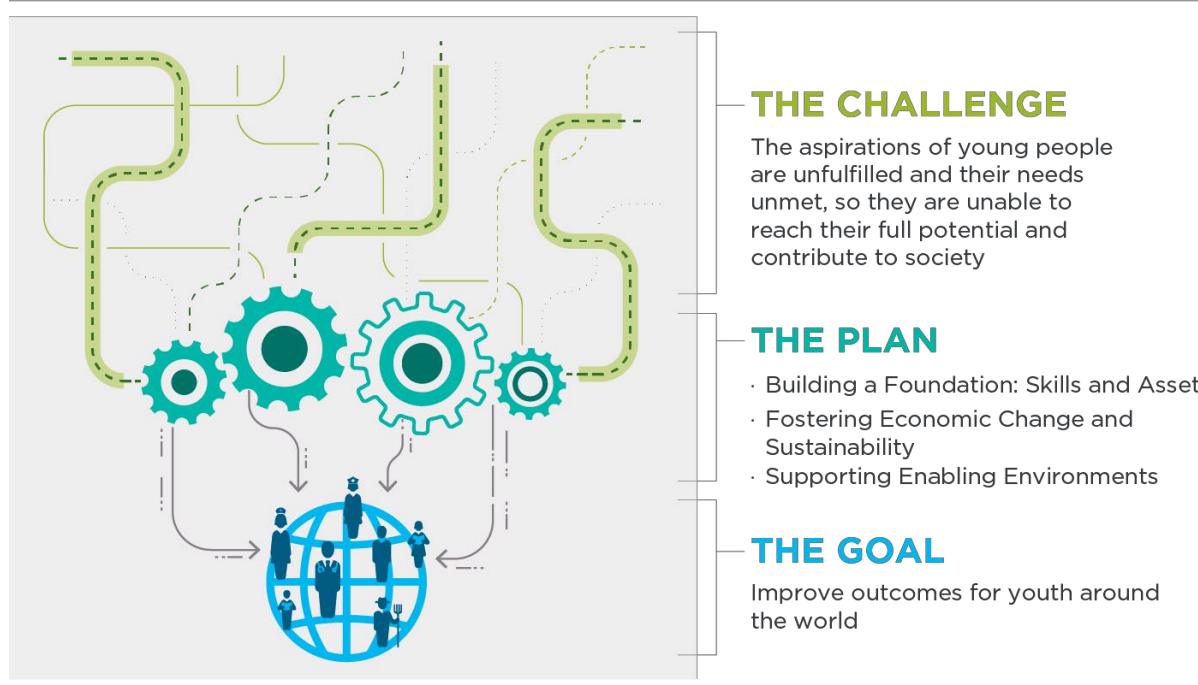# CHEMONICS' YOUTH DEVELOPMENT PHILOSOPHY

Chemonics is committed to supporting today's generation of world leaders — from small-scale farmers to health-care workers, from community organizers to policy advocates. We do this by implementing innovative solutions for youth across multiple sectors: conflict and crisis, gender and disability, democracy and governance, health, and economic growth and trade, among others. Because many young people's aspirations go unfulfilled and their needs unmet, they don't reach their full potential. We help youth succeed by putting them in the driver's seat to improve the structures around them. We believe that if we support youth to gain the skills they need, foster partnerships for change, and work with governments and other young people to create an enabling environment for youth development, then outcomes will improve (see Exhibit 1). We are not problem-solvers, but rather catalysts to empower young people to thrive.

This document outlines Chemonics' philosophy on youth development. Its intention is to help projects and proposals be more effective by elevating their focus on youth.

Exhibit 1. Chemonics' Youth Development Theory of Change

THE CHALLENGE
The aspirations of young people are unfulfilled and their needs unmet, so they are unable to reach their full potential and contribute to society

THE PLAN
· Building a Foundation: Skills and Assets
· Fostering Economic Change and Sustainability
· Supporting Enabling Environments

THE GOAL
Improve outcomes for youth around the world

CONTEXT

The United Nations Population Fund reports that there are 1.8 billion young people between the ages of 10 and 24 in the world.[1] In sub-Saharan Africa, minors often account for more than 50 percent of a country's population. Moreover, by 2050, the world's population will increase by 28 percent — meaning that 2 billion more people will require health and education services, food security, jobs and self-employment opportunities, and stable democratic structures to thrive.

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[1]United Nations Population Fund. (2014). The State of World Population 2014. "The Power of 1.8 Billion: Adolescents, Youth and the Transformation of the Future." Retrieved from https://www.unfpa.org/sites/default/files/pub-pdf/EN-SWOP14-Report_FINAL-web.pdf (Accessed May 1, 2018).

The sizable global youth population represents an opportunity for international development and progress. Capitalizing upon it can lead to significant economic gains and pathways out of poverty — if supported by a robust enabling environment that places youth voices at the center. Conversely, lack of economic opportunities for youth can fuel conflict and instability. In fact, a shortage of jobs is one of several key motivating factors cited by people who join rebel movements worldwide.[2] If young people are not recognized as trusted agents of change and do not

Defining "Youth"

Youth is defined differently, depending on the type of development assistance and the sociocultural context in which it is delivered. The United Nations defines youth as young women and men between the ages of 15 and 24, whereas DFID uses the age range of 10 to 24. USAID targets youth between the ages of 10 and 29. All three of these institutions at times extend the age range to 35, to align with local definitions.

receive proper support, there is a risk they will become disaffected and apathetic. Political unrest and the lack of economic opportunities often propel youth dissatisfaction, which spurs migration. High rates of youth emigration undermine a country's greatest asset: the next generation of leadership.

Today's youth are disproportionately affected by some of the world's toughest challenges, including unemployment; poor physical, social, and emotional health; barriers to education; and displacement. With the right investments and supports, the youth demographic dividend can accelerate development across all sectors.

CORNERSTONES

To strengthen our impact, Chemonics relies on a set of cornerstones to anchor our approach to youth development around the world. The cornerstones of our approach run in tandem with USAID's "Youth in Development Policy"[3] and Positive Youth Development. Both a philosophy and an approach, Positive Youth Development ensures that youth — along with their families, communities, and governments — are engaged and empowered to reach their full potential. Positive Youth Development approaches build skills, assets, and competencies; foster healthy relationships; strengthen the environment; and transform systems. USAID's 2012 "Youth in Development Policy" defines best and promising practices for youth development and engagement, with two objectives. First, to strengthen youth programming, participation, and partnership in support of USAID's development objectives. And second, to mainstream and integrate youth issues and engage young people across initiatives and operations. Chemonics' four cornerstones, explained below, are summarized in Exhibit 3.

Pursue Gender Equality and Inclusion

We use gender and inclusion analysis across sectors to examine the roles, rights, and responsibilities of men, women, and other vulnerable groups, as well as the obstacles, opportunities, and choices available to them across different contexts. We design our youth programs with the understanding that these groups of people will experience development issues differently. Women, men, migrants, individuals with disabilities, and religious minorities all have different roles within their communities — roles that are shaped by social, cultural, religious, and economic factors. In our design process, we account for differing expectations, constraints, vulnerabilities, and opportunities among men and women. We recognize that a one-size-fits-all approach may not allow for the whole community to participate in and benefit from programmatic

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[2]World Bank. (2011). World Development Report 2011, "Conflict, Security, and Development." Retrieved from https://siteresources.worldbank.org/INTWDRS/Resources/WDR2011_Full_Text.pdf (Accessed May 1, 2018). [3]USAID
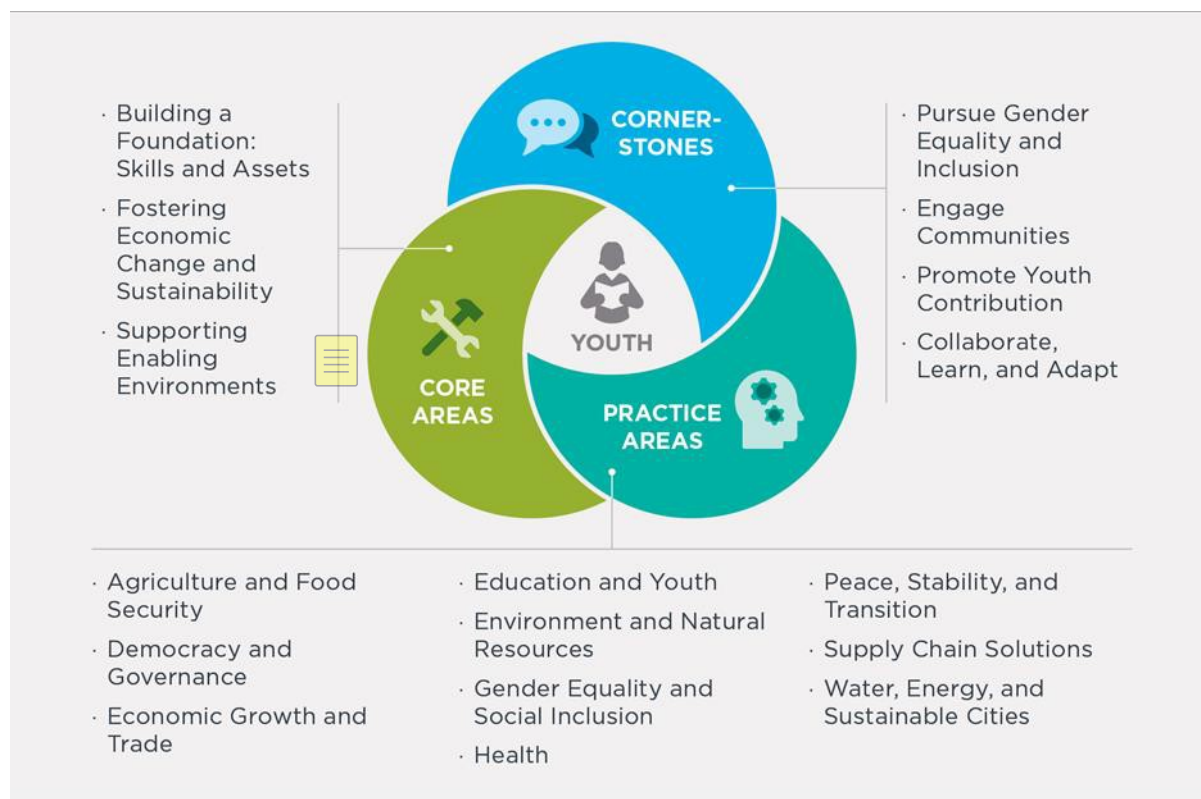
[3]USAID. (2012). "Youth in Development Policy: Realizing the Demographic Opportunity." Retrieved from https://www.usaid.gov/sites/default/files/documents/1870/Youth_in_Development_Policy_0.pdf. (Accessed July 12, 2018).

activities, so we target, design, and implement accordingly.

Engage Communities

We cannot assume that a country, city, or district is homogeneous. Therefore, we take into consideration the perspectives and experiences of a variety of stakeholders who impact the lives of young people. In project design and implementation, we engage adults and intergenerational stakeholders and ensure all are prepared to interact with youth. Chemonics conducts rapid cultural-consensus assessments to identify tradition, language, norms, attitudes, and beliefs of a community. Each community will have different institutional relationships, barriers, and opportunities to support change for young people. Therefore, as we begin working on any project or proposal, we ensure we have the most robust understanding of the local communities and stakeholder entry points to reach youth.

Exhibit 3. Chemonics' Approach to Youth Development

Promote Youth Contribution

Chemonics is committed to engaging young people as a source of change for their own and their community's development. We do this by ensuring youth are leading the process, as they know better than we do about local needs. We train youth to conduct thorough analyses of the local context to inform the work we are supporting. We engage youth in focus groups and offer a safe space for young people to talk about the real needs of their communities. For example, to inform our programming, we support young people in conducting labor market assessments and political economy analyses to see where stressors in the economic system are, balance the needs of supply and demand for services, and understand what lies under the surface of the

immediate problem.

Collaborate, Learn, and Adapt

Chemonics is committed to monitoring, evaluation, and learning in all its work with young people. Our adaptive management ensures that our projects remain flexible, that we continually learn, and that we can make mid-course adjustments, when necessary. We prioritize quality research and relevant data collection using consistent indicators to generate new knowledge and evidence. We analyze qualitative and quantitative data, and course correct as needed on a regular basis. Our strong relationships with local partner organizations allow us to reflect on important areas of measurement, contextualize programs, and contribute to the evidence base of our youth development programming.
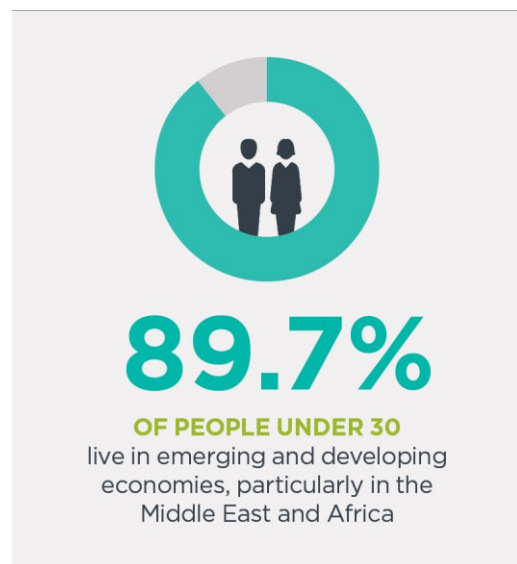
CORE AREAS

Chemonics implements youth development projects in each of our practice areas. With the cornerstones as the foundation for all of our youth development work, we carry out our work in three core areas (see Exhibit 3): building a foundation of skills and assets, fostering economic change and sustainability, and supporting enabling environments.

Building A Foundation: Skills and Assets

Chemonics recognizes the strengthening of skills and assets for young people — 89.7 percent of whom live in emerging and developing economies[4] — as an imperative for success and resilience through the many transitions, shocks, and dimensions of their lives. An estimated 500 million youth are unemployed or in insecure or vulnerable jobs for low pay, no benefits, and limited opportunity.[5] Chemonics is committed to working with partners to empower youth to act as agents of change in their own lives, to bring about a more equitable world. High quality and relevant education is key to providing youth with the confidence, skills, entrepreneurial know-how, leadership, positive attitudes, and technical skills to succeed. Building the human capital of young people so they can succeed in knowledge-based societies requires intentional cross-sectoral interventions at the policy and programmatic level. The success of this generation of business owners, innovators, policymakers, and world leaders depends on the provision of comprehensive soft- and life-skill training. Not all youth complete their education through a formal structure. Once outside the school system, they can find it difficult to obtain the soft skills needed to succeed — as employees or entrepreneurs, citizens or civil society leaders, parents or caregivers. This core area commonly intersects with our work in economic growth and trade; health; education; gender equality and social inclusion; peace, stability, and transition; and agriculture and food security.
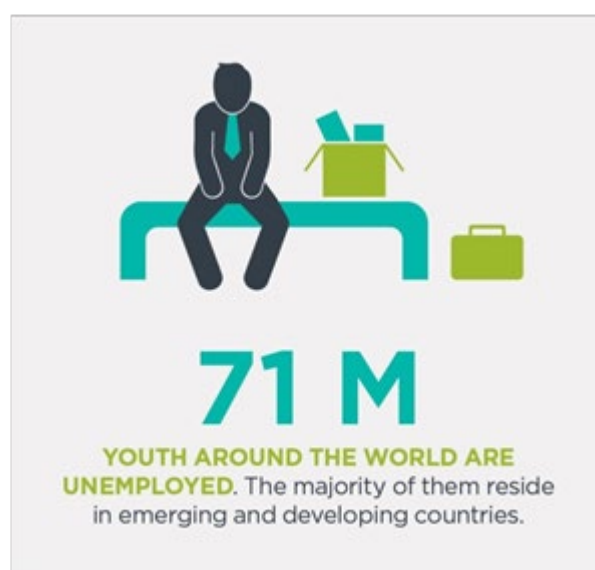

89.7%
OF PEOPLE UNDER 30
live in emerging and developing economies, particularly in the Middle East and Africa

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[4]United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization. "Statistics on Youth" Retrieved from http://www.unesco.org/new/en/unesco/events/prizes-and-celebrations/celebrations/international-days/world-radio-day-2013/statistics-on-youth/. (Accessed July 12, 2018).
[5]Solutions for Youth Employment. (2015). "Toward Solutions for Youth Employment: A 2015 Baseline Report." Retrieved from http://www.ilo.org/employment/areas/youth-employment/WCMS_413826/lang--en/index.htm (Accessed June 27, 2018).

We work inside and outside of the formal education system to improve the skills young people are learning and to ensure that these skills match what is demanded by the labor market. We also work with schools and out-of-school programs, as well as in other venues and with other service providers to support youth to gain assets, contribute to their communities, create a sense of belonging and commitment, help convey new norms and expectations for youth behavior, and provide meaningful opportunities for youth and adults to develop positive relationships. We work with technical and vocational education and training institutions to build skills for productive livelihoods and careers by unlocking the potential for "win-win-win" partnerships among youth motivated to gain decent jobs, private sector employers interested in fulfilling workforce needs, and growing businesses in emerging and underserved markets. With more than one-fourth of the entire global population living in countries where development outcomes are directly affected by fragility, conflict, and violence, we examine how learning and personal growth take place in these contexts and how interventions can more effectively incorporate these considerations.

Fostering Economic Change and Sustainability

Getting the global economy on track to reap a demographic dividend, create new prosperity, protect the planet, and eliminate extreme poverty will be difficult unless public and private sectors work together to harness the economic dynamism of youth. Youth unemployment is one of the biggest crises facing the world today. In 2016 the global youth unemployment rate reached a near-historic high of 13.1 percent, which equates to more than 71 million unemployed youth around the world, the majority of whom reside in emerging and developing countries.[6] At the same time, globalization, urbanization, climate change, and technological

71 M

YOUTH AROUND THE WORLD ARE UNEMPLOYED. The majority of them reside in emerging and developing countries.

diffusion are shifting patterns of production and consumption, reshaping the nature and impact of work, and creating new opportunities for young people in food and health systems, green jobs, the sharing economy, and the fourth industrial revolution.[7] We see projects focused on fostering economic change and sustainability most often in our economic growth and trade, and agriculture and food security, portfolios but are increasingly finding application to our work in water and cities, as well as environment and natural resources.

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[6]International Labour Organization. (2016). "World Employment Social Outlook: Trends for Youth 2016." Retrieved from http://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/---dgreports/---dcomm/---publ/documents/publication/wcms_443480.pdf. (Accessed on July 12, 2018).

[7]Previous industrial revolutions liberated humankind from animal power, made mass production possible, and brought digital capabilities to billions of people. The fourth industrial revolution is characterized by a range of new technologies that are fusing the physical, digital, and biological worlds, impacting all disciplines, economies and industries, and even challenging ideas about what it means to be human. Schwab, K.. (n.d.). "The Fourth Industrial Revolution." Retrieved from https://www.weforum.org/pages/the-fourth-industrial-revolution-by-klaus-schwab (Accessed June 27, 2018).

Chemonics acts to bridge the gap between youth and the private sector so that young people not only gain job experience but develop a career. We further support self-employed youth and young entrepreneurs to enter supply chains or access markets, find efficiencies, increase income, and grow revenues. Chemonics seeks to accelerate innovation in products, services, and delivery, as well as build a robust evidence base to improve young people's success in work and marketplaces. We work with partners who use novel approaches — through practical research and active engagement with public and private stakeholders — to enable solutions at scale. Chemonics augments inaccessible traditional financial products by designing or facilitating new financial products and services (e.g., group lending and savings, and micro- credit) that fulfill an unmet need. We embrace knowledge, innovation, and technology by and for youth, including information and communication technology integration and affordable access, and build partnerships from the ground up and in support of local youth, by providing them with the tools and resources they need to increase productivity and drive sustainable economic growth.

Supporting Enabling Environments

Youth in developing countries around the world frequently feel disenfranchised and disempowered when it comes to making a difference in their communities, regions, and nations. In fact, 66.5 percent of youth ages 18-29 believe their government doesn't care about their opinions.[8] As a result, civic participation among youth — whether at the community or national level — may be limited, and youth are often unaware of their fundamental civil rights and responsibilities. One of the critical factors affecting the life of a young person is the policy and legal environment in which they live. Policies and laws can act as either a protective factor or a significant barrier to young people's health, education, and employment. Research demonstrates that youth who are

Across 33 emerging and developing countries worldwide

66.5%

OF YOUNG PEOPLE AGE 18-29
do not feel their government cares about what they think

engaged in the lives of their families, communities, and environments are more likely to become healthy, productive, and engaged young adults. Projects that engage youth and other stakeholders to gain a deeper understanding of existing systems and the governing context, and to better inform programs and navigate risks, most often appear in the sectors of environment and natural resources; peace, stability, and transition; and democracy and governance.

Chemonics strengthens policy and legal environments in countries where we work, to protect and empower young people to succeed. We work within justice systems to ensure the rule of law reaches youth, and to build accountable and transparent national or municipal governance platforms, and service delivery processes that are more participatory and responsive to youth. We empower young people to engage in and create policies across a multitude of issues, including child marriage and protection, adolescent health, and education. Our programs are driven from the bottom up — by listening to young people and involving them in the process of developing solutions and advocating for their rights and needs.

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[8] Goldin, N. and Hobson, M., with Glick, P., Lundberg, M., and Puerto, S. (2015). "Toward Solutions for Youth Employment: A Baseline for 2015." Washington D.C: Solutions for Youth Employment.

CONCLUSION

We recognize that nearly all our work can have a direct or indirect impact on youth. As a member of the global development community, Chemonics is committed to providing youth with quality education, health services, work or livelihoods, and civic and political engagement opportunities so they can contribute their unique aspirations, energy, and ideas to advance more stable and prosperous societies. As we continue our proposal development and project implementation, we build upon the foundational cornerstones and core areas of our approach to help young people around the world thrive.