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

Lessons from a Global Assessment of Positive Youth Development

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CREATIVE

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

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

--Global assessment key informant

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

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

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

Mixed methods study:

Global, Indonesia, Uganda
and Kenya

Key Informant interviews: 40

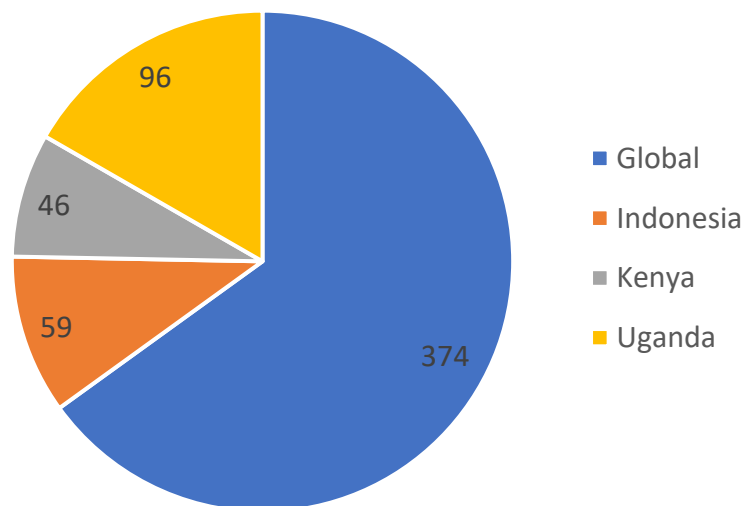
Focus Group Discussions: 5

Survey respondents: 575

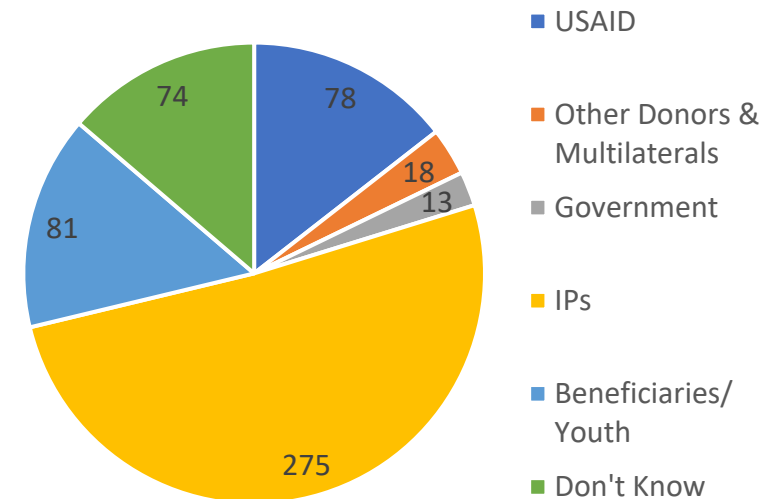
Document review: YP RFTOP
for systems

Web review: Donor
landscape

Survey Respondent by Country

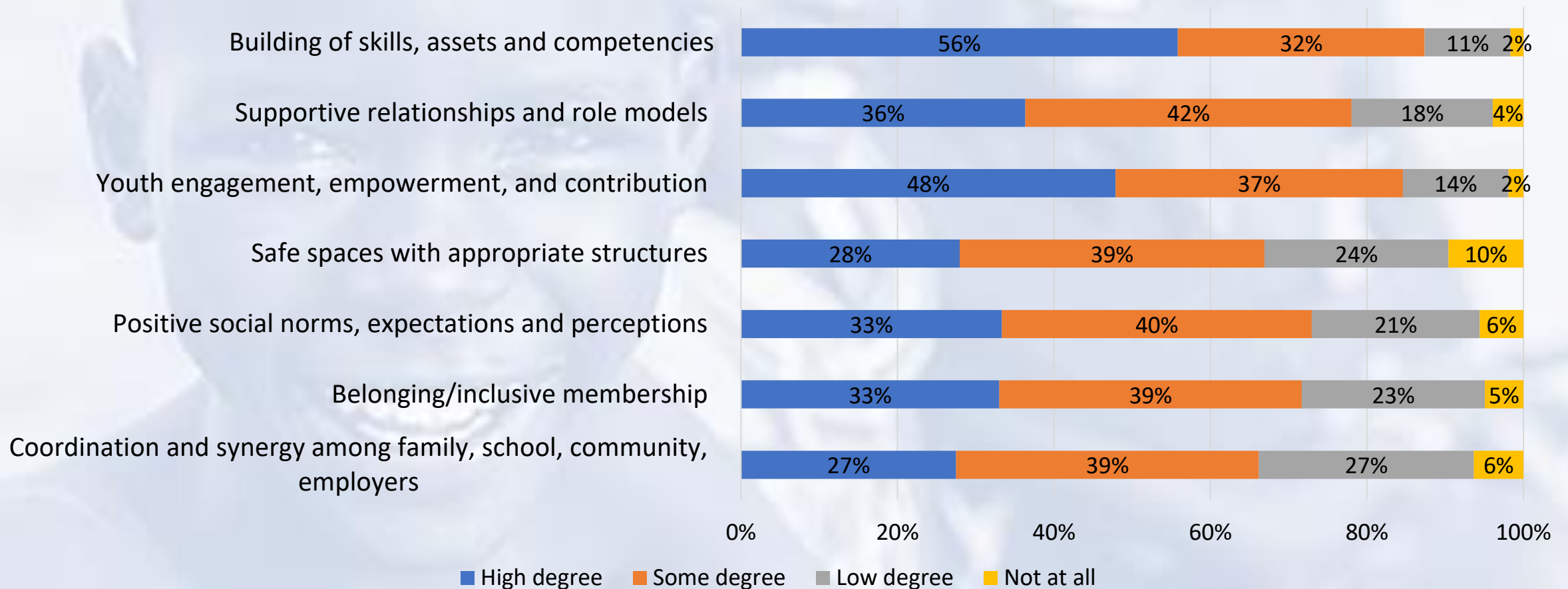


Survey Respondent Types



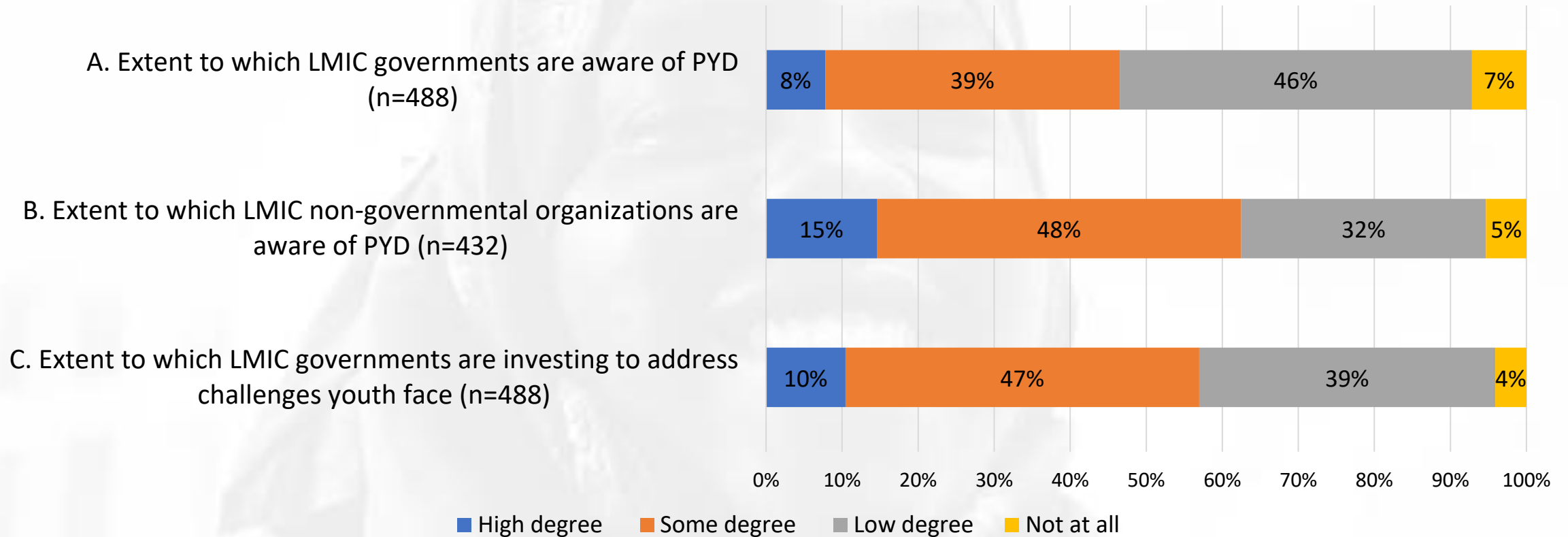
Findings: PYD Uptake

Figure 3. Extent to which respondents report their organization's youth development programs incorporate PYD features



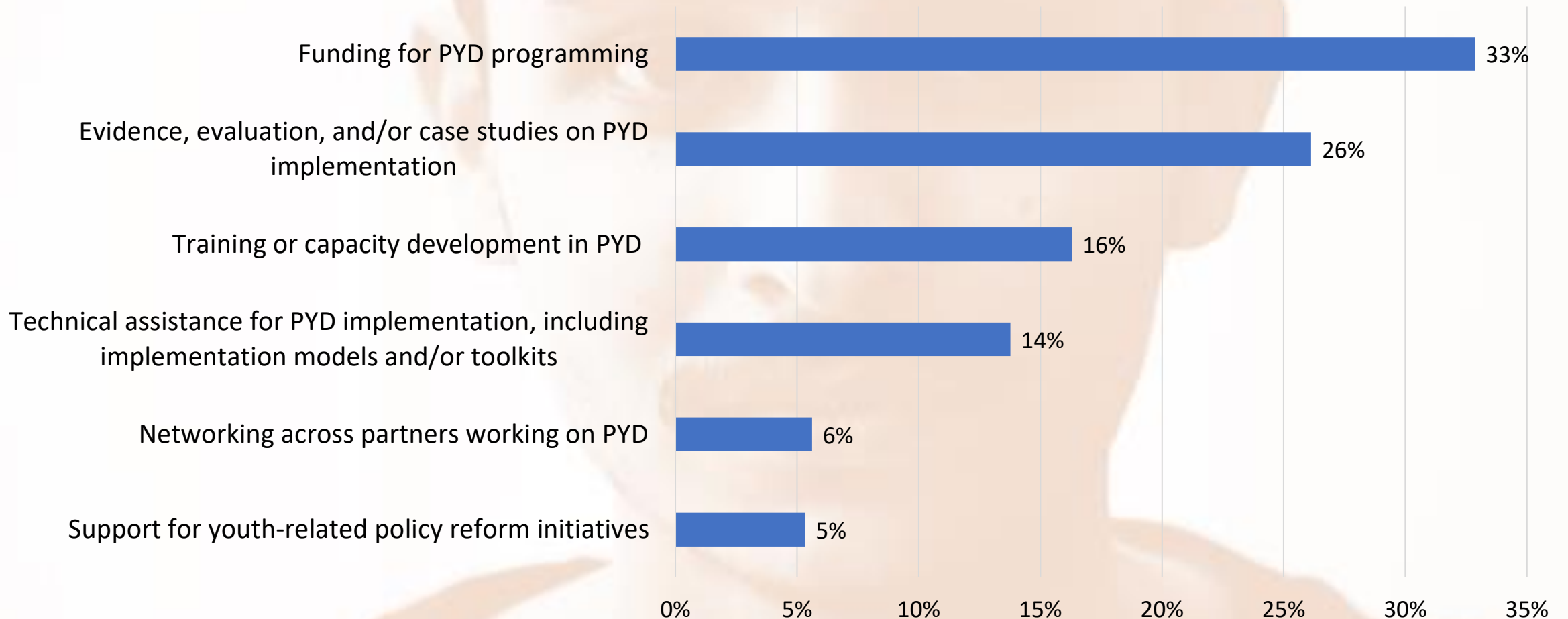
Perceptions of PYD awareness in LMICs

Figure 6. Perceptions PYD awareness and youth investments in LMICs



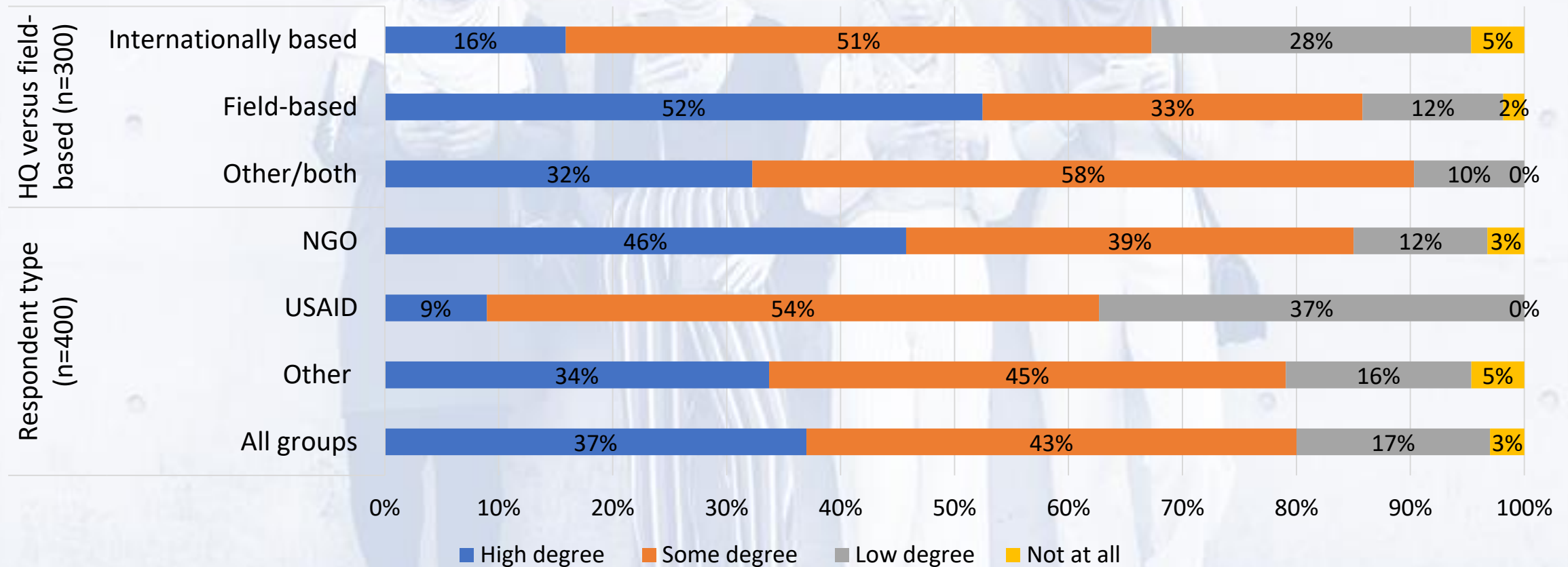
Most critical resources needed for PYD

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



Extent of youth participation

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

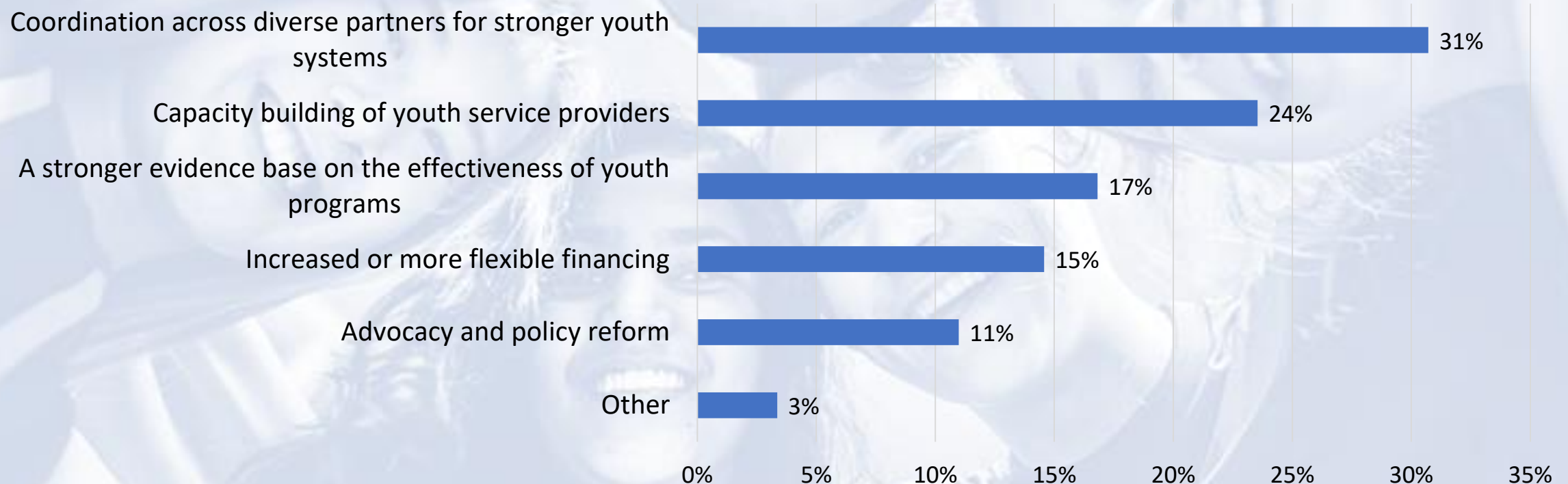


Youth systems (Enabling environment)

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

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

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



Youth systems findings



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

Recommendations



Deepening and expansion of PYD

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

Youth engagement

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

Strengthening youth systems

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

Systems scoring matrix: Useful for reflection

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

Q & A

For comments and more information:

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Current cross-sectoral investment

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

