional information on our sub-group analysis. This appendix concludes with a summary of the findings to date in a table format, to allow readers to see, and possibly compare, results to date across the six different projects.

## **A. Profile of targeted beneficiaries**

**Although each project has a specific definition for youth targeted, all projects focus on supporting at-risk or disadvantaged youth.** Table E.1 includes details on the beneficiaries targeted by each project. Beneficiaries can be considered at-risk because of the high levels of crime in the communities, or disadvantaged for a variety of socio-economic reasons. In FY2018, projects also increasingly focused on vulnerable populations such as women, Lesbian Gay Bisexual Trans Intersex (LGBTI) youth, indigenous and afro-descendant youth, and youth with disabilities. These populations were targeted for recruitment, and projects made an effort to create new curricula and improve outreach to these populations to ensure that activities were more inclusive.

- In Guatemala, the Bridges project began working with beneficiaries in FY2018 in about 100 communities located in 15 Western Highland municipalities. Moving forward, Bridges will continue working in these 15 municipalities and will also expand to work in an additional 10 municipalities, for a total of 25 municipalities. All youth ages 15 to 24 living in the Western Highlands are eligible to participate in Bridges. The project considers youth from the Western Highlands disadvantaged because of their high rates of poverty and lack of educational achievement, and because there are limited services and opportunities available for youth.
- In Honduras, the EF project continued serving youth in six communities and expanded to 52 new communities within all of the five target municipalities.<sup>39</sup> The target population is out-of-school youth (primarily young men) between the ages of 16 to 30 who live in areas with high levels of violence. The project considers all youth living within target communities at-risk and categorizes each beneficiaries' level of risk as primary, secondary, and tertiary based on their degree of exposure to violence and crime.
- The Advance Regional project began working with beneficiaries in FY2018. The project identified youth as eligible for participation based on the specific criteria that it developed in FY2017 for disadvantaged youth ages 17 to 30, including the following: limited economic resources, living in communities with high indices of delinquency or violence, from

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<sup>39</sup> The EF Honduras project works in the municipalities of Tegucigalpa, San Pedro Sula, Tela, Choloma, and La Ceiba.

indigenous communities, or marginalized. In addition to meeting at least one of the disadvantaged criteria, youth must have completed secondary education.

- In El Salvador, the Bridges project continued working with youth in eight prioritized municipalities and expanded to the remaining 7 of the 15 high-crime municipalities originally selected.<sup>40</sup> Bridges works with vulnerable youth ages 16 to 29 who are “in need of technical training, education, psychosocial support, or related assistance to complete their education or to find, keep, and/or improve employment” (DAI 2016b).
- In Nicaragua, the TVET-SAY and EFS projects both continued worked with at-risk youth from the Caribbean Coast in 12 municipalities and from the Pacific Region in three municipalities. TVET-SAY’s beneficiaries are at-risk youth ages 14 to 29 and EFS’ beneficiaries are at-risk youth ages 10 to 29.

**Table E.1. Details on the beneficiaries targeted, by project**

Bridges Guatemala	EF Honduras	Advance Regional	Bridges El Salvador	TVET-SAY Nicaragua	EFS Nicaragua
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ages 15 to 24 and from the Western Highlands</li> <li>• Includes LGBTI youth and youth with disabilities</li> <li>• Assume 60 percent of youth will be out of school</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ages 16 to 30 from targeted high-crime communities</li> <li>• Out of school</li> <li>• Youth at primary, secondary, or tertiary risk</li> <li>• Includes LGBTI youth and youth with disabilities</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ages 17 to 30</li> <li>• Completed secondary education</li> <li>• Limited economic resources</li> <li>• Living in communities with high indices of delinquency or violence</li> <li>• From indigenous and Garifuna communities</li> <li>• Marginalized due to their ethnic origin, gender, religion, disabilities, or sexual orientation</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ages 16 to 29 from targeted high-crime municipalities</li> <li>• In school or out of school, with a 9th-grade education</li> <li>• Need support to either complete high school or find employment</li> <li>• Demonstrate a commitment to their own development and the time and effort required to search for and maintain employment</li> <li>• Includes young women, LGBTI youth, and youth with disabilities</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ages 14 to 29 from the Caribbean Coast</li> <li>• At-risk youth living in unsafe neighborhoods or communities; or traditionally excluded youth including those from marginalized indigenous or afro-descendant communities, the disabled, lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, or intersex</li> <li>• Out of school and unemployed, but having passed the minimum grade required by the TVET courses</li> <li>• Extremely poor</li> <li>• Demonstrated vocation for the career selected</li> <li>• Potential personal leadership</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• At-risk youth, from high crime and violent areas in Nicaragua; youth that are particularly at risk, falling into criminal/gang activity or drug and alcohol abuse; youth with little schooling whose further employability options are severely curtailed; youth from marginalized indigenous and afro-descendant communities.</li> </ul> <p><b>Primary scholarship recipients:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ages 10 to 16</li> <li>• Only completed 3rd grade or the first cycle of accelerated primary education</li> </ul> <p><b>Secondary scholarship recipients:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ages 14 to 24</li> <li>• Only completed 6th grade or accelerated primary school</li> </ul> <p><b>TVET training:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ages 16 to 29</li> <li>• Only completed 6th grade or accelerated primary school</li> </ul>

Note: Source materials from World Vision, Banyan Global, FHI 360, DAI, Creative Associates, and FADCANIC.

<sup>40</sup> Bridges El Salvador works in the following municipalities: Ahuachapán, Ciudad Arce, Ciudad Delgado, Cojutepeque, Colón, Jiquilisco, Mejicanos, San Miguel, San Salvador, Santa Ana, Santa Tecla, Sonsonate, Soyapango, Tonacatepeque, and Zacatecoluca.

## **B. Recruitment and eligibility screening**

Before enrolling beneficiaries in training activities, projects invest a significant amount of time recruiting and screening youth who are at risk and eligible to participate. Activities around recruitment and eligibility screening are key to attracting youth who demonstrate an interest in being trained and who are more likely to complete the program and find employment. Throughout the life of the projects, projects engage in a range of recruitment efforts to continue to identify and enroll potential beneficiaries across multiple cohorts.

**Recruitment strategies vary across projects, but in FY2018 all projects worked with local entities with ties to target communities to identify and attract at-risk youth.**

- Two WFD projects, Advance Regional and Bridges Guatemala, recruited their first cohorts of beneficiaries in FY2018. Advance Regional worked with each of the three local tertiary institutions in Guatemala, Honduras, and Jamaica to design and launch the Advance scholarship program for disadvantaged youth. Some tertiary institutions recruited scholarship applicants from their existing student populations, while others also recruited within disadvantaged communities (FHI 360 2017b). Bridges Guatemala worked with local implementing organizations to recruit youth through community assemblies and meetings with parents.
- The four other projects continued their work with local entities from previous years to recruit beneficiaries. In El Salvador, Bridges conducted outreach and recruitment in partnership with other organizations and local government stakeholders. EF Honduras recruited youth within target communities through local host organizations, including three new organizations with experience working with youth at tertiary risk. EFS Nicaragua worked with 232 Community At-Risk Youth Advisory Committee (CAYAC) volunteer members and alumni of the program to recruit and select beneficiaries through house visits (FADCANIC 2016b). TVET-SAY Nicaragua's 20 Youth Advisory Council members, some of whom are TVET-SAY alumni, helped recruit youth within their communities.

**Additionally, in FY2018 all projects implemented or improved their communications strategy for recruitment of beneficiaries through social media or media coverage.** To encourage participation of women, TVET-SAY Nicaragua launched a short life story documentary focused on a young-single mother whose life was changed by her participation in the project due to her ability to find employment. In addition to producing over 30,000 flyers, posters, and banners, EF Honduras supported an eight-minute feature story of the project on national TV and conducted open recruit calls through social media. EFS Nicaragua, Bridges El Salvador, and Bridges Guatemala all launched social media campaigns, and the latter two projects are planning to launch larger public communications campaigns in FY2019.

**In four projects, the recruitment process includes administering assessments to determine eligibility and/or the appropriate WFD service for each beneficiary.** Through a combination of eligibility processes and geographic expansion, projects were able to increase their recruitment numbers, with 12,616 youth recruited in FY2018 compared to 5,415 in FY2017 (for the EF Honduras, Bridges El Salvador, TVET-SAY Nicaragua and EFS Nicaragua projects with recruitment numbers in their M&E systems).

- In FY2018, EF Honduras recalibrated its risk-level assessment tool to better identify the risk level of youth and the appropriate level of WFD training support needed. As shown in Table E.2, the project administered the tool to 2,200 youth in FY2018, with 1 percent identified as youth with tertiary risk, 16 percent identified as youth at secondary risk, and the rest as youth at primary risk.
- In El Salvador, 7,367 youth participated in Bridges' eligibility screening process in FY2018. The four-hour process involves completing a registration form and either a psychometric test or a personal interview. This fairly lengthy intake process helps identify youth who are more committed to participating in WFD training thereby improving the likelihood that participants will complete the extensive training.
- In Nicaragua, the TVET-SAY project used a risk-level assessment tool (COMPAS-T), an interview, and remedial course grades to determine scholarship eligibility. In FY2018, 418 potential TVET-SAY beneficiaries went through this process (Creative Associates 2016).
- EFS Nicaragua also used a social risk assessment tool to screen 709 youth for primary and secondary scholarships in FY2018.<sup>41</sup> Additionally, the project recruited 1,192 youth for TVET training.

**Table E.2. FY2018 recruitment numbers against FY2018 targets and FY2017 recruitment numbers**

FY2018 actual vs. FY2018 target and FY2017 actual	Bridges Guatemala	EF Honduras	Advance Regional	Bridges El Salvador	TVET-SAY Nicaragua Scholarship recipients	TVET-SAY Nicaragua Non-Scholarship recipients	EFS Nicaragua Basic education	EFS Nicaragua TVET	Total across projects
FY2018 Actual	N/A	2,931	N/A	7,367	418	N/A	709	1,192	12,617
FY2018 Target	N/A	N/A	N/A	8,050	400	N/A	608	900	8,450 <sup>b</sup>
FY2017 Actual	N/A	600	N/A	4,395	420	N/A	N/A <sup>a</sup>	N/A <sup>a</sup>	5,415

Notes: Source materials from World Vision, Banyan Global, FHI 360, DAI, Creative Associates, FADCANIC.

At the time of writing this report, we did not have confirmation on the recruitment information for EF Honduras.

<sup>a</sup> EFS Nicaragua did not have FY2017 recruitment data available in its M&E system.

N/A = not applicable because project does not track recruitment data in its M&E system.

**In FY2018, about 68 percent of those reached through the recruitment process have enrolled in project services thus far for those four projects with recruitment data.** However, there is large variance across the four projects with recruitment data: EF Honduras, Bridges El Salvador, TVET-SAY Nicaragua, and EFS Nicaragua. The percentage of recruited beneficiaries included 22 percent for TVET-SAY Nicaragua scholarship recipients, 57 percent for Bridges El Salvador, 82 percent for EFS Nicaragua (TVET), 86 percent for EFS Nicaragua (basic education), and 92 percent for EF Honduras. Due to Nicaragua's political crisis, TVET-SAY was only able to enroll 22 percent of youth in FY2018, compared to 89 percent in FY2017.

<sup>41</sup> The social risk assessment tool is also administered to TVET program beneficiaries for screening youth who may be in immediate need of referral to psychosocial services. Areas that are assessed include: family conditions, living conditions, economic situation, and four self-esteem dimensions.



**Moving forward, the six projects will continue recruitment activities to identify potential beneficiaries, some of which will incorporate changes based on lessons learned in FY2018.** For example, in order to address recruitment challenges linked to gang borders, EF Honduras has increased its youth intake goals and contracted more organizations. The project will also prioritize recruiting youth who are “learning ready,” such as those that may have applied for jobs but were not selected and may be looking for additional training, or those that are completing high-school but do not have plans to continue on to university. By identifying youth with these characteristics, EF hopes they will be more committed to meeting the participation requirements of WFD training programs. After initially following different processes, Bridges Guatemala developed a guide based on the successful practices used by its implementing partners for entering municipalities and communities to introduce the project.

### **C. Participation in WFD complementary activities**

#### **1. Tutoring, mentoring, and counseling**

In addition to the soft skills taught during the WFD integrated trainings, in FY2018, five projects provided complementary support services in the form of tutoring, mentoring, and group counseling or cognitive behavior therapy (CBT).<sup>42</sup> Figure E.1 provides a snapshot of some of the FY2018 project accomplishments related to their WFD complementary activities. EFS Nicaragua and TVET-SAY Nicaragua continued their complementary support services from previous years, with some adaptations or expansions. EF Honduras expanded its mentoring program and offered CBT for the first time. Bridges Guatemala and Bridges El Salvador offered tutoring support for the first time in FY2018.

**Tutoring.** In order to help beneficiaries succeed in their programs, three projects, Bridges Guatemala, Bridges El Salvador, and EFS Nicaragua, offered beneficiaries tutoring support in FY2018. Bridges Guatemala, trained 12 tutors to assist and mentor youth in 105 community youth meeting points, which were established in FY2018 for youth to meet and exchange experiences. As part of its new activities in FY2018, Bridges El Salvador, trained 165 tutors for flexible education programs intended to help youth complete their high school in a reduced amount of time. As in previous years, EFS Nicaragua continued to offer after-school tutoring and established 12 new homework clubs to beneficiaries enrolled in basic education, however, the project was forced to stop this support during the political crisis.

**Mentoring.** In FY2018, three projects continued or expanded their mentoring services to support and encourage youth throughout their WFD training. EFS Nicaragua worked with its existing 141 youth mentors as part of its peer mentorship strategy for supporting soft skills development. The 20 youth who are part of TVET-SAY’s Youth Advisory Council also continued to serve as mentors for beneficiaries. In Honduras, the EF project expanded its mentoring program from 10 to 88 community mentors focused on supporting the development of at-risk youth during training. The project has found that mentors living in the same communities

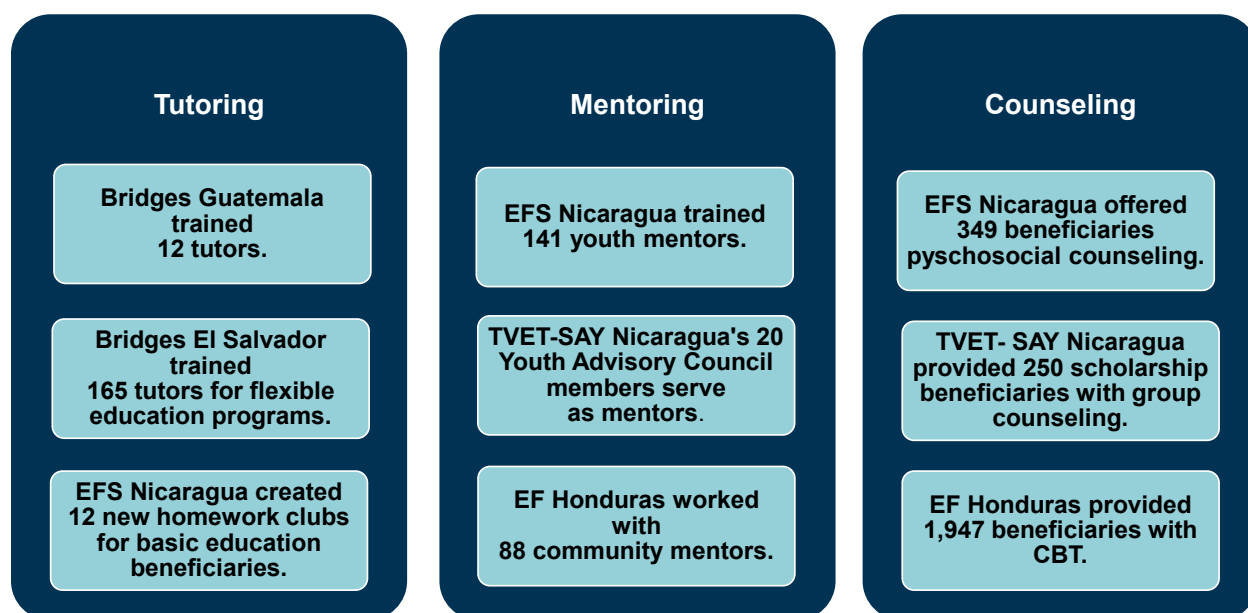
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<sup>42</sup> CBT is a therapeutic approach used to treat a variety of harmful beliefs and behaviors such as impulsivity, anger, and depression. The first part of this approach involves making individuals aware of their harmful automatic patterns of thinking or behaving and challenging them. Following this, the approach then seeks to disrupt these patterns of thinking and foster better ones by having individuals put to practice new skills and behaviors (Blattman and Ralston 2015).

as beneficiaries are seen as being more credible and trustworthy. For example, new mentors in FY2018 included leaders of soccer fan clubs known as *barras bravas*. These clubs include many members with criminal records. These mentors have been able to leverage the respect and authority they achieved as *barra* leaders, to instill discipline within their mentee groups.

**Counseling and cognitive behavior therapy.** Three projects in FY2018 also offered counseling or CBT as a complement to their classroom-based soft skills training. In FY2018, EFS Nicaragua continued its individual and group counseling, including a referral program for specialized cases, from previous years, offering it to 308 basic education and 41 TVET beneficiaries identified as being in need of additional psychosocial support. As in previous years, the TVET-SAY Nicaragua project continued to offer group counseling, serving 250 scholarship beneficiaries in FY2018. During the political crisis TVET-SAY adapted its counseling to include more continuous and personalized contact with beneficiaries. In FY2018, 1,947 youth completed EF Honduras' pilot CBT program, through group therapy sessions held in their communities. However, after completing this pilot, EF Honduras determined that instead of having therapists regularly travel to vulnerable communities, it is more sustainable from a cost perspective to integrate CBT components within existing training and mentoring components; the project will begin doing this in FY2019.

**Figure E.1. FY2018 accomplishments in tutoring, mentoring, and counseling for soft skills**



Notes: Source materials from World Vision, Banyan Global, FHI 360, DAI, Creative Associates, and FADCANIC.

## 2. Labor bridging

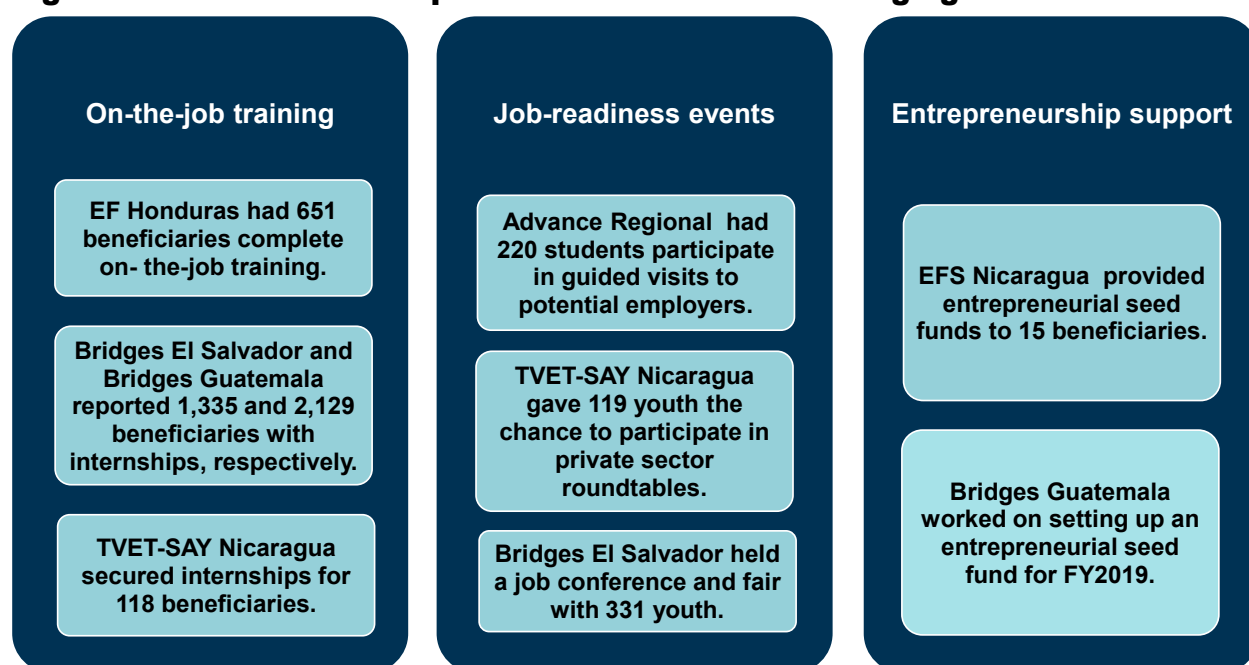
In FY2018, all projects offered labor bridging services in order to help beneficiaries find employment after training completion. Labor bridging support provided by projects included on-the-job training and internships, career counseling, job-readiness sessions or events, and entrepreneurship support. Figure E.2 provides a snapshot of the key FY2018 accomplishments related to WFD labor bridging activities for each project. In FY2018, Bridges Guatemala, EF

Honduras, and Advance Regional offered labor bridging services for the first time, while the other three projects continued their labor bridging work from previous years.

**On-the-job training and internships.** Four projects helped their beneficiaries secure on-the-job training or internship opportunities with the private sector. In FY2018, 651 beneficiaries from the EF Honduras completed on-the-job training with a company in their occupation choice. EF Honduras requires beneficiaries to carry out 20 days of on-the-job training, where they are evaluated and their skills certified by the company, thereby making them eligible for immediate employment. Bridges El Salvador reported 1,335 beneficiaries with a private sector internship. The project has facilitated many of its internship opportunities in the high-growth sectors of IT and manufacturing (plastics) through its alliances with industry leaders. Bridges Guatemala and TVET-SAY Nicaragua also worked with the private sector to secure internship opportunities for 234 and 118 beneficiaries, respectively. Bridges Guatemala struggled to find companies in the Western Highlights, where it is working, that were willing to offer internships to project beneficiaries and or had the capacity to take on interns. In Nicaragua, the political crisis' impact on the private sector also limited the internship opportunities available to TVET-SAY beneficiaries. Advance Regional has plans to roll out its internship program in FY2019.

**Career services and job-readiness sessions or events.** In FY2018, projects also offered beneficiaries labor bridging support in the form of career counseling and job-readiness sessions or events. Advance Regional and TVET-SAY Nicaragua beneficiaries had access to the career services of tertiary institutions strengthened by them. The training centers strengthened by EF Honduras, Bridges El Salvador, and Bridges Guatemala assigned beneficiaries job placement specialists or career counselors to help them find and maintain employment. Four projects also held job-readiness sessions or events for youth to engage with potential employers. Two of Bridges Guatemala's partners use their private sector connections to promote group visits to enterprises. Advance Regional conducted a variety of labor bridging events including guided visits to potential employers with 220 students, professional congresses relevant to degree programs with 60 student participants, and two career outreach events for over 100 students aimed at enhancing their knowledge on potential career pathways. TVET-SAY Nicaragua created roundtables with the private sector, in which 119 beneficiaries participated. Bridges El Salvador continued its partnership with the Association of Human Talent Leaders and participated in the *JuvenTour* conference and job fair with 331 youth. As in previous years, job fair sessions included stations focused on specific job-readiness themes such as mock interviews, personalized feedback, and coaching.

**Entrepreneurship support.** Given the employment obstacles faced by at-risk youth, in FY2018, projects also supported youth in finding self-employment opportunities in the formal and or informal sector. The technical/vocational and soft skills training offered by Bridges Guatemala, EFS Nicaragua, and TVET-SAY Nicaragua courses also included entrepreneurship components or approaches. EFS Nicaragua continued its entrepreneurial seed fund from previous years, providing seed funding to 15 new TVET beneficiaries in FY2018. In FY2018, Bridges Guatemala also worked on setting up an entrepreneurial seed fund for beneficiary business plans, which it expects to launch in FY2019. As in previous years, Bridges El Salvador, referred youth interested in starting their own businesses to other entrepreneurship support services. Additionally, some of the job-readiness sessions or events supported by Bridges El Salvador and Advance Regional included information on entrepreneurship.

**Figure E.2. FY2018 accomplishments around labor bridging**

Notes: Source materials from World Vision, Banyan Global, FHI 360, DAI, Creative Associates, and FADCANIC.

## D. Disaggregated findings

Details on differences in enrollment, completion, employment, and continuing education, disaggregated by sex and age group, are in Table E.3, and can help projects assess which subgroups could be able to obtain employment at a higher rate, which could then help projects assess and change their recruitment strategies.

**Table E.3. FY2018 and cumulative beneficiary achievements disaggregated by sex**

Sex	FY2018								Cumulative	
	Bridges Guatemala	EF Honduras	Advance Regional Scholarship recipients	Bridges El Salvador	TVET-SAY Nicaragua Scholarship recipients	TVET-SAY Nicaragua Partial Scholarship recipients	EFS Nicaragua		Total across projects	Total across projects
							Basic education	TVET		
<b>Enrollment</b>										
Male	3,322	1270	81	2,084	47	231	294	459	7,788	10,283
Female	4,739	1491	163	2,085	47	132	317	518	9,492	11,810
<b>Completion</b>										
Male	952	260	N/A <sup>a</sup>	1,476	35	125	368	372	3,588	4,859
Female	1,639	391	N/A <sup>a</sup>	1,492	37	77	270	427	4,333	5,542
<b>Employment</b>										
Male	42	112	N/A <sup>a</sup>	299	31	N/A <sup>b</sup>	N/A <sup>b</sup>	35	519	869
Female	13	91	N/A <sup>a</sup>	259	44	N/A <sup>b</sup>	N/A <sup>b</sup>	46	453	671
<b>Education</b>										
Male	N/A <sup>c</sup>	N/A <sup>c</sup>	N/A <sup>c</sup>	N/A <sup>c</sup>	13	N/A <sup>b</sup>	N/A <sup>b</sup>	67	80	252
Female	N/A <sup>c</sup>	N/A <sup>c</sup>	N/A <sup>c</sup>	N/A <sup>c</sup>	36	N/A <sup>b</sup>	N/A <sup>b</sup>	70	106	247

Notes: Source materials from World Vision, Banyan Global, FHI 360, DAI, Creative Associates, and FADCANIC.

<sup>a</sup> Advance Regional will not have completion, employment, or education data until FY2019.

<sup>b</sup> Project does not collect data on employment or enrollment in other education opportunities outside of the project after training completion for this group of beneficiaries.

<sup>c</sup> Project does not collect data on the enrollment of training completers in other education programs outside of the project.

N/A = not applicable.

**Table E.4. FY2018 beneficiary achievements disaggregated by age group**

Age group	Bridges Guatemala	EF Honduras	Advance Regional Scholarship recipients	Bridges El Salvador	TVET-SAY Nicaragua Scholarship recipients	TVET-SAY Nicaragua Partial scholarship recipients	EFS Nicaragua		Total across projects
							Basic education	TVET	
<b>Enrollment</b>									
Ages 10–15	N/A <sup>a</sup>	N/A <sup>a</sup>	N/A <sup>a</sup>	N/A <sup>a</sup>	N/A <sup>a</sup>	N/A <sup>a</sup>	435	N/A <sup>a</sup>	435
Ages 15–17	4,353	547	16	650	17	80	114	196	5,973
Ages 18–19	1,692	740	61	1,231	20	98	44	238	4,124
Ages 20–24	2,016	945	123	1,559	34	142	13	401	5,233
Ages 25–30	N/A <sup>a</sup>	529	44	729	23	43	5	142	1,515
<b>Completion</b>									
Ages 10–15	N/A <sup>a</sup>	N/A <sup>a</sup>	N/A <sup>a</sup>	N/A <sup>a</sup>	N/A <sup>a</sup>	N/A <sup>a</sup>	479	N/A <sup>a</sup>	479
Ages 15–17	1,373	91	N/A <sup>a</sup>	496	10	22	112	160	2,264
Ages 18–19	570	182	N/A <sup>b</sup>	806	9	50	33	181	1,831
Ages 20–24	648	241	N/A <sup>b</sup>	1,132	27	109	10	342	2,509
Ages 25–30	N/A <sup>a</sup>	137	N/A <sup>b</sup>	534	26	21	4	116	838

Table E.4 (continued)

Age group	Bridges Guatemala	EF Honduras	Advance Regional Scholarship recipients	Bridges EI Salvador	TVET-SAY Nicaragua Scholarship recipients	TVET-SAY Nicaragua Partial scholarship recipients	EFS Nicaragua		Total across projects
							Basic education	TVET	
Employment									
Ages 10–15	N/A <sup>a</sup>	N/A <sup>a</sup>	N/A <sup>a</sup>	N/A <sup>a</sup>	N/A <sup>a</sup>	N/A <sup>a</sup>	N/A <sup>a</sup>	N/A <sup>a</sup>	N/A <sup>a</sup>
Ages 15–17	0	32	N/A <sup>a</sup>	29	8	N/A <sup>c</sup>	N/A <sup>c</sup>	9	78
Ages 18-19	20	67	N/A <sup>b</sup>	127	5	N/A <sup>c</sup>	N/A <sup>c</sup>	16	235
Ages 20–24	33	65	N/A <sup>b</sup>	271	37	N/A <sup>c</sup>	N/A <sup>c</sup>	29	435
Ages 25–30	N/A <sup>a</sup>	39	N/A <sup>b</sup>	131	25	N/A <sup>c</sup>	N/A <sup>c</sup>	27	222
Education									
Ages 10–15	N/A <sup>a</sup>	N/A <sup>a</sup>	N/A <sup>a</sup>	N/A <sup>a</sup>	N/A <sup>a</sup>	N/A <sup>a</sup>	N/A <sup>a</sup>	N/A <sup>a</sup>	N/A <sup>a</sup>
Ages 15–17	N/A <sup>d</sup>	N/A <sup>d</sup>	N/A <sup>a</sup>	N/A <sup>d</sup>	9	N/A <sup>c</sup>	N/A <sup>c</sup>	38	47
Ages 18-19	N/A <sup>d</sup>	N/A <sup>d</sup>	N/A <sup>b</sup>	N/A <sup>d</sup>	7	N/A <sup>c</sup>	N/A <sup>c</sup>	55	62
Ages 20–24	N/A <sup>d</sup>	N/A <sup>d</sup>	N/A <sup>b</sup>	N/A <sup>d</sup>	20	N/A <sup>c</sup>	N/A <sup>c</sup>	30	50
Ages 25–30	N/A <sup>a</sup>	N/A <sup>d</sup>	N/A <sup>b</sup>	N/A <sup>d</sup>	13	N/A <sup>c</sup>	N/A <sup>c</sup>	14	27

Notes: Source materials from World Vision, Banyan Global, FHI 360, DAI, Creative Associates, and FADCANIC. For EF Honduras and Bridges EI Salvador, the 15 to 19 age group only includes beneficiaries ages 16 to 19. For TVET-SAY Nicaragua, the 15–19 age group includes 4 new enrollees and 1 completer who were age 14, and the 25–29 age group includes 13 completers who were age 30.

<sup>a</sup> Project does not have youth in this age group. This group is only relevant for EFS Nicaragua.

<sup>b</sup> Advance Regional will not have completion, employment, or education data until FY2019.

<sup>c</sup> Project does not collect data on employment or enrollment in other education opportunities outside of the project after training completion for this group of beneficiaries.

<sup>d</sup> Project does not collect data on the enrollment of training completers in other education programs outside of the project.

N/A = not applicable.

## E. Summary of findings to date

As highlighted in Chapter IV of the main report, as well as in this appendix, all projects devote extensive time and resources to train and prepare at-risk and disadvantaged youth for possible employment in a context where employment opportunities are limited, and youth face many barriers to success. Because of the unique context of each country, the varied lengths of time projects have been training youth, and the distinct features of each WFD program, overall generalizations about youth employment in the context of these projects must be made with care. Table E.5 below summarizes the many features and results of each project.

**Table E.5. Cumulative accomplishments of 6 WFD projects**

Project	Years training youth (inclusive FY2018)	Required training for completion	Intensity of required program	Complementary soft skills support	Job readiness Support	Financial and in-kind support	Cumulative enrollment	Cumulative completion	Cumulative employment	Cumulative positive outcome (employment or further education)
<b>Bridges Guatemala</b>	<1	<i>Diplomado</i> Beneficiaries are also offered TVET courses, but these are not required to count towards employment	112 hours over the course of six months	Mentoring	Internships and apprenticeships	Vouchers and conditional cash transfers	8,061	2,591	55	N/A
<b>EF Honduras</b>	1+	5-part training program	474 hours over the course of six months	Individualized life plan, mentoring	Internships and job shadowing	N/A	3,152	651	203	N/A
<b>Advance Regional</b>	<1	Tertiary education degree	2-3 years (varies by program)	N/A	Internships	Scholarships	244 (scholarship recipients) 1,060 (non-scholarship recipients)	0 <sup>a</sup>	0 <sup>a</sup>	N/A
<b>Bridges El Salvador</b>	2+	Soft/technical program + labor bridging activity	Most courses last between 8 and 12 weeks.	Mentoring; psychosocial support	Internships	Stipends	5,788	4,338	797	N/A
<b>TVET-SAY Nicaragua</b>	3+	Soft/technical program	Scholarships for technical careers last 2.5 to 3 years Short-term trainings last 2 weeks to 4 months	Counselling	Internships; apprenticeships	Scholarships	523 (scholarship) 974 (partial scholarship)	179 (scholarship) 349 (partial scholarship)	191 (scholarship)	279 (scholarship)
<b>EFS Nicaragua</b>	2	Soft/technical program	Varies. Can be up to 2 years	Counselling ; Mentoring	Internships	Scholarships	1,897 (TVET) 1,742 (basic education)	1,528 (TVET) 1,152 (basic education)	268 (TVET)	679 (TVET)

Notes: Source materials from World Vision, Banyan Global, FHI 360, DAI, Creative Associates, and FADCANIC.

<sup>a</sup> Advance Regional does not expect to have any completion data until FY2019 or later, depending on the duration of training.

N/A = not applicable.

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**APPENDIX F:**

**ADDITIONAL INFORMATION ON FY2018 FINDINGS RELATED TO  
UNDERSTANDING LABOR MARKET NEEDS**

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This appendix has more information about the LMAs performed by each project, including assessment details and findings.

Table F.1 summarizes the LMAs conducted thus far. All the study projects have now conducted LMAs to better understand the skills sought by employers and the sectors that offer the most growth potential. As of FY2018, through various LMA exercises, all WFD projects had surveyed or interviewed over 700 firms to get their key observations on recruitment and employment trends and preferences. EF Honduras conducted its first LMA in FY2018. Bridges Guatemala conducted a market study in 15 municipalities in FY2018. The Bridges El Salvador project also completed its LMA in FY2017 and is planning to update it in FY2019. EFS Nicaragua completed a study on the local labor market in FY2014 that focused on identifying possible partnerships with the private sector. In FY2016, TVET-SAY Nicaragua conducted a Labor Demand and Entrepreneurship Study that was similar in nature to other LMAs, and updated it in FY2017 and FY2018. Advance Regional has conducted a distinct LMA in each of its focus countries—Honduras, Jamaica, and Guatemala.

The projects' methodologies for the LMAs varied, but in general they included desk reviews, quantitative analysis of economic data on different industries and sectors, surveys of firms, and key informant interviews (KIIs) with employers across a variety of sectors. Employers were asked about skills demanded and types of employment opportunities that exist in each sector. Many of these LMAs also included sector assessments or value chain analyses to better understand opportunities within specific sectors.

Once completed, the LMAs revealed the companies' perspectives on the type of skills they look for in the labor market. In the cases of Bridges El Salvador, EFS Nicaragua, TVET-SAY Nicaragua, Bridges Guatemala, and EF Honduras, the LMAs allowed the projects to quantify the number of jobs that could be available to youth in the coming years. This information allowed projects to refine their training programs to increase the chances of employment after participation in the program. Additional benefits of LMAs included serving as stepping-stones to develop or expand possible connections between projects and individual companies or business associations. These links could then be used by the projects to seek possible internship opportunities for program beneficiaries, provide key inputs to improve curricula, or secure additional sources of cash or in-kind services for the projects. Table F.2 summarizes the type of assessment, the date it was completed, and the geographic scope and methodology used for each of the project assessments, as well as some details on findings from each LMA.

**Table F.1. Overview of labor market assessments across WFD projects**

	Bridges Guatemala	EF Honduras	Advance Regional	Bridges El Salvador	TVET-SAY Nicaragua	EFS Nicaragua
Name of assessment	Departmental Business Diagnostics	Labor Market Assessment	LMAs in three countries: Jamaica, Guatemala, Honduras	Labor Market Assessment	Labor Demand and Entrepreneurship Study	Public-Private Partnership Strategy
Completion date	FY2018	FY2018	FY2017, with updates in FY18	FY2017, with updates in FY2018 and FY2019	FY2016, with updates in FY2017 and FY2018	FY2015
Geographic scope	15 municipalities in 5 departments	5 municipalities	Focus on Western Highlands in Guatemala; national in Jamaica and Honduras	Only in municipalities of interest to the project given set criteria	Caribbean Coast	Caribbean Coast
Methodology	Desktop review, KIs with private sector and local government, focus groups with local actors; total of 250 people participated	Desktop review, KIs with unions and business chambers, focus groups with microentrepreneurs, survey of 300 firms	Desktop and quantitative analysis of data, sector selection, subsector analysis, and KIs with representatives of organizations in subsectors (29 companies in Guatemala, 47 in Honduras, 41 in Jamaica)	Desktop review, stakeholder interviews, enterprise survey of 206 companies, focus groups with microenterprises	KIs, existing national survey, enterprise survey of firms along Caribbean Coast; survey included information across 6 competency areas from 40 companies in the Caribbean Coast <sup>a</sup>	Desktop review, KIs, and rapid survey of approximately 40 stakeholders (businesses and some local non-governmental organizations)

Notes: Developed by authors based on source materials from World Vision, Banyan Global, FHI 360, DAI, Creative Associates, and FADCANIC.

<sup>a</sup> The competency areas include (1) existing cognitive, technical, and social-emotional skills of importance to the firm; (2) current demand for skills; (3) future demand for skills (aligned with expansion or innovation plans for the next five years); (4) types of positions the company has demanded in the last three years and those that it will demand in the next five years; (5) number of new employees carrying out technical jobs that will be demanded annually for the next five years; and (6) demand for interns and possible employment.

**Table F.2. Summary of LMA findings across WFD projects through FY2018**

	Advance Regional: Guatemala LMA	Advance Regional: Honduras LMA	Advance Regional: Jamaica LMA	Bridges El Salvador	TVET-SAY Nicaragua	EFS Nicaragua	Bridges Guatemala	EF Honduras
Sectors under review	Textiles and apparel, processed food and non-alcoholic beverages, and tourism	Coffee, textiles, tourism, and health	Tourism, agribusiness, creative industries	Tourism Agroindustry Manufacturing Information technology	Tourism, transportation, financial services, coffee, cocoa, telecommunications	Agroforestry, tourism, renewable energy, textiles/clothing manufacture, traditional trades/services	Agroindustry, tourism, health services, technology, and textiles	Business services, agroindustry, tourism, intermediate manufacturing, textiles
Key constraints/limitations identified by employers	Specific technical skills missing for key growth sectors as well as specific tertiary education programs. In textiles and apparel, training and education opportunities do not satisfy demand.	Specific technical skills missing for key growth sectors (high quality coffee), soft skills (especially for tourism)	Specific technical skills missing for key growth sectors (i.e., ecotourism and health tourism)	Deficiencies in basic skills, such as oral and written communication and numeracy  Weaknesses in communication, soft skills, and self-esteem  Mobility constraints due to violent neighborhoods. Limited specialized skills around environmental management, agricultural processes, and quality control in the agroprocessing sector.	Socio-emotional skills, specialized technical skills	Limited employment opportunities. Technical skills are needed, but overall impression that entrepreneurship along the Caribbean Coast would lead to better opportunities for youth.	Limited infrastructure to access market, security concerns, and involvement/support of local government in promoting competition and access to the market <sup>a</sup>	Soft skills, professional training specific to the sector, education level, issues with citizen security and candidates' physical appearance
Skills demanded by employers	Soft skills, innovation and creativity (for textiles), business and sales skills	Soft skills (strong work ethic). In the tourism sector, technical skills in demand varied, with multiple employers preferring youth who can be trained in-house.	More practical education and hands-on experience; more specialized training	Hard and soft skills, interpersonal skills (honesty, creativity, teamwork, communication, reliability, and responsibility). For service sector, how youth look and relationship to gangs is important. The plastics industry seeks very specialized technical skills.	Hard (depending on type of employment) and soft skills (responsibility, honesty, teamwork, and punctuality)	N/A	N/A	Basic skills (reading and writing), interpersonal skills (teamwork, communication, proactivity, work under pressure, verbal and written communication, honesty, and responsibility), and intrapersonal skills (reliability, problem-solving, self-teaching, and leadership)

Note: Based on source materials from FHI360 2017b, 2017c, 2017d; DAI 2017b; Creative Associates 2017; FADCANIC 2014a, 2014b; Fundación Nicaragüense para el Desarrollo Económico y Social 2016, World Vision 2018,

<sup>a</sup> Bridges Guatemala did not determine key constraints and limitations identified by employers, and instead focused on key constraints and limitations to the business climate in each municipality.

N/A = Not applicable.

Key observations and findings on project LMAs follow.

**In Honduras, EF finalized its LMA in FY2018.** The assessment focused on identifying high-growth sectors (agribusiness, information technology, manufacturing, textiles and tourism) to ensure alignment with the Honduran government's Plan 20/20. The assessment also described employment opportunities for at-risk youth, provided data on the number of jobs that could be created, identified constraints to hiring youth, discussed entrepreneurial opportunities and barriers, and made recommendations about the current EF training curriculum. While the LMA was carried out, the project held 14 meetings with industry associations and chambers of commerce representatives to validate some of its market-driven training programs. These preliminary findings helped the EF project focus its first round of vocational training grants on the tourism, manufacturing, services, construction, and IT sectors.

Some of the findings from the Honduras LMA revealed that (1) companies are reluctant to hire youth if they come from dangerous neighborhoods, (2) the preferred way to recruit youth is through personal contacts and networks, (3) opportunities exist for youth to find internships and apprenticeships in the key sectors that were identified, and (4) companies continue to perceive soft skills (such as interpersonal skills) as key to recruiting top candidates. The agroindustry and business services sectors have the highest hiring rate of at-risk youth. However, the country's security conditions have made some companies reluctant to hire youth from specific areas. Over 27 percent of companies stated that they would not consider an applicant who lives in an area that is considered very dangerous. In addition, 56 percent of companies said physical appearance could be a cause for rejecting a candidate. Most companies said they required a high school academic level for skilled positions, whereas unskilled positions usually required a basic-level education. The agroindustry and business services sector reported the greatest need for tertiary or postsecondary education. Overall, all sectors anticipate hiring for 3,290 new positions, most of which could be filled by youth with appropriate skills. The business services sector plans on generating the most jobs in FY2019.

In terms of labor bridging, companies are interested in giving qualified youth internships, but there are not many internships available, and the conversion rate from intern to full-time employee is never above 27 percent. Once youth are employed, companies sometimes notice gaps in the basic skills, interpersonal skills, and intrapersonal skills of at-risk youth. Employers noted that these skills were sometimes more valued than technical skills, and that technical programs should focus on strengthening soft skills. The main causes for dismissing staff include irresponsibility in task performance and a lack of preparation for the position.

The report made four main recommendations. First, programs should develop training and activities to strengthen soft skills. Second, Bridges should help youth strengthen their professional networks. Even if youth have the required skills for employment, they may find it difficult to be hired without a network. Third, the project should prioritize working with sectors that have a high demand for at-risk youth such as the manufacturing, textiles, and business services sectors. Finally, the project should partner with the private sector and vocational centers to identify relevant and effective technical training required for job placement.

During the launch of the LMA, the project organized workshops with human resources leaders on how to successfully leverage opportunities with the project. Since publishing their

LMA, EF Honduras technical training has focused on information technology, tourism, services, manufacturing, and construction (Banyan Global 2018b).

The **Bridges Guatemala** project conducted a market study in the 15 municipalities where it is intervening in Phase II. This study was different from the other labor market assessments because it did not seek information on attributes the private sector looks for in the youth it employs. Instead, the study made a macroeconomic assessment of each municipality, outlining barriers to and facilitators of growth. Overall, the study revealed that more and more youth seek employment in their municipalities, and often emigrate if they cannot find employment. The study included an analysis of economic data and businesses to identify economic sectors with potential to grow and businesses with potential for acceleration and expansion that can employ youth as a result. Although the study determined the top two sectors with potential in each municipality, the following sectors were identified as having the most potential: agroindustry, tourism, health services, technology, and textiles. Overall, there is promising potential for three or four municipalities that have the opportunity to develop high-level industry. Smaller municipalities need more attention in order to expand market access and accelerate currently slow growth.

The market study also scored each municipality on a 100-point scale using seven indicators to determine the condition of the business climate. This exercise helped highlight weaknesses and suggest how to improve them to ultimately attract investments and generate employment. Some of the areas for improvement included (1) promote public policies at the local government level to improve competition and relationships with businesses, (2) improve infrastructure to facilitate access to markets, and (3) enhance perception of security. The report suggests that each municipality create an annual work plan so that local governments and the private sector can work to bridge the gaps and improve the overall business climate.

Based on the market study, Bridges Guatemala started identifying companies in the sectors with potential to try and create courses tailored for their needs. The project also identified micro-companies in communities to expand employment opportunities for vulnerable youth. Additionally, the project has started creating videos to inform youth about the results of the market study, especially about the sectors of growth so that youth could see where potential employment opportunities might exist (World Vision 2018b).

**Bridges El Salvador** interviewed 290 businesses in FY2017 and found that many of the business associations representing employers expressed concern about entry-level applicants' skills in numeracy and literacy, a concern that reflects poorly on the general quality of education in El Salvador. In addition, Salvadoran youth seem to lack skills-based competencies that can help them respond to industry demands. Associations expressed an interest in having youth gain more technical knowledge and practical skills to prepare them for opportunities. In the service industry, though, employers emphasized the need for soft skills; the perception is that youth with strong soft skills will be easier to train than those without soft skills. Because Bridges works with municipalities with high levels of violence, the LMAs also provided information on how violence or the perception of violence affected youth. Employers had concerns about youth's ability to transport themselves safely in or out of gang-affected areas, which could compromise their ability to regularly report to work. In addition, employers said they made assumptions about candidates' fitness for jobs based on where they lived. Applicants from more violent

neighborhoods were perceived as being more violent themselves, based purely on where they lived. Violence, insecurity, and extortion payments were factors that affected microenterprises and entrepreneurs. With limited funds in the start-up phase, many small business owners said that it was hard to expand their businesses when they needed funds to cover security costs and extortion payments.

Bridges El Salvador also explored youth employment opportunities in value chains it considered to have exhibited growth characteristics, based on economic and trade data and the experiences of other USAID projects in the LMA. Starting from an original list of 17 possible sectors, Bridges narrowed the focus sectors to the following five: tourism, agroindustry, manufacturing information technology, and renewable energy.<sup>43</sup> The sugar, dairy, bakery, pharmaceutical, and plastics industries are tradable goods industries that create jobs and contribute to the Salvadoran economy. The LMA for El Salvador included value chain analyses identifying possible entry opportunities for youth in sales, marketing, and distribution in these sectors. The information from this assessment equipped Bridges with key information to help service providers modify some of their trainings to be more responsive to labor market demand and private sector workforce needs. To disseminate the findings from the LMA, Bridges El Salvador held a forum with 374 representatives of government, private sector, academia, donors and civil society in July 2017. Bridges also has begun planning for a follow-up LMA to take place in FY2019, to ensure that program activities respond to current market trends and needs.

In FY2018, the project updated its LMA, and the results of this update will be shared publicly in FY2019. The updated information helped Bridges create a job placement strategy that includes (1) supporting institutional strengthening of training centers by creating strong and long-term alliances with employers, (2) building the capacity of job placement managers, (3) creating One-Stop Shops, (4) fostering more engagement with the private sector, (5) strengthening alliances between training centers and private sector companies by designing and updating training curricula to respond to labor market needs and coordinating internships, and (6) improving the job readiness and employability of vulnerable youth (DAI 2017a, 2017b).

**In Nicaragua, EFS and TVET-SAY conducted separate assessments of the labor market on the Caribbean Coast.** EFS' assessment of the labor market in 2014 summarized the capabilities required by the private sector in RACCN and RACCS (FADCANIC 2014b). The assessment revealed that the private sector along the Caribbean Coast is characterized by family-owned microenterprises with limited growth and employment potential. The most promising employment opportunities found at the time included seafood processing in Corn Island, an agribusiness in Kukra Hill, and some larger businesses in Bluefields. The information on skills demanded by employers helped EFS adapt its courses to private-sector demand. For example, because of the growth of the seafood processing industry in the Corn Islands, EFS trained youth to repair engines in small boats. The necessity of continued training in both soft skills and entrepreneurship was another important finding because these skills could help youth develop their own microenterprises to make up for the limited employment opportunities. Since 2014, the EFS project has also been using the findings from the LMA conducted by TVET-SAY Nicaragua.

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<sup>43</sup> Bridges El Salvador started working in the renewable energy sector during FY2018.



TVET-SAY Nicaragua conducted an analysis of private sector demand for employment in 2016 and updated it in 2017 and 2018. The report focused on companies along the Caribbean Coast of Nicaragua, but also drew on a national report produced by *Fundación Nicaragüense para el Desarrollo Económico y Social* (FUNIDES). In FY2016, the report focused on specific sectors including agriculture (cocoa and banana/plantains), mining, fisheries, and commerce. TVET-SAY's LMA revealed the following findings about the Caribbean Coast: over half of the firms surveyed by TVET-SAY responded that they had difficulty recruiting youth because they lacked skills, especially socio-emotional skills: a skills gap exists between skilled labor and employment prospects that the project could bridge, especially around life skills training. The report also noted difficulties in securing internships for youth mostly due to lack of coordination with training centers and the fact that candidates' skills did not match the competencies required. However, the report did help identify positions open to youth based on specific training offered by the projects, particularly in the agriculture and sales sectors. In FY2017, TVET-SAY updated its assessment with a survey of 30 firms. Some of the findings of the updated report included a willingness by the private sector to provide hands-on training to new/young employees, but firms continue to seek soft skills, notably honesty, responsibility, timeliness, and teamwork. The assessment also determined the possibility of certain sectors investing in project training programs. The sectors most willing to employ youth included the transportation, telecommunications and commerce sectors, however this varied considerably by sector. The project updated the LMA again in FY2018, this time surveying 96 firms from 11 different sectors, some of which were tourism, dairy processing, financial services, cocoa, and telecommunications. The survey measured the willingness of companies to hire youth and noted that soft skills like responsibility, honesty, teamwork, and punctuality are most valued. As a product of the LMA, RENET helped create sector-specific reports (such as the coffee, automotive, and tourism sectors) that describe the state of the sector, positions available to youth, and the qualifications needed for those positions.

The **Advance Regional** project conducted separate LMAs in Honduras, Guatemala, and Jamaica. The studies explored the labor market in each country as well as the growth trends in some key sectors. Because the Advance Regional project is focused on tertiary education, its LMAs explored the demand for technical education graduates and the supply of qualified workers in selected growth subsectors. A summary of the LMAs for each country follows.

In **Guatemala**, the LMA facilitated a more nuanced understanding of the employment opportunities in the vegetable and legumes, textiles and apparel, processed food and non-alcoholic beverage, and tourism subsectors. In the agriculture sector, the general perceptions were that university students are an asset to companies in the sector and often also have the appropriate soft skills (positivity, self-motivation, and the ability to work well in groups). In the textiles industry, the LMA found that training opportunities in Guatemala did not satisfy the needs of formal and informal businesses in the sector. Employers in the processed food and beverage industry said they were seeking more trained technicians to respond to the spike in demand for health foods. Table F.3 summarizes some of the tertiary training needs identified by each subsector. The LMA also found that sales and marketing specialists with experience in web and graphic design are in demand in the tourism industry (FHI 360 2017c).

**Table F.3. Guatemala training needs by focus sector, as identified in the LMA**

Sector	Training needs identified
Vegetable and legumes	Food processing, logistics and transportation, marketing and sales.
Textiles	Design, marketing, machine maintenance.
Food and beverage	Sales and marketing, logistics and transportation, industrial mechanics.
Tourism	Hospitality and tourism management, logistics and transportation, business and administration.

Note: Source materials from FHI 360c.

In **Honduras**, the LMA focused on the coffee, textiles, tourism, and health sectors. The Honduras LMA determined that, in general, employers do not think Honduras' secondary education system adequately prepares job seekers for the workplace. Employers also said soft skills such as a desire to learn, clear communication skills, and creativity were critical to employment. As with the example in Guatemala, the LMA mapped the sectors to local institutions offering training and education that could be relevant to employers in their sector. The Honduras LMA found that more training was needed in each of the four focus sectors. Table F.4 depicts the training needs identified for each of the focus subsectors (FHI 360 2017d).

**Table F.4. Honduras training needs by focus sectors identified in the LMA**

Sector	Training needs identified
Coffee sector	Coffee cultivation (with an emphasis on quality and organic production practices), processing (mostly coffee tasters), and agribusiness
Tourism sector	Upgrading of cultural attractions and commercial airline services
Textile industry	Production management and high-end specialties such as embroidery, electromechanics, apparel design, and industrial design
Health sector	Pharmacy assistance, biomedicine, health IT, and other primary care support tasks

Note: Source materials from FHI 360 2017d.

In **Jamaica**, the LMA focused on several promising sectors: tourism, agroprocessing/agribusiness, and the creative industries (music and entertainment). For each selected sector, the team explored what key positions within each chain in the sector could be available to youth. In parallel, it overlaid the positions with potential degree programs. This exercise allowed the project to identify technical programs that could be strengthened and, therefore, potentially receive support from the project (FHI 360 2017e). A summary of the findings is in Table F.5.

**Table F.5. Jamaica training needs by focus sector as identified in the LMA**

Sector	Identified training needs
Tourism sector	Specialized skills in health and ecotourism
Agribusiness sector	More practical skills training in agriculture and agribusiness
Creative industry	Infrastructure and instructor capacity lacking to fully train people in this industry Additional training in entrepreneurship, since there are many freelancers in this industry

Note: Source materials from FHI 360 2017b.

The information came from the LMAs and from additional institutional landscape analyses set up by the Advance Regional project to identify its priority areas of intervention by country.

The project is working closely with three institutions and degree programs in each country to receive services for the duration of the contract. By the end of FY2018, Advance signed memoranda of understanding with nine institutions, meeting its life-of-program target. These partnerships set the framework for Advance to start strengthening organizations that will train tertiary education institutions serving youth.

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## **APPENDIX G:**

### **ADDITIONAL INFORMATION ON WFD SYSTEM STRENGTHENING: IMPROVING THE WFD ENABLING ENVIRONMENT AND SERVICE DELIVERY**

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All six WFD projects discussed in this report have worked to improve the WFD system, either by creating a more enabling environment or strengthening the capacity of WFD service providers so they can develop more market-oriented courses, giving youth a better chance at employment and making the training centers more sustainable. It is important to note that the projects can differ in the types of organizations they strengthen or in their approach to strengthening the enabling environment.

- TVET SAY Nicaragua and Bridges El Salvador worked to improve national and municipal policies aimed at improving the WFD system. EF Honduras also began to improve the enabling environment through its work to strengthen *Instituto Nacional de Formación Profesional* (INFOP). Although not as intensive as the EF Honduras efforts, Nicaragua TVET and Bridges El Salvador also built the capacity of organizations that help set TVET priorities (such as RENET and *Instituto Salvadoreño de Formación Profesional* (INSAFORP)).
- All projects are committed to strengthening service providers, including universities (Advance Regional) or specialized training institutions (all other projects). This includes revising, updating, or creating new programs that give staff and faculty opportunities for professional development; providing operational support; and offering other activities. Some projects such as Advance Regional, Bridges El Salvador, and TVET-SAY Nicaragua are also monitoring improvement by assessing service providers' capacity and needs throughout the life of the project. Bridges El Salvador hopes to strengthen 20 different TVET centers, The Bridges Guatemala project is designed to train 25 education service providers, and TVET-SAY Nicaragua is strengthening the capacity of 8 TVET service providers. The Advance Regional project aims to strengthen three tertiary institutions in each country. EFS Nicaragua is unique in that it is the only project implemented by a local organization (FADCANIC), and its organizational strengthening activities are self-focused.<sup>44</sup>

## **A. Strengthening the WFD enabling environment and service providers**

### **1. National WFD policy**

**Assessing policy constraints.** In FY2018, Bridges El Salvador assessed WFD policy constraints within the country. The project built on a policy assessment conducted in FY2017, which has guided its activities at the national level. That policy assessment revealed that in general, El Salvador's laws, policies, and regulations do not specifically create opportunities for at-risk youth. In particular, there appears to be limited guidance in the laws pertaining to internships and apprenticeships. In some cases, the law is not working as intended—as in the Law on First Employment. In FY2018, the project offered to provide technical and logistical support to assist INJUVE, the government entity in El Salvador with principal responsibility for supporting youth, in tailoring a new municipal youth policy based on youth needs. Other projects such as TVET-SAY also contributed to assessing policy constraints and improving the WFD system as summarized below.

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<sup>44</sup> FADCANIC organizational training activities are focused on improving strategic plans and internal policies, developing human resources, improving their M&E system, and improving ICT systems and office infrastructure.

**Revising, updating, or creating new WFD policies.** Bridges El Salvador and TVET-SAY Nicaragua supported updating or creating new WFD national policies in FY2018. Bridges El Salvador helped two municipalities update their municipal youth policies to establish new legal frameworks for the rights of youth and to respond to the specific needs of youth in each community. In addition, with project support, INJUVE identified an opportunity to expand its internship program and make it easier for youth with disabilities to participate. The project is providing continued support to help with the implementation of its new inclusion policy. TVET-SAY Nicaragua was instrumental in the creation of a national technical/vocational education network called RENET—it set up RENET’s legal framework. As a result of TVET-SAY’s role in strengthening RENET, many institutions recognize RENET’s role in training Nicaragua’s future workforce, and they have joined this network. In FY2018, TVET SAY supported RENET as it refined a draft on a preliminary law on internships and first jobs. The network was also preparing to participate in a discussion of a proposal for a Youth Employment and Entrepreneurship Act. The project also supported a consultation process, to include the Youth Advisory Council in the *Región Autónoma de la Costa Caribe Sur* (RACCS) - the Autonomous Region in the Southern Caribbean Coast- Youth Coordination Table, designed to ensure that technical/vocational education is incorporated into new youth policies. Although work has not stopped, advocacy efforts have been postponed or have encountered difficulties because of the political crisis and because RENET is still waiting to achieve legal status.

## 2. National WFD institutions

**Assessing capacity and/or needs.** EF Honduras worked with national WFD institution INFOP to assess its institutional capacity. In FY2016, **EF Honduras** conducted an in-depth analysis of INFOP to identify areas of improvement in order to ensure INFOP was providing services that corresponded to private-sector demands. The assessment gave the project in-depth understanding of INFOP’s capacity and role in continuing to train Honduran youth. The findings from the assessment of INFOP revealed that, overall, INFOP is a respected institution with vast reach within Honduras (INFOP 2016b). However, there is a general perception that INFOP’s graduates would be better off if they received more soft skills training. In addition, the assessment indicated that INFOP management could benefit from more training, including participating in field missions to other Latin American vocational training institutions, such as the national WFD service in Colombia—*Servicio Nacional de Aprendizaje* (SENA).

In FY2017, EF Honduras started working with INFOP to develop 64 parameters, organized in six categories, to establish the institution’s progress toward becoming a market-driven organization. The six categories include institutional management, finance and planning, technical capacity, new and revised curricula, instructors receiving training, and percentage of graduates tracked. All categories align student competencies and abilities with the needs of the market. In FY2018, the project conducted two midline assessments using a scale of 0 to 4. The first assessment in Q2 showed a 31 percent overall improvement compared to the baseline, and the second assessment in Q4 showed an 88 percent improvement compared to the baseline. The most significant improvement was in market investigations, achieved by creating a job-prospecting office. Following these assessments, EF Honduras conducted workshops to share results and develop plans for further improvement. Although INFOP is eager to make its offerings more market-driven, its success will depend on whether it can overcome political and economic challenges.



**Training activities for national institutions.** EF Honduras strengthened the management of INFOP by creating a Leaders for Workforce Development Change program in which 25 trainers and government or private sector officials are being trained through a series of workshops, coaching sessions, exchanges, and a certification program to validate competencies to manage WFD programs. In the future, the project will also organize regular forums between INFOP and the private sector, train INFOP managers and technical trainers on how to adapt courses to private sector needs, and support exchanges between INFOP and training or vocational centers in Latin America or the United States, among other activities (Banyan Global 2017b).

In FY2018, **Nicaragua TVET SAY** invested considerable effort in creating sustainable structures to promote technical and vocational education in Nicaragua. Notably, TVET-SAY was instrumental in the creation of a national technical education network called RENET. Currently, RENET has 57 network members from private sector chambers, private TVET centers and universities, and civil service organizations (CSOs). This represents a unique opportunity in Nicaragua because RENET is able to convene TVET centers and private-sector representatives to develop better TVET services and employment opportunities. The project is still working with the government to recognize the network as a legal entity, and is hoping to receive confirmation in March of 2019. In FY2018, RENET members received training in social marketing to understand how to attract youth to technical education centers, and on the use of COMPAS-T, a tool to help measure risk levels for youth. RENET also collaborated with ChileValora to create training curriculums (using regional dialogues and workshops) for students interested in the tourism, industry, and agriculture sectors. To enhance sustainability, RENET also signed a cooperation agreement with the Swiss Development Cooperation to provide technical education. Nicaragua TVET SAY also assisted RENET in establishing advocacy and communication strategies by helping incorporate Youth Advisory Council members into the RACCS' Youth Coordination Roundtable discussion. This will help ensure that a technical education section will be incorporated in the proposed youth policy.

**Other strengthening activities for national institutions.** Three projects have worked to strengthen national WFD institutions that also support the WFD system. EF Honduras helped INFOP make institutional improvements to be more market-driven by implementing the Leaders for Workforce Development Change program for 25 government representatives and by helping to create a job forecasting office. In addition to adding 15 new members in FY2018, TVET-SAY Nicaragua's RENET received training in social marketing, measurement of risk for youth (COMPAS-T), and creating training curriculums for students. The project also helped RENET establish advocacy and communication strategies that will be implemented in FY2019. Projects also took steps to improve the institutional capacity of certain programs. During FY2018, Bridges El Salvador and INSAFORP laid the groundwork for INSAFORP to inherit Bridges' tailor-made CRM system, which it can use for years to come to improve data management, reporting and analysis of youth training and employment at a national level.

In FY2018, members of the Bridges El Salvador and EF Honduras teams participated in study tours to learn more about success stories in providing professional training to vulnerable youth and ultimately to help strengthen national WFD institutions. As part of the USAID Regional Trilateral Cooperation (RTC) Bridges El Salvador participated in a study tour in Colombia to learn about the country's experience in providing WFD training to vulnerable

youth, implementing One-Stop Shops, and creating alliances with the private sector. EF Honduras also traveled to Colombia and visited three national training institutions to inform its strategies to support INFOP. Although projects traveled at different times, both visited Colombia's vocational training institution SENA, which is a regional model for influencing WFD policy and improving training opportunities.

Organizational strengthening activities conducted through the end of FY2018 are summarized below and divided into two categories: strengthening the WFD enabling environment and strengthening service providers.

## **B. Strengthening service delivery**

The projects engage in organizational capacity assessments (OCAs) to identify the things that institutions or service providers need to strengthen, and use the information to determine specific activities that strengthen WFD programs and providers.

### **1. Organizational capacity assessments**

Table G.1 summarizes the types of organizational assessments and the dimensions of service that were observed in projects in different institutions. The Advance Regional project's organizational assessment differs from the others because it used a multistep process for the assessment, which was completed in FY2018. First, the project did an institutional landscape analysis in each country to assess the state of tertiary education institutions, then used it together with the results of the labor market assessment (LMA) to develop a short list of institutions to work with. The Advance Regional project also conducted institutional capacity assessments (ICAs) of the target institutions on the short list; these assessments are similar to OCAs but tailored to the needs of institutions.

**Table G.1. Organizational strengthening assessments, by project**

OCA characteristics	Bridges El Salvador	Bridges Guatemala	EF Honduras	TVET-SAY Nicaragua	EFS Nicaragua	Advance Regional
Name of organizational assessment conducted	Technical Vocational Education and Training CAT	TBD (some form of OCA but not defined)	Strengthening INFOP in Directing Talent Toward Demand	Capacity Building Assessment OCAT	Appreciative Review of Capacity	Institutional Landscape Analysis (ILA) leading to a deep-dive Institutional Capacity Assessment
Date the assessment was completed	2017, 2018 (TVET CAT)	TBD	2016, 2017, 2018	2016, 2017, 2018	2015	2017 (Jamaica ILA), 2018 (Guatemala, Honduras, and Jamaica ICA)
Planned follow-up?	Yes, yearly	TBD	Yes	Yes, yearly	No	Not as part of the ILA, TBD as part of ICA
Number of organizations assessment was applied to	20 in 2017 3 in 2018*	Planned for 6	1, INFOP	6 in 2016, 2017 5 in 2018	1, FADCANIC** (conducted by another organizations)	The ILA explored the general tertiary education sector. ICAs covered 9 institutions based on the findings of the ILA.
Dimensions observed	Philosophy and objectives Organization and administration Training programs Library and learning resources Management of administrative staff and teaching faculty Finance Overall institutional Infrastructure Workshops, equipment and materials Student services	TBD	Institutional management and coordination Finance and planning Demand-oriented training Curriculum and teaching aids Teacher training Monitoring, evaluation, and learning	Governance Management Human resource management Financial management Organizational management Technical management Program management Project performance management Workforce development management Communications Sustainability Private sector engagement	Governance Strategic planning Human talent External relations Project/service management Resource development Finance and administration	Context and target population Strategy and planning Educational programs promotion Student recruitment Staff recruitment Faculty and staff Staff professional development Education services Evaluation Graduates and degrees Financial resources and infrastructure Monitoring, transparency and financial accountability Governance and enforcement

Note: Source materials from World Vision, Banyan Global, FHI 360, DAI, Creative Associates, and FADCANIC.

\* This number is based on the first semi-annual report, and the number of organizations the assessment was applied to could be higher.

\*\* As a part of its OCAT assessments TVET-SAY Nicaragua also assessed one of EFS Nicaragua's primary service providers, *Centro Wawashang*.

CAT =Capacity assessment tool; OCAT =Organizational capacity assessment tool.

Some of the main findings from the OCAs conducted thus far for each project include the following:

The **Advance Regional** project conducted institutional landscape analyses (ILAs) in its three countries of operation (Honduras, Guatemala, and Jamaica) in the first year and a half of the project. The ILA of local tertiary technical providers gave the project information on curriculum, faculty and staff, labor market bridging, and any other services (scholarships or other support). The ILA also shed light on the availability of other support services, such as admissions, financial aid (scholarships), and support with labor market bridging. Based on the results of the ILA, the project prioritized institutions to work with (three in each country, as shown in Table G.2) and began individual deep-dive ICAs. These ICAs were finalized in FY2018, and focused on understanding capacity constraints in curriculum development, staff and faculty professional development, labor market bridging, recruitment and student support services, and scholarships, thereby prioritizing future Advance interventions. The ICA also conducted skills and knowledge assessments of faculty and staff. The ICA results identified four weaknesses: (1) the need to define and systematize administrative processes for managing scholarships and curriculum revisions, (2) the lack of effective tracking systems for program graduates, (3) the need for improved teacher professional development, and (4) the need for improved student support services. In Jamaica, the ICAs emphasized the lack of resources and learning equipment, and in Guatemala, the universities highlighted the need for improved collaboration with stakeholders.

**Table G.3. Institutions and degree programs participating in Advance Regional**

Country	Institution	Degree program
Honduras	Universidad Cristiana Evangélica Nuevo Milenio	Clinical laboratory Logistics and transportation
	Centro Universitario Tecnológico	Web design and development Auxiliary nursing
	Universidad Nacional Autónoma de Honduras	Business administration for coffee growers Food and beverage management Agriculture production
Guatemala	Universidad Panamericana (UPANA)	Business administration Marketing and sales
	Universidad Rafael Landívar (URL)	Hotel administration and gastronomy Physical and occupational therapy Primary care nursing Logistics and transportation
	Universidad San Carlos	Fruit production Forestry
Jamaica	Council of Community Colleges of Jamaica	Agroprocessing and business management Health and wellness tourism
	Vocational Training Development Institute	Entertainment and events management Digital media
	University of Technology	Design and technology Fashion styling and image consulting

Note: Source materials from FHI 360.

In FY2017, **Bridges El Salvador** used its TVET-CAT tool to lead an assessment of 20 WFD service providers. The results of the assessment revealed a series of suggested interventions that Bridges could support depending on the individual needs of each organization.

The findings from the baseline TVET-CAT indicated that some areas of possible intervention across the service providers included reworking training programs to better meet the needs of the private sector and the future employees, strengthening and upgrading library and learning centers where youth can access learning resources, designing and implementing recruitment and hiring procedures that comply with labor laws, training service providers so they can identify sources of funding to keep infrastructure and content updated, and developing a student services roster that could allow for better follow-up communication with students (DAI 2017c). These findings shaped the project's work to improve the capacity of training centers and the quality and relevance of training available to at-risk youth. In FY2018, Bridges conducted midline TVET-CAT assessments for three training centers (*Capacitación Profesional en Computación* (CAPUCOM), *Asociación Ágape de El Salvador* (AGAPE), and *Asociación para la Organización y Educación Empresarial Femenina de El Salvador* (OEF)). This allowed the project to understand how each project improved by comparing results with the baseline assessment. All three training centers improved their overall scores, with particularly visible improvement in the following categories: philosophy and objectives, organization and administration, finance, and overall institutional infrastructure. See Table G.3 for a summary of the total scores for the baseline and midlines assessments.

**Table G.3. Results from TVET-CAT baseline and midline assessments for 3 training centers**

Training center	Assessment	Total Score (out of 500)
CAPUCOM	Baseline	312
	Midline	<b>365</b>
AGAPE	Baseline	388
	Midline	<b>428</b>
OEF	Baseline	376
	Midline	<b>398</b>

In addition to building the organizational capacity of training centers, Bridges El Salvador also built the capacity of 10 CSOs in FY2018 using OCAs. Bridges helped CSOs strengthen monitoring and evaluation, communications and branding, and fundraising and sustainability.

**TVET-SAY Nicaragua** is strengthening the capacity of eight organizations—six WFD providers and two universities—in nine different categories. In FY2018, the project evaluated five training centers, with an additional institution set to be evaluated in Q1 of FY2019. TVET-SAY OCAT evaluations only focus on TVET centers, as universities have completed separate evaluations with the support of other USAID projects. Equipped with OCA scores for each organization, TVET-SAY staff crafted individualized action plans for each TVET center. The baseline OCA also generated valuable information on enrollment, retention, and course offerings that the project could share with partners and the private sector. Although TVET-SAY does not have indicators that track the number of organizations with improved capacity or the number of programs that were strengthened, it does track progress through individualized OCA scores. Based on the individualized plans and the work carried out throughout 2018, on average, TVET-SAY was able to raise the OCA score from 2.7/4 to 3.57/4 in the span of two years for six organizations. The project surpassed its OCA target by improving institutional performance tracking, communication, organizational management, and program management. A summary of some of the interventions TVET-SAY implemented to increase organizations' OCA scores is

included in the next section. TVET centers are now using strategic plans based on OCA results as a tool to help management become more results-oriented. In addition, the M&E team also conducted a rapid qualitative assessment in parallel to the OCA to measure the impact of program activities and to determine areas of growth in order to improve quality and inclusivity of services.

**Table G.4. Results from OCAT assessments for 6 TVET centers from 2016 to 2018**

TVET centers	2016	2017	2018
CEFODI	2.63	3.03	3.09
Centro Juvenil Don Bosco	2.96	3.68	3.81
Roberto Clemente de Fe y Alegria	2.62	3.06	3.66
Instituto Rey Juan Carlos 1	1.66	2.78	3.48
Samuel Foundation	3.63	3.72	3.80
CETAA Wawashang	N/A	3.1	FY2019 Q1

As stated, the **EFS Nicaragua** project's organizational strengthening component has been focused on FADCANIC, the local implementer of EFS. In the mid-2000s, the American Institutes for Research conducted a baseline OCA of FADCANIC. Based on those findings, FADCANIC started to receive training in youth engagement, M&E, and strategic planning. In 2014, the *Programa de Gobernabilidad Local* led a follow-up organizational self-assessment (Global Communities 2016). Based on the results of the self-assessment, FADCANIC developed an organizational improvement plan that was used to prioritize its own organizational strengthening activities. FADCANIC organizational training activities are focused on improving strategic plans and internal policies, developing human resources, and improving ICT systems and office infrastructure. Since this assessment was completed, no formal follow-up assessments have taken place. In addition to self-strengthening activities, EFS also strengthens FADCANIC's Center for Agroforestry and Environmental Education (CETAA) through teacher training; institutionalization of the life skills, counseling, tutoring and peer mentoring programs; and support for the introduction of virtual learning programs.

**Bridges Guatemala** plans to use an adaptation of the OCA methodology to conduct an assessment of 25 organizations in FY2019. It is currently finalizing the plan for this work.

## 2. Strengthening WFD programs and service providers

**Bridges Guatemala** is designed to strengthen 25 service providers who will ultimately help deliver the project's *Diplomado Emprender con Éxito* curriculum. In FY2018, Bridges Guatemala trained 108 facilitators to deliver seven modules of the *Diplomado Emprender con Exito*. Workshop subjects included an orientation to project goals; the objectives of the curriculum, materials, and resources available to facilitators; and practical experience for delivery. Bridges Guatemala trained 108 facilitators to deliver seven modules of the *Diplomado Emprender con Exito*. The *Diplomado* is being implemented in the 15 prioritized municipalities. The project also developed and implemented a radio version of its *Diplomado* program with the help of the *Instituto Guatemalteco de Educación Radiofónica* (IGER). Radio allowed the project to reach more youth; 568 volunteers from IGER were trained to implement the radio mode. Bridges Guatemala is currently collaborating with the Ministry of Education to develop a virtual

version of the Diplomado as well. The project has already started to review and improve modules that have been implemented, and will continue to do so in FY2019.

In addition to this, Bridges Guatemala developed a Diplomado in Agriculture Under Protected Conditions for youth who have completed the core Diplomado and expressed an interest in vocational training in agriculture. The project created five modules in FY2018: agricultural marketing, agricultural entrepreneurship, administration, structures for agriculture under protected circumstances, and crop management. Three new agricultural training centers were established, equipped, and became operational in Q1 of FY2019. The project trained 14 facilitators for the agricultural learning centers, and 1,800 youth expect to be trained by the end of the project.

The project also introduced other new courses, including a training course on entrepreneurship led by Fundasistemas. In FY2018, Bridges Guatemala started a pilot program to train young sugarcane cutters. Training includes the core Diplomado and a business development system called SIDEM (*Sistema de Desarrollo Empresarial*). The project is also developing a diploma in administration and finance, and a diploma for vegetables for export that should be available in FY2019. In terms of professional development for training center staff, workshops for facilitators and trainers were held on topics such as gender-based violence, social protection, and human rights. In addition, the project is partnering with local municipalities that will house Municipal Youth Centers. These Youth Centers will be safe places for youth to take courses and get additional WFD support with mentoring, internships, and access to activities in the areas of science, technology, engineering, arts, and mathematics.

In FY2018, **EF Honduras**, after seeing LMA results, developed courses through a process involving businesses and INFOP. Sixteen new course offerings will be available in construction, tourism, services, manufacturing, and information technology. In addition, three vocational training organizations were selected and trained for implementation, and 62 vocational instructors were trained using INFOP's methodology. EF Honduras is in the process of developing a school to train the trainers for INFOP, and hopes that training activities will begin in Q2 of FY2019. Finally, the project is helping INFOP draft a program curriculum to help integrate information technology across its programming and operations. New courses for instructors and students are planned for Q1 of FY2019. EF Honduras also trained over 180 facilitators, peer mentors, and vocational instructors for the basic labor competencies and soft skills program. The project also chose three tertiary service organizations to lead training, and 16 tertiary services leaders were trained to implement EF Honduras methodology.

At the university level, **Advance Regional** is improving the quality and relevance of the technical degree program by working closely with curriculum task teams at partner institutions. The project also made significant advances in curriculum development by assessing the training gaps in each curriculum. Advance Regional used the results of the ICAs conducted in FY2018 to design and implement activities on capacity-building strategies within each institution. Advance also worked with institutions to revise existing curricula and pilot new courses to align with labor market needs. The project used guidelines to decide whether a degree program needed minor revisions (tweak) or substantive revisions (revise). Overall, Advance identified 4 degrees to tweak and 11 degrees to revise, and created 6 new degree programs. By the end of FY2018,

the project completed curriculum revisions for 9 of the degree programs, and will continue to make changes for the remaining programs in FY2019.

New programs include Fashion Styling & Image Consulting, Design & Technology, Health & Wellness Tourism, Agroprocessing & Business Management in Jamaica; and Logistics & Transportation in Honduras and Guatemala. In addition, the project tailored additional professional development programs for faculty and staff, and will continue doing this in Year 4 and Year 5 of the program. The project noted specific needs in training for technology use in Jamaica, conflict resolution and teamwork strategies in Guatemala, and development planning for individuals in Honduras. The project also trained faculty for new degree programs and held soft skills trainings in Guatemala and Jamaica. Additionally, Advance organized a one-week tour of four technical education universities in Mexico for selected faculty and staff from Honduran and Jamaican institutions. Study tour participants learned about the technical degree programs, their recruitment and admissions practices, curriculum development, and private sector partnerships.

Throughout the project's life cycle, **Bridges El Salvador** provides ongoing technical assistance to help service providers improve organizational capacity. Although Bridges El Salvador exceeded their accreditation program target in FY2017, the project did not add any new certifications or accreditations in FY2018, instead focusing on and strengthening those created in FY2018. The project developed customized Technical Assistance Plans for selected WFD providers that participated in the TVET-CAT exercise including for the three organizations assessed in FY2018, which should be implemented in FY2019. The Technical Assistance plans included improvements in operations and administration, communications, financial management, hiring and training of new staff, student recruitment and registration, new or modified curricula and learning materials, and data management and reporting. These are all in response to the findings from the organizational capacity assessment. This fiscal year, Bridges worked with INJUVE to help certify additional training center staff to be life skills instructors by holding a number of workshops to explain how to incorporate life skills themes into ongoing courses and programs. In FY2018, 109 people from 10 institutions were trained and certified to be instructors, including technical course instructors, psychologists, and social workers.

In FY2018, programs improved training curricular and responded to the needs of the sectors. Trainings were accredited or serviced by an industry association, INSAFORP (*Instituto Salvadoreño de Formación Profesional*, the national WFD institution), or the Ministry of Education. The project also developed new training curricula, most of which was focused on the results of past LMAs. For example, Bridges collaborated with CasaTIC to implement 18 computer programming training courses at three training centers. Youth have the opportunity to work remotely on real company projects on a software established by the program. Bridges El Salvador also worked with the plastics industry to help fill positions by developing new curricula to provide specialized training in this sector.

For the Nicaragua TVET providers, **TVET-SAY** provided technical assistance to service providers in response to the findings of the OCA. This included training TVET organizations on the measurement of risk for youth in their programs based on the COMPAS-T and how to manage needs based on results. The project also created a manual for teaching soft skills in order to reinforce subjects like resilience, conflict resolution, effective communication, and emotional



intelligence, among others. To help with professional development, TVET-SAY created the Diplomado, an online resource for training center staff to improve management and teaching methodologies for courses such as financial sustainability and personal development. Other initiatives for capacity strengthening included human resource optimization, counseling services for youth, and the implementation of new management systems. TVET-SAY Nicaragua also helped create new programs for training centers, including one on automotive maintenance funded by Grupo Pellas and KIPESA. The course was launched in August 2018 and included 61 youth. The structure of the class consists of 16 sessions for a total of 80 hours.

In FY2018, **EFS Nicaragua** used partnerships to create four community-based vocational courses and three innovative courses. This included one cell phone repair course in RACCN and a RACCS course on the electrical systems of marine motors. One innovative course held in Bluefields taught basic massage technique, providing course materials such as massage beds free of cost. Other courses included a motorcycle maintenance and repair course outside of Bluefields and a video production course at the Municipal Trade School of Bluefields. The latter program enabled youth to work in a computer lab. EFS Nicaragua has also partnered with the National Production Bank (BANPRO) to create online training courses. These include courses on micro- and small-business management and how to start up a business. The courses last two months each, and the project is hoping to expand this opportunity to other regions. In addition, EFS Nicaragua helped train 18 staff members on the new soft skills strategy and entrepreneurial mentorships.

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## **APPENDIX H:**

### **RANGE OF ASSESSMENT TOOLS USED BY COMMUNITY OF PRACTICE**

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**Table H.1. Description of assessment tools**

Name of tool	Description	Projects using tool	Project designed the tool
Violence Involved Persons Risk Assessment (VIP-RA)	Risk-level assessment tool that identifies signs of violent behavior and classifies youth as having primary, secondary, or tertiary risk. Based on their identified risk level, youth are referred to training programs with varying levels of support.	EF Honduras	
Comprehensive Positive Assessment Tool (COMPAS-T)	A tool developed by TVET-SAY Nicaragua and USAID to measure 12 risk factors and 5 protective factors. The assessment is administered to beneficiaries before and after the training, as well as six months after they finish it. The tool includes an early warning system useful for identifying beneficiaries who need individual counseling.	TVET-SAY Nicaragua	X
Social risk assessment tool	Administered to TVET program beneficiaries to determine eligibility for primary and secondary scholarships. The tool is also administered to screen youth who may be in immediate need of referral to psychosocial services. Areas that are assessed include family conditions, living conditions, economic situation, and four self-esteem dimensions.	EFS Nicaragua	
Soft skills measuring tool	Bridges Guatemala is serving as a validation site for a soft skills measurement tool developed by FHI360 as part of the USAID YouthPower initiative. The tool aims to assess changes in individuals' soft skills following completion of a soft skills training program. The tool has been administered to participants twice to determine change.	Bridges Guatemala	
Participatory Youth Assessment	Assessment that describes the quality of life of at-risk and vulnerable young men and women—their conditions, access, obstacles, and opportunities pertaining to education, professional training, life skills, employment, entrepreneurship, gender equality, and how involved they are as citizens.	Bridges El Salvador	
Organizational Capacity Assessment (OCA)	Tool to evaluate critical elements for effective organizational management and to identify areas that need strengthening and development.	Bridges El Salvador Nicaragua	X
OCA+	Adapted OCA tool to include technical vocational and private sector engagement categories.	TVET-SAY	X
Institutional Capacity Assessment (ICA)	Tool that includes self-evaluation carried out by the academic and administrative staff; it measures operational capacity, management capacity, leadership capacity, and adaptability.	Advance Regional	X
Institutional Landscaping Analysis (ILA)	Study that identifies institutions' capabilities in terms of curriculum, faculty, and personnel of existing programs. The study also identifies support structures for students, the barriers that impede the development of programs, and the main areas of improvement.	Advance Regional	

Name of tool	Description	Projects using tool	Project designed the tool
Technical Vocational Education and Training Capacity Assessment Tool (TVET-CAT)	Tool that documents the state of the main functions and key features for efficiency of training centers, in order to identify areas for improvement. The diagnosis is made in three categories: institutional leadership, programs and services, and operational efficiency.	Bridges El Salvador	
Study of Barriers to Access and Completion (SBAC)	Study examines the barriers that students in disadvantaged situations face, based on three criteria: student, community, and gender.	Advance Regional	

TVET = technical and vocational education and training.

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