

YOUTH POWER

LEARNING

CIES 2017

Highlighting Solutions in Soft Skills Development for Youth in Challenging Environments



Furthering the Field of Positive Youth Development



[ABOUT](#) [TOPICS](#) [APPROACH](#) [COMMUNITIES](#) [COUNTRIES](#) [EVENTS](#) [RESOURCES](#) [BLOGS](#)



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CHANGING THE WORLD BY
UNLOCKING THE POWER OF
YOUNG PEOPLE



USAID Shifts in youth programming

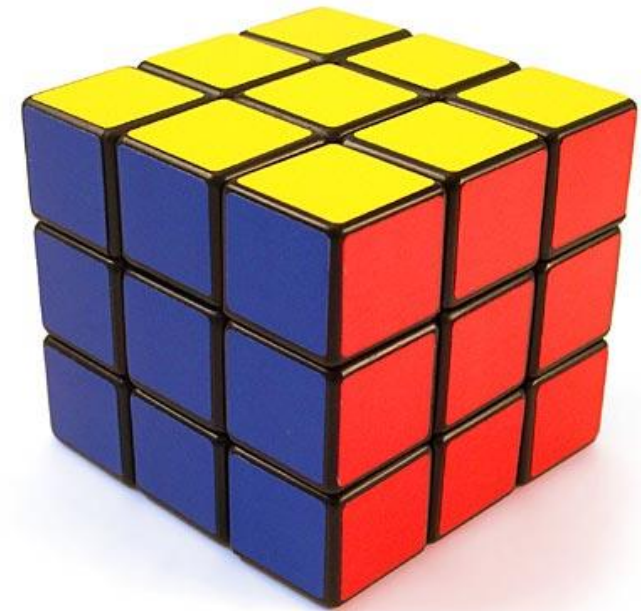
Old

- Single sector, problem-focused
- Focus on the individual.
- No distinction by age



New

- Focus on developmental stages
- Focus on the individual as well as family/peers, community, environment.
- Focus on assets and competencies
- Engage youth as partners



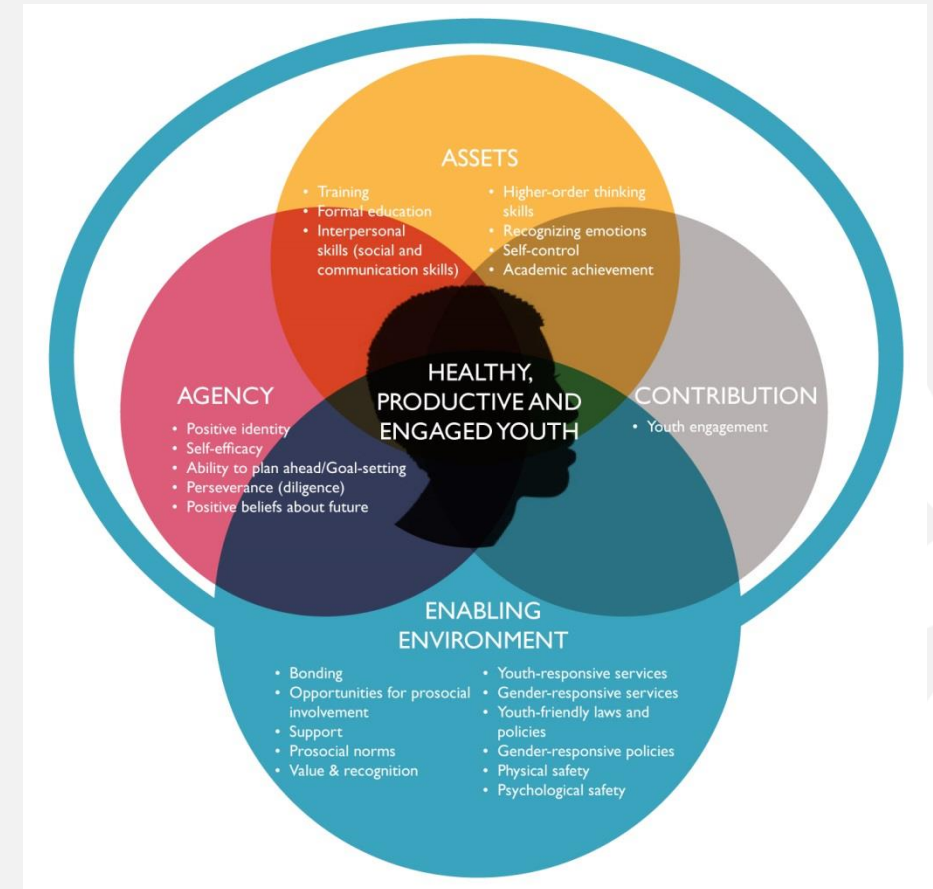
PEPFAR
U.S. President's Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief

What is Positive Youth Development?

There are four critical components to PYD:

- PYD programs recognize youth's inherent rights and result in youth who have **assets**, the ability to leverage those assets (**agency**), and the ability to **contribute** to positive change for themselves and their communities, surrounded by an **enabling environment** that supports them.

<http://www.youthpower.org/positive-youth-development>



Key PYD Features

- **Build skills, assets, competencies**
- **Healthy relationships and role models**
- **Youth engagement and contribution**
- **Safe spaces for constructive after school activities**
- **Access to integrated youth friendly services**
- **Belonging/membership**
- **Positive social norms, expectations and perceptions**

Adapted from National Resource Council of
the National Academies of Science



YouthPower Action Mozambique—Putting PYD lens on adolescent OVC activity

Purpose: Introduce focus on adolescence to OVC program with PYD lens

- Supported parent and community leader groups
- Youth participation at community level
- 12,500 youth in VS&L groups
- Life skills curriculum for youth clubs
- Introduced youth study groups
- Created in-take and case management tools for adolescents
- Youth Score Card to assess quality of youth services

Results:

- Supported 22,000 older OVC with comprehensive services
- Adolescent approach expanded in new \$75 million OVC activity
- Potential to expand approach to other OVC programs
- Disseminate to missions through YP Learning



POSITIVE YOUTH DEVELOPMENT MEASUREMENT TOOLKIT

A PRACTICAL GUIDE FOR IMPLEMENTERS OF
USAID YOUTH PROGRAMS



December 2016

This report is made possible by the support of the American people through the United States Agency for International Development (USAID), under the terms of YouthPower Learning Contract No. AID-OAA-I-15-00034/AID-OAA-TO-15-00011. The contents of this report are the sole responsibility of Making Cents International and do not necessarily reflect the views of USAID or the United States Government.

YOUTH POWER ADVANCING RESEARCH

www.YouthPower.org



KEY SOFT SKILLS FOR CROSS- SECTORAL YOUTH OUTCOMES



November 2016

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What 1 800 000 000 adolescents are facing in the world today:



Youth
unemployment



Armed conflict



Trafficking in
Persons



Less stable
families



Environmental
degradation



Mass migration

EDUCATION: 225 million youth, or 20% of youth are not in education, employment or training

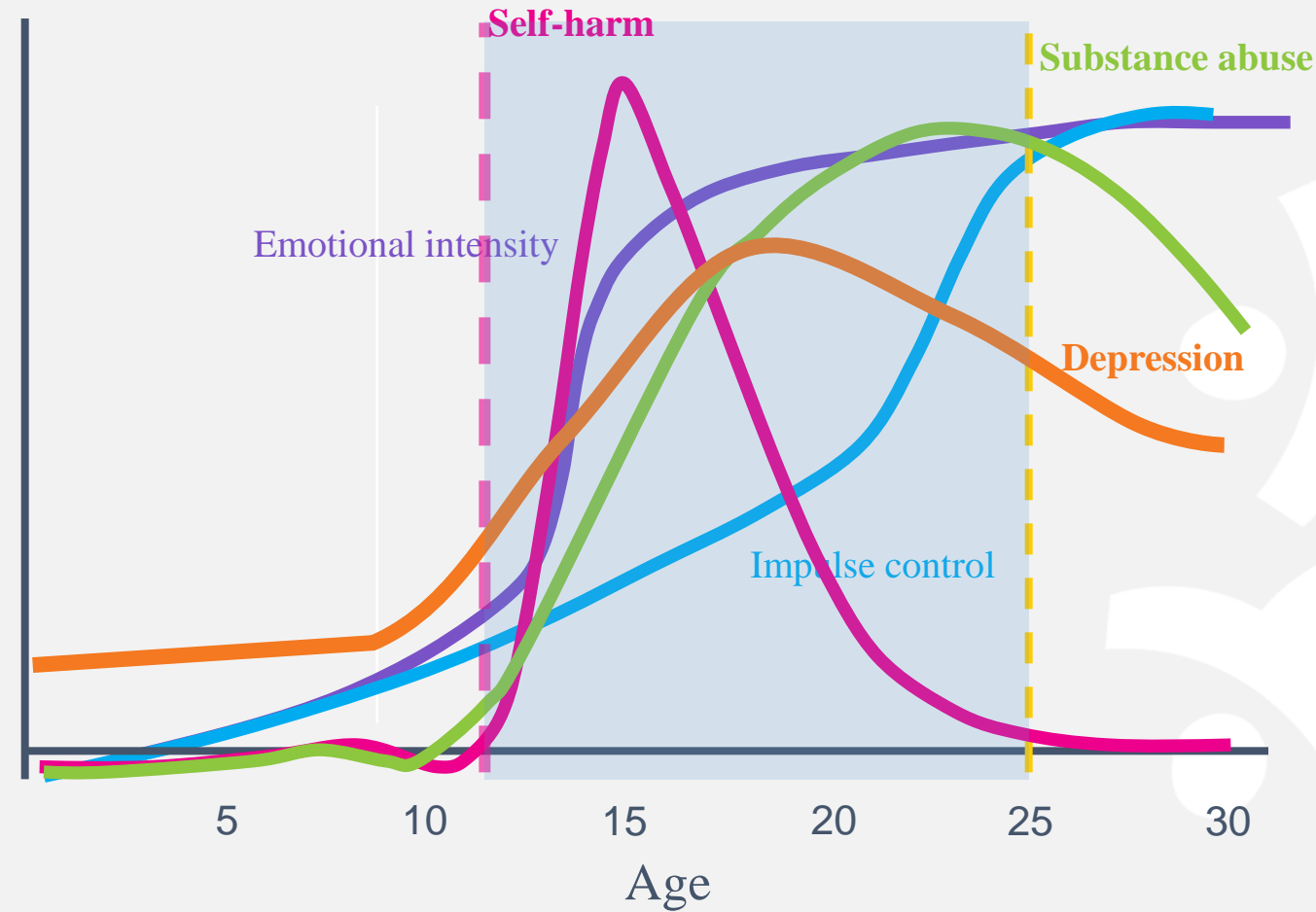
EMPLOYMENT: 5 million new jobs needed every month

SECURITY/VIOLENCE: 43% of the homicides (200,000+) yearly are youth 15 to 29

REPRESENTATION: 6% of the political representatives are under 35 despite 65% of population under 35

HEALTH: Adolescents is the only group where AIDS-related mortality has not declined over the past 15 years

Adolescent development – the big picture



Source:
George Patton,
University of
Melbourne

Panel

- ***Caitlin Moss*, Results for Development Institute**
- ***Rebecca Povec Pagel*, Education Development Center**
- ***Leesa Kaplan-Nunes*, Development Alternatives, Inc.**
- ***Maria Brindlmayer*, YouthPower Learning @ Making Cents International**
- **Michael McCabe, USAID**

Highlighting solutions in soft skills development for youth in challenging environments

Comparative International Education Society
March 6, 2017

Caitlin Moss, R4D



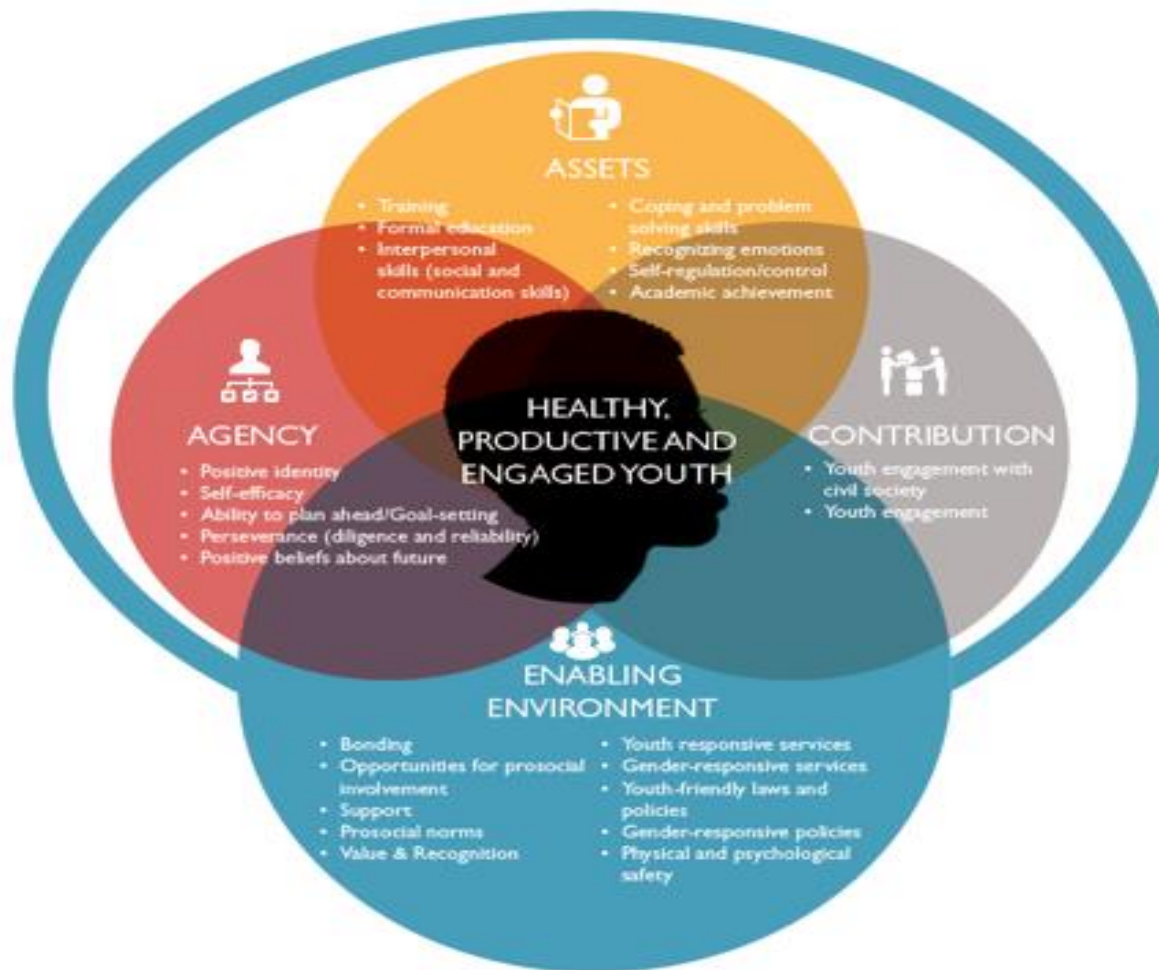
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What is Positive Youth Development (PYD)?



Positive Youth Development (PYD) engages youth, along with their families, communities and/or governments, so that youth are empowered to reach their full potential. PYD approaches **build skills, assets and competencies**; foster healthy relationships; strengthen the environment; and transform systems.



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Meta – Review of Positive Youth Development in LMICs

YouthPower Learning's Meta-Review of Positive Youth Development answered two questions:

1. How have PYD approaches been implemented in low- and middle-income countries?
2. What does the evidence say about their effectiveness?

Search Criteria:

- projects engaging youth (ages 10-29)
- included at least 2 PYD-related outcomes within the domains of assets, agency, contribution and enabling environment
- Papers published between 1990 – 2015

Mixed Methods Approach:

- Systematic search for peer reviewed literature
- Purposive search and survey for grey literature: program descriptions, case studies, evaluations or end-of-project reports

Identified **108** reports on **97** programs implemented across **60** countries that primarily covered three sectors: health, democracy and governance, and economic development and education

Soft skills

- A broad set of **skills**, **behaviors**, and **personal qualities** that enable people to effectively navigate their environment, work collaboratively with others, perform well, and achieve their goals
- Lack agreement on what to call them – terminology differs across sectors
 - Other terms include “psychosocial attributes,” “life skills,” “socio-emotional skills,” “risk / protective factors,” etc.
- Measuring soft skills is challenging, especially in terms of validity and comparability across contexts
 - Generally rely on self-reports, which are affected by reference and social desirability biases
 - Most tools are not suitable for tracking individual changes over time

Gates, S., Lippman, L., Shadowen, N., Burke, H., Diener, O. and Malkin, M. (2016). *Key Soft Skills for Cross-Sectoral Youth Outcomes*. USAID's YouthPower: Implementation, YouthPower Action.



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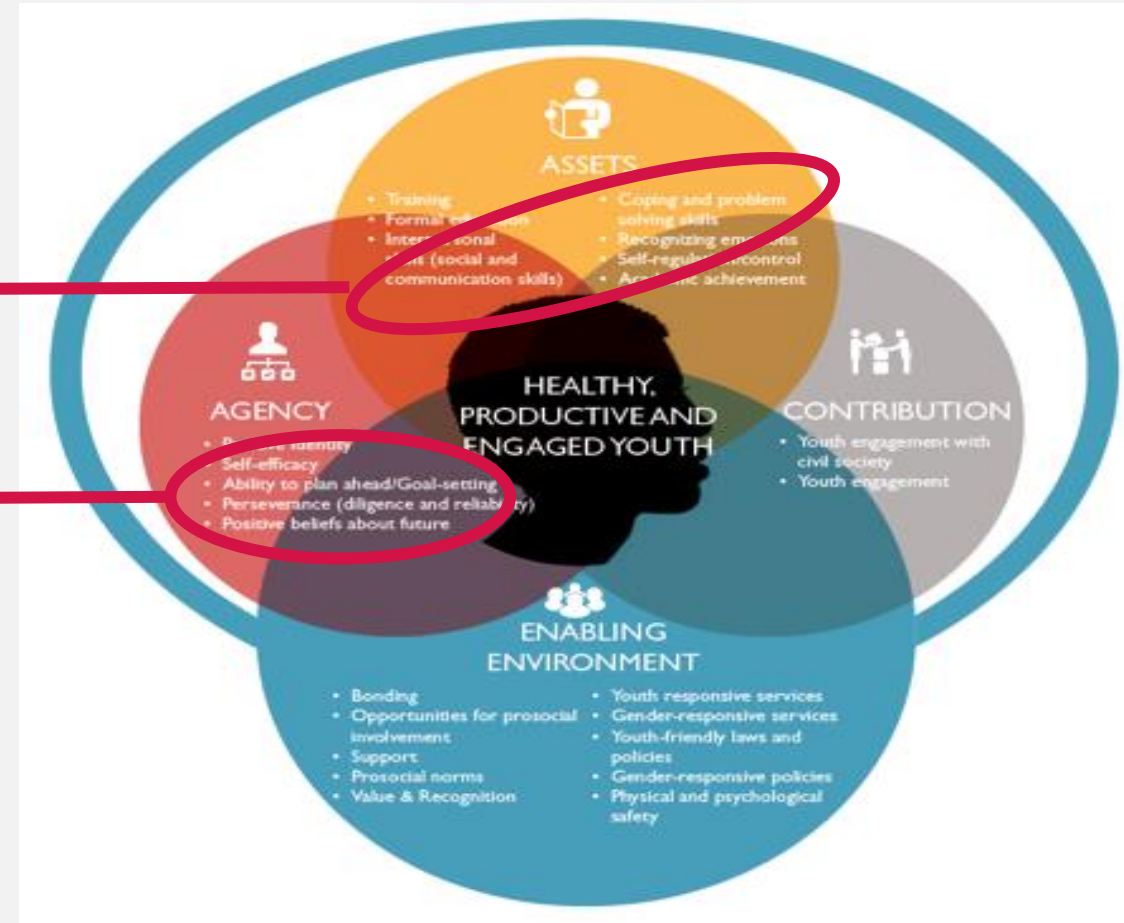
Soft skills in the Meta – Review

Assets: Youth have the necessary resources, skills, and competencies to achieve desired outcomes.

- Interpersonal skills – social & communication skills
- Coping & problem-solving skills
- Recognizing emotions
- Self-regulation & self-control

Agency: Youth perceive and can employ their assets and aspirations to make or influence their own decisions about their lives and set their own goals, as well as to act upon those decisions to achieve desired outcomes, without fear of violence or retribution.

- Positive identity
- Self-efficacy
- Goal-setting
- Perseverance – diligence & reliability
- Positive beliefs about the future



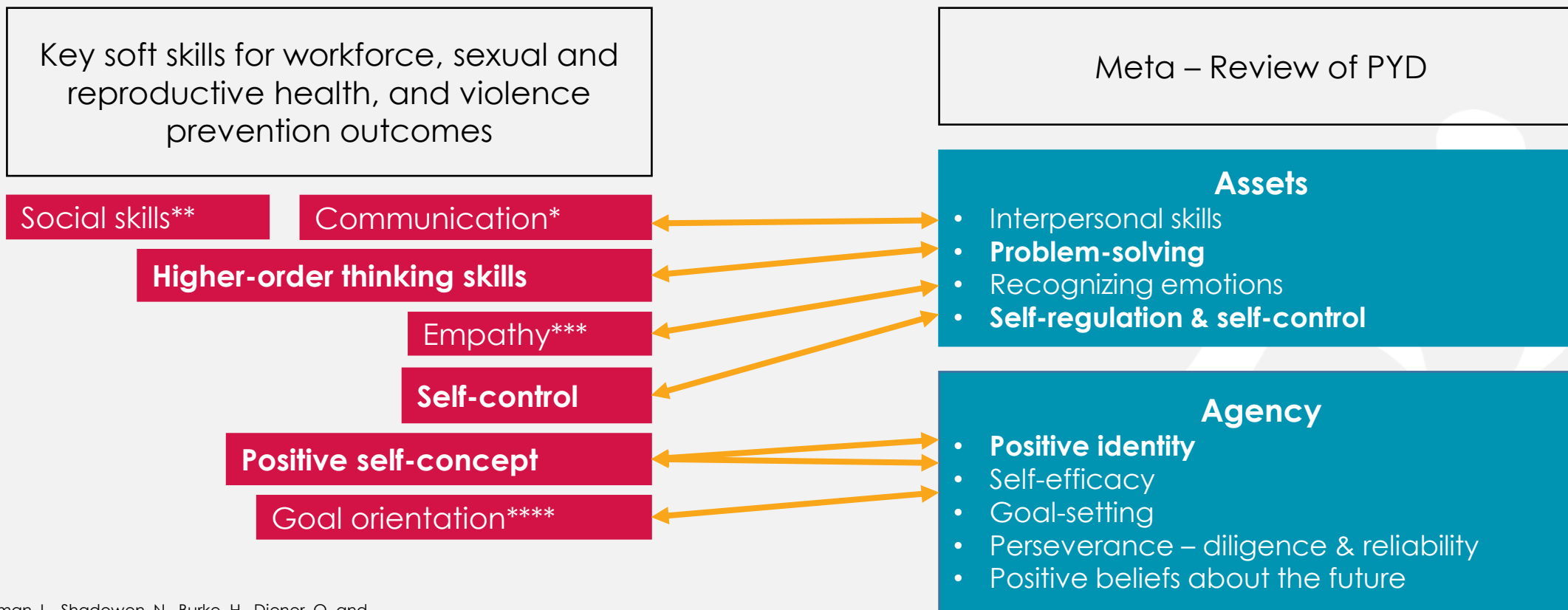
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Soft skills that are important for youth outcomes



Gates, S., Lippman, L., Shadowen, N., Burke, H., Diener, O. and Malkin, M. (2016). Key Soft Skills for Cross-Sectoral Youth Outcomes. USAID's YouthPower: Implementation, YouthPower Action.



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From the meta-review: programs using PYD approaches to build soft skills in fragile situations

Out of the 97 programs identified through the meta-review, **15 took place in fragile situation countries or territories.***

11 out of 15 programs are multi-sectoral, with 5 programs covering all three sectors, and another 6 covering two sectors.

Programs vary in their goals, but recognize the importance of **meeting youths' basic needs and developing key skills** to achieve positive outcomes in health, education and economic growth, and democracy and governance.

Out of 15 papers, **only three were high-quality experimental studies**. Nearly half of papers (7) did not have evidence on outcomes.

*As defined by the [World Bank's list of fragile situation countries](#) in FY2016.



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Programs using PYD approaches in fragile situations emphasize interpersonal skills, problem-solving skills, self-efficacy, and positive identity.



- 13 of these 15 programs address soft skills within the domain of assets
 - 12 promote interpersonal skills and **problem-solving skills**
 - 4 develop **self-regulation, self-control**, and recognizing emotions



- 9 programs address soft skills within the domain of agency
 - 8 promote **self-efficacy and positive identity**
 - 6 address positive beliefs about the future
 - 5 promote planning ahead and goal-setting

conflict resolution
and negotiation

teamwork and
cooperation

recognizing and
coping with
emotions

self-confidence, self-
esteem, and self-
awareness

goal-setting and
being proactive

resolving conflicts
peacefully

making healthy choices



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Examples: programs using PYD approaches to build soft skills in fragile situations

Support for Kosovo's Young Leaders



- Goal: help young people become active participants in communities
- Provided training on confidence, leadership skills, and skills for employment
- Brought youth together to build inter-ethnic reconciliation and tolerance through common projects

Palestinian Adolescents: Agents of Positive Change



- Goal: empower adolescents to be agents of positive change and promote an environment that fosters peace and reconciliation
- Youth receive life skills training, help create and manage safe spaces, and lead own community initiatives

Shaping the Health of Adolescents in Zimbabwe



- Goal: reduce risk of HIV infection among adolescent girls
- Provided life skills and health education, vocational training, micro grants, and social supports
- Reduced food insecurity, increased # youth with own income, lowered risk of transactional sex, & increased likelihood of condom use



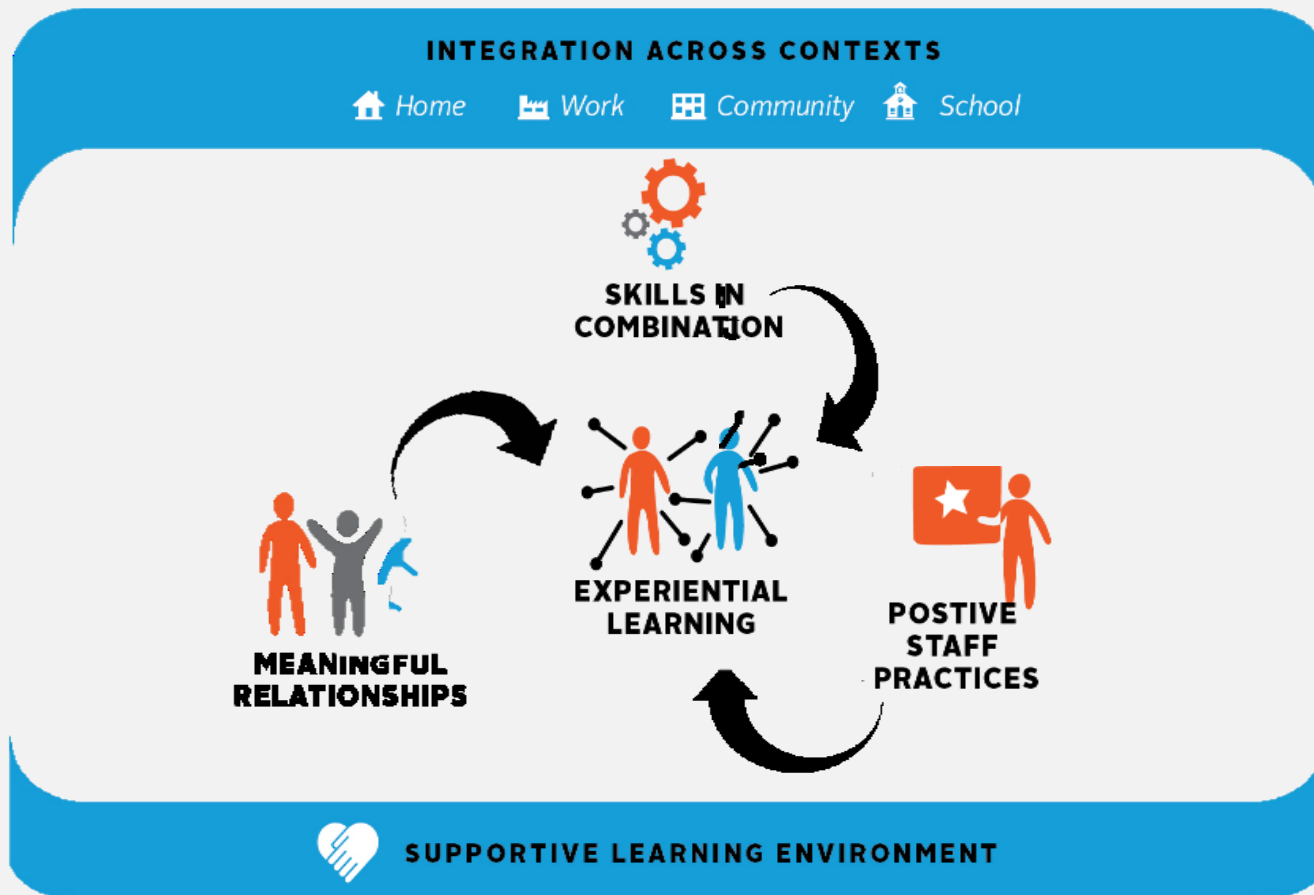
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Recommendations for implementation and research



*Ignatowski and Babb. Forthcoming. "Guiding Principles for Building Soft Skills Among Adolescents and Young Adults." USAID.

Integrating soft skills into programming in challenging contexts:

- Consider cultural norms and gain youth and community buy-in
- Promote experiential learning
- Address skills in combination rather than isolation
- Integrate learning across contexts by involving families, local community, education institutions, workplace, and more

Areas for further research:

- Build evidence on how soft skills support outcomes for youth in challenging environments
- Conduct rigorous research on multi-sectoral interventions
 - Including impact evaluations and collecting cost data



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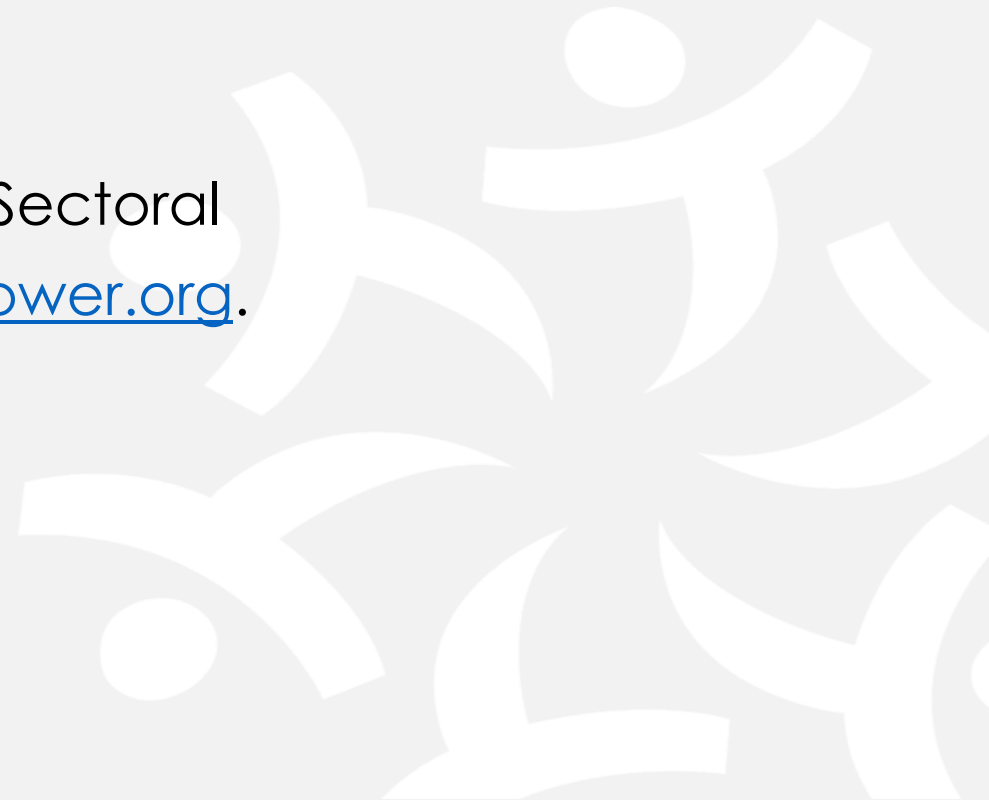
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Thank you!

Contact information: cmoss@r4d.org

To learn more about YouthPower, Positive Youth Development, the Meta-Review, and the Cross-Sectoral Skills Community of Practice, please visit youthpower.org.



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Identifying Cross-Cutting Non-Cognitive Skills for Positive Youth Development

EDC Learning
transforms
lives.

Overview




The Study

- The Research Questions
- The Tool
- The Sample

The Findings

- Youth Self-Ratings
- Education
- Employment

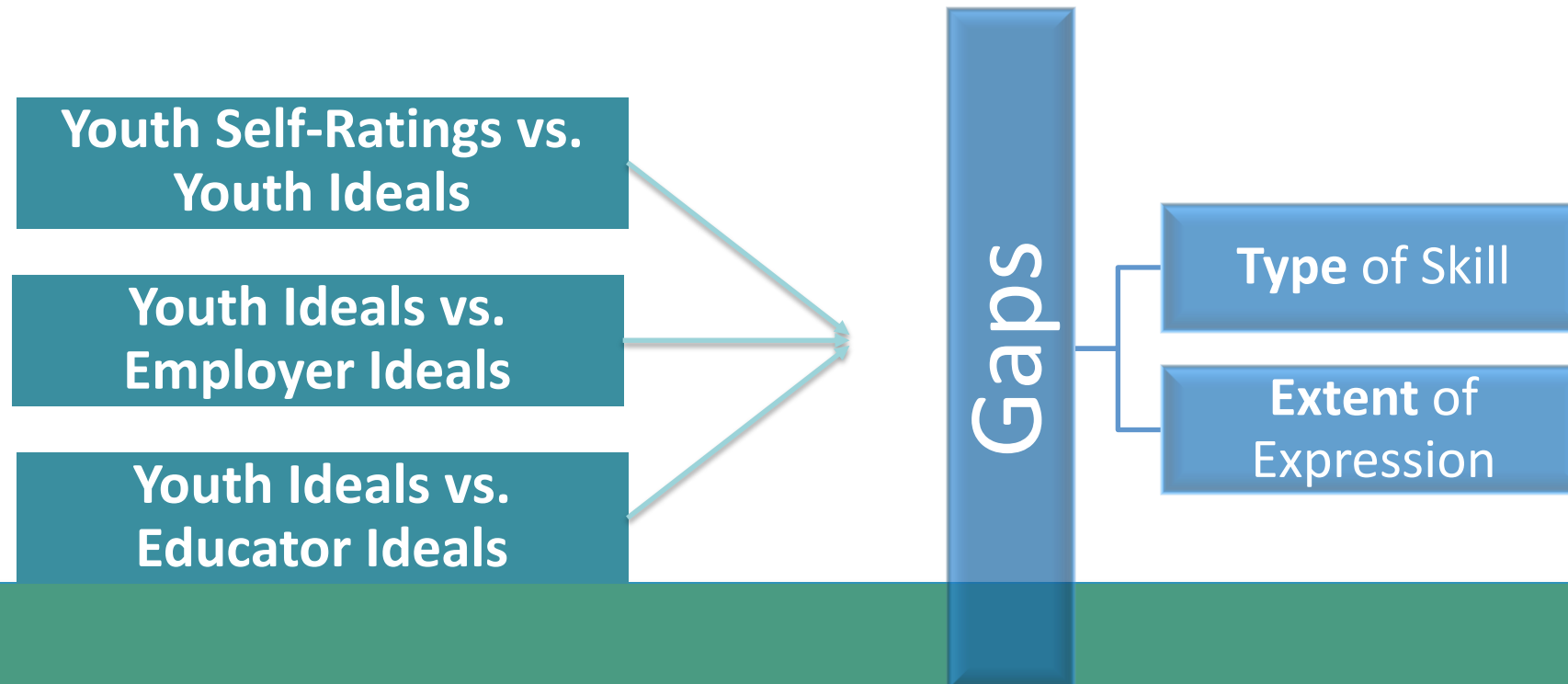
Implications

- Research
 - Implementation
- 

The Study: Research Questions

What soft skills do **youth** perceive to be important for education and employment?

How, if at all, do their ideals differ from **employer** and **educator's** ideals?

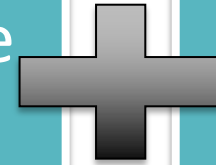


The Project: The Anchored BFI Tool

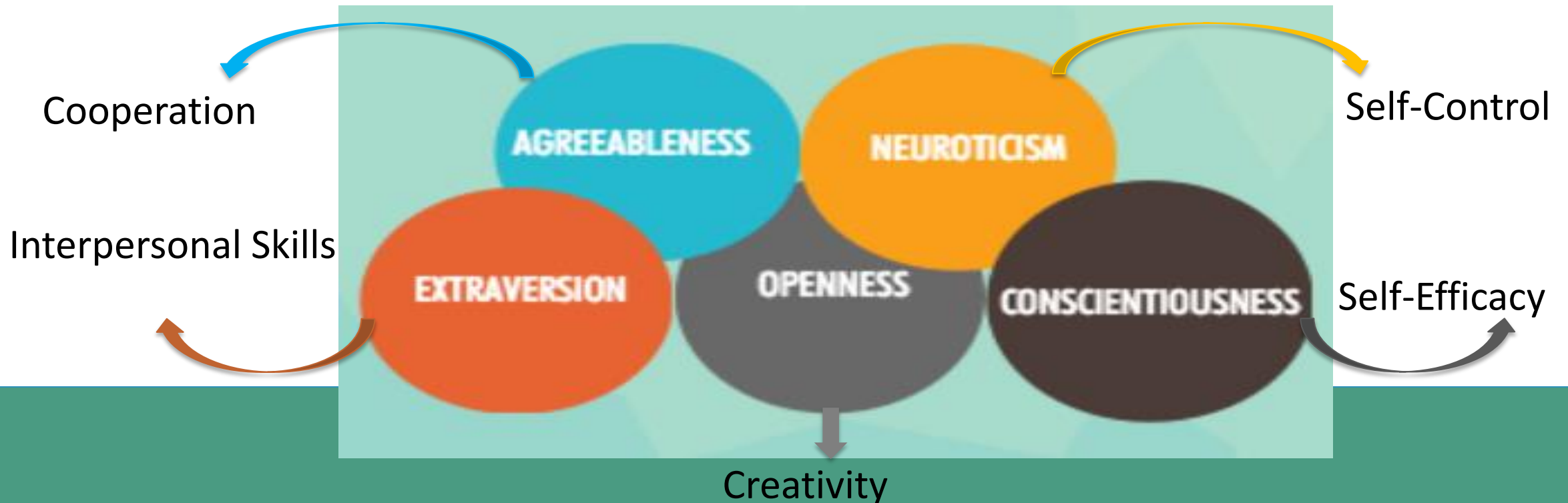
The Big Five
Inventory-44



5 Anchoring Vignette
Sets



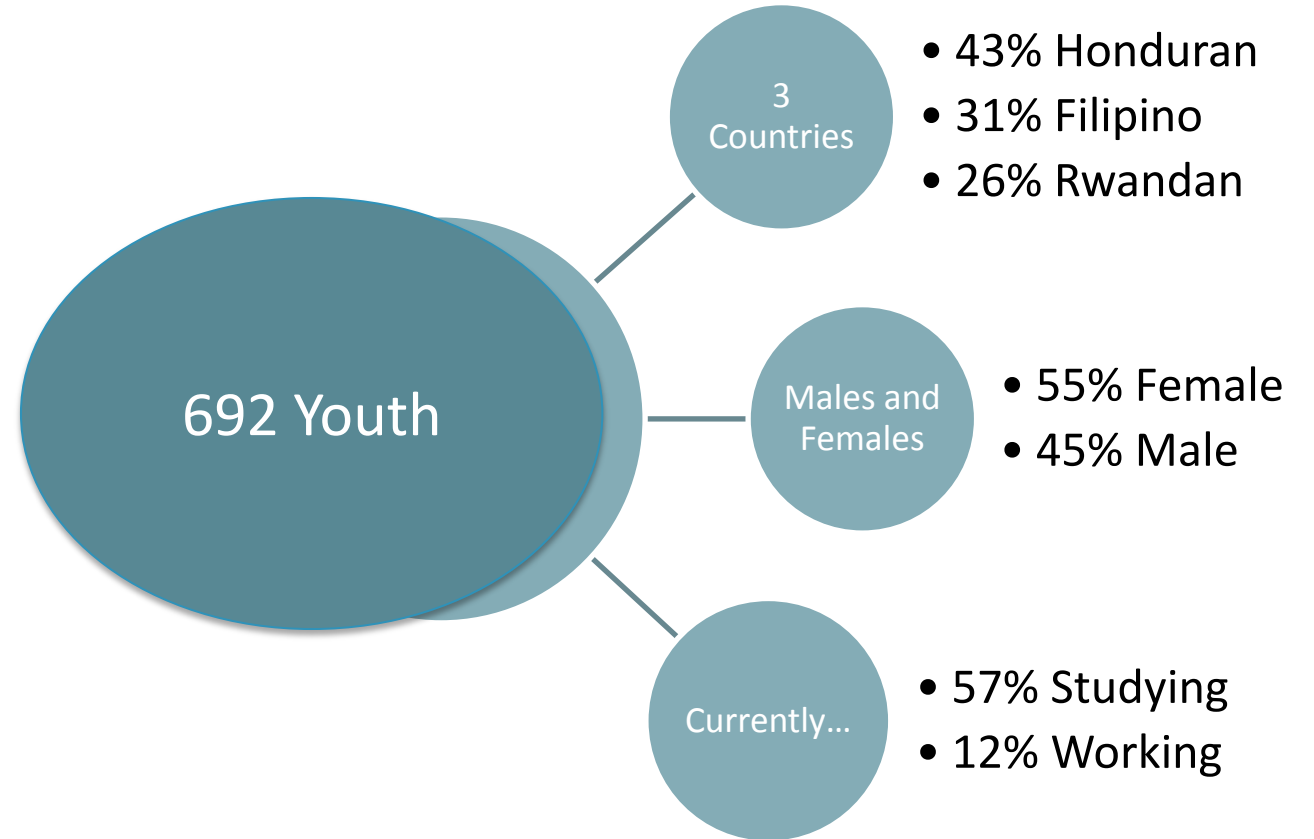
4 Situational
Judgment Tests



The Sample

111 Educators;
54% Female

93 Employers;
39% Female



The Contexts



- Gang violence
- Crime



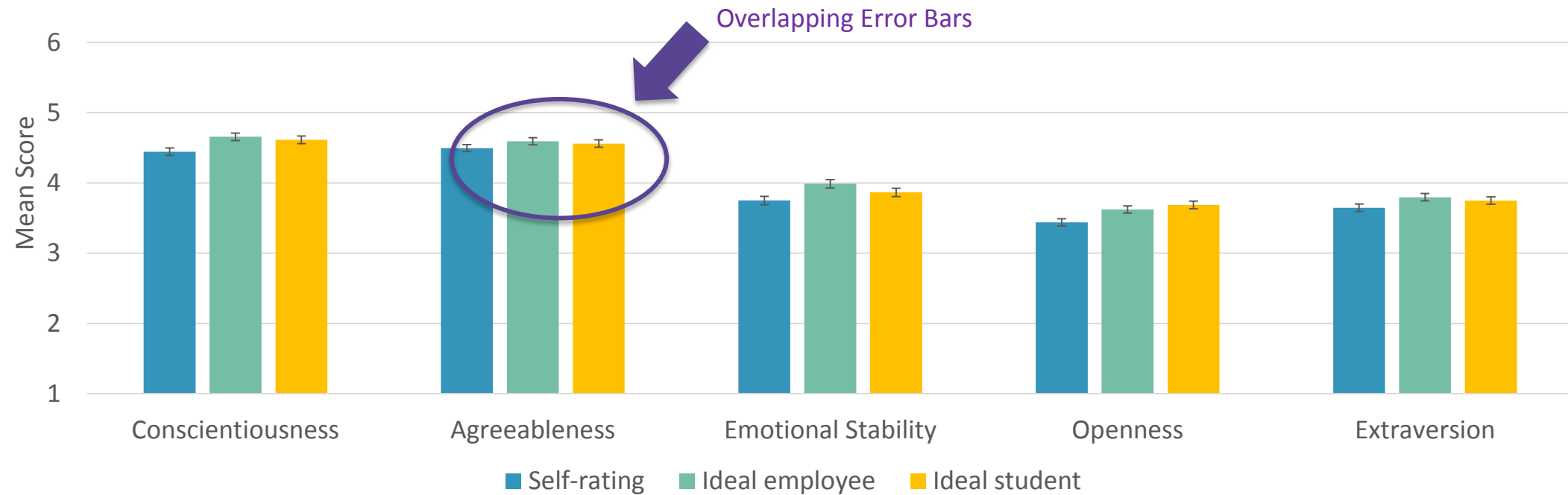
- Recent history of war and genocide



- Violent extremism
- Lawless banditry

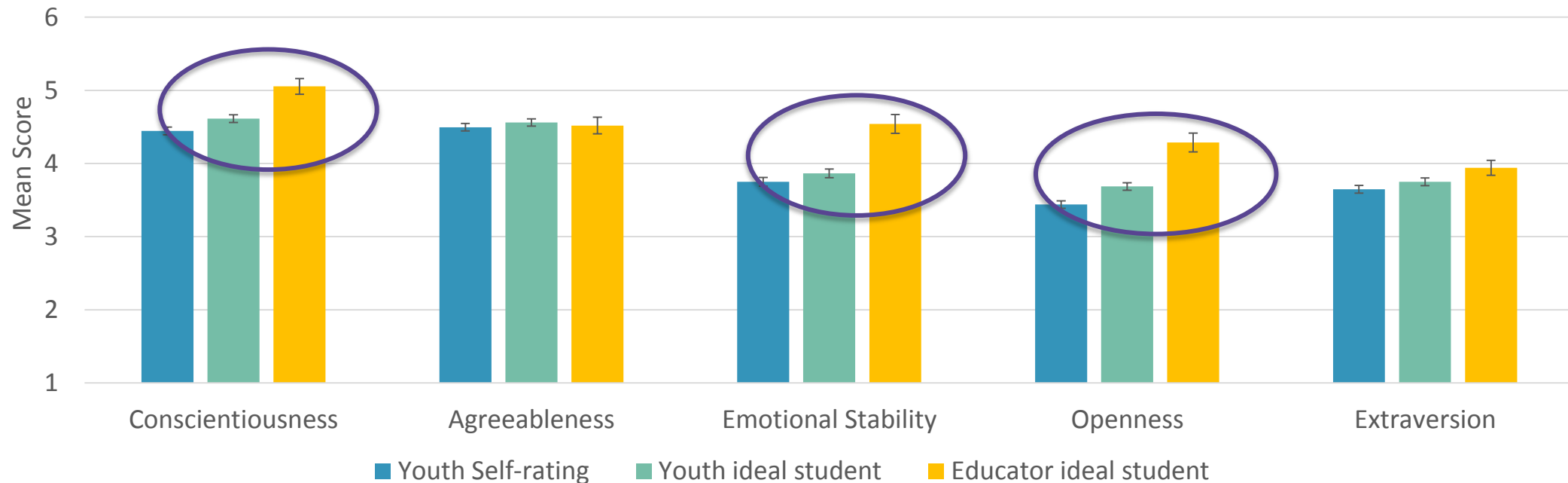
Findings: Youth Self-ratings vs. Ideals

Youth rate their own soft skills similarly to their ideal soft skills.



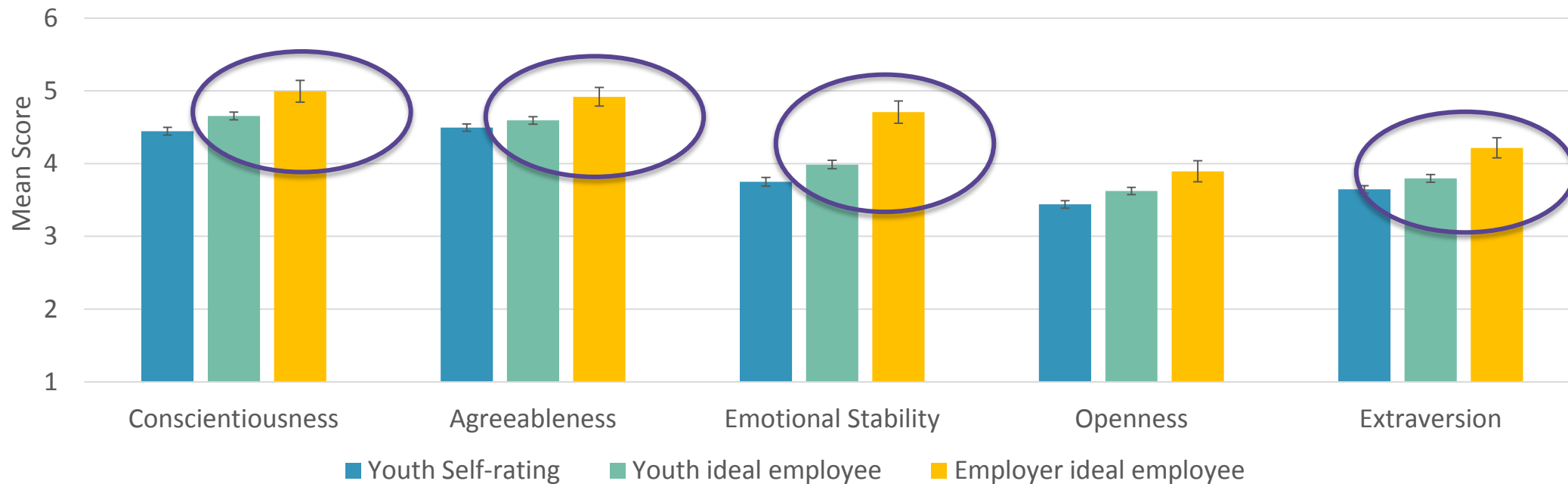
Findings: Youth vs. Educators

Youth Underestimate Extent of Skills Necessary for Education.



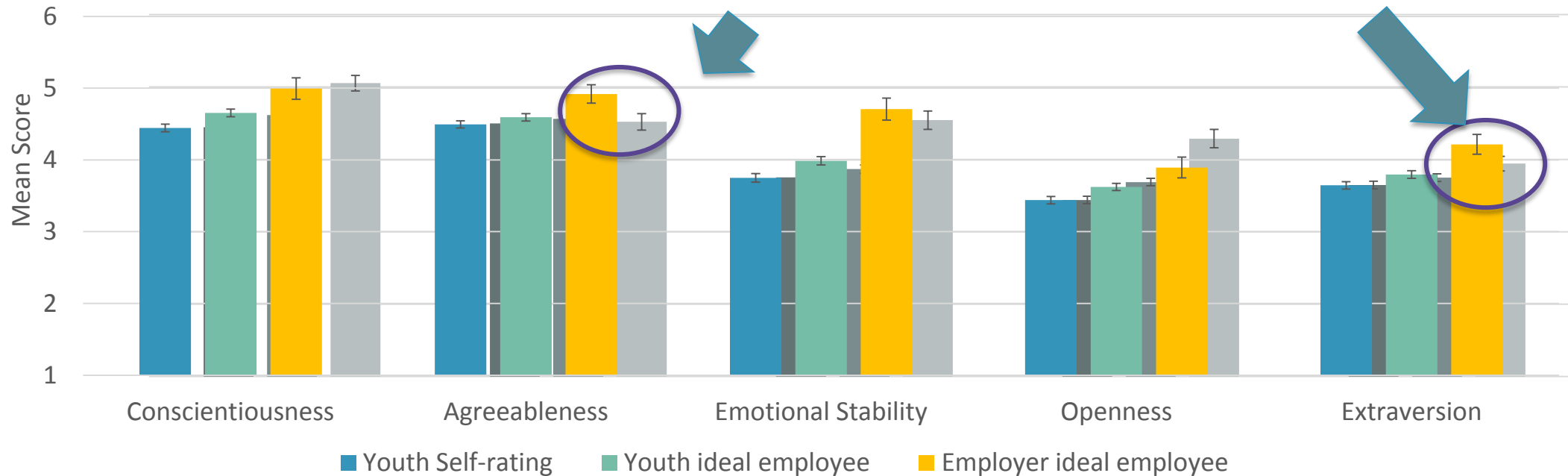
Findings: Youth vs. Employers

Youth Underestimate Extent of Skills Necessary for Employment.

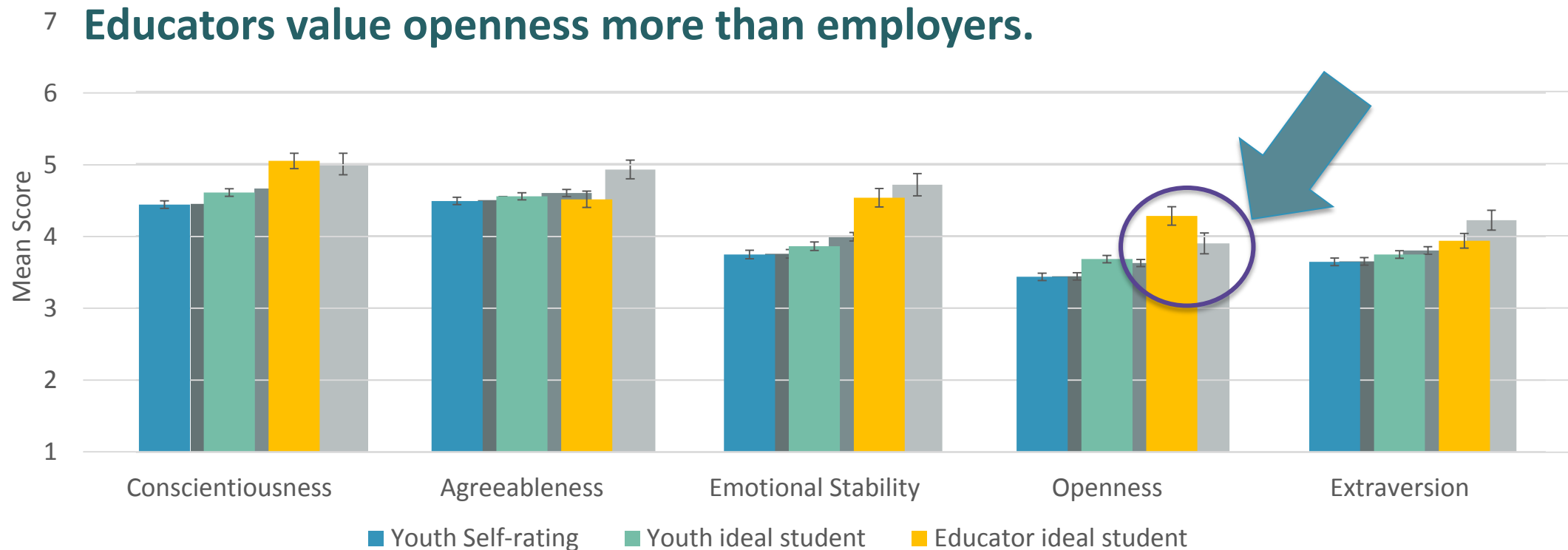


Findings: Employers vs. Educators

Employers value agreeableness and extraversion more than educators.



Findings: Educators vs. Employers



Youth vs. Employers by Work field

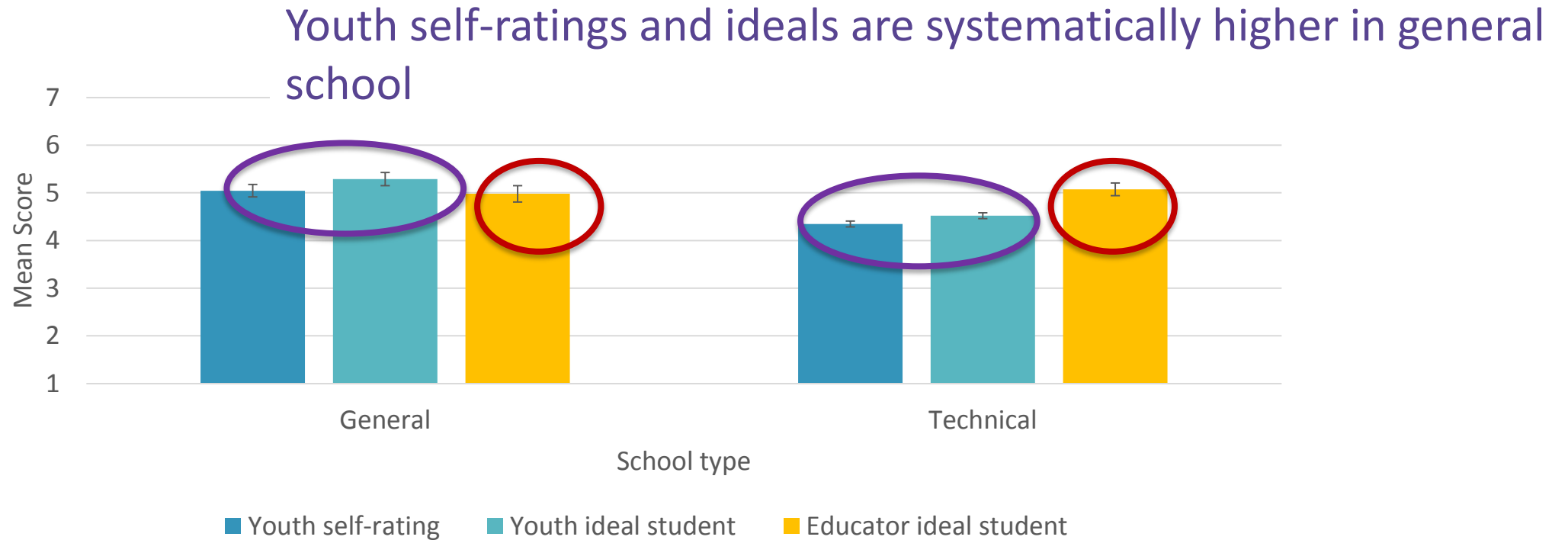
Employers have the lowest ideals for production and the highest for direct service.

Youth have the lowest ideals for production and the highest for business.



Youth vs. Educators by School type

Educators' ideals are similar across school types.



What Does the Evidence suggest for Implementation?

There is a relationship between youth's ideals and the skills they possess.

Youth underestimate the importance of soft skills.

Educators value openness more than employers.

Employers value agreeableness and extraversion more than educators.

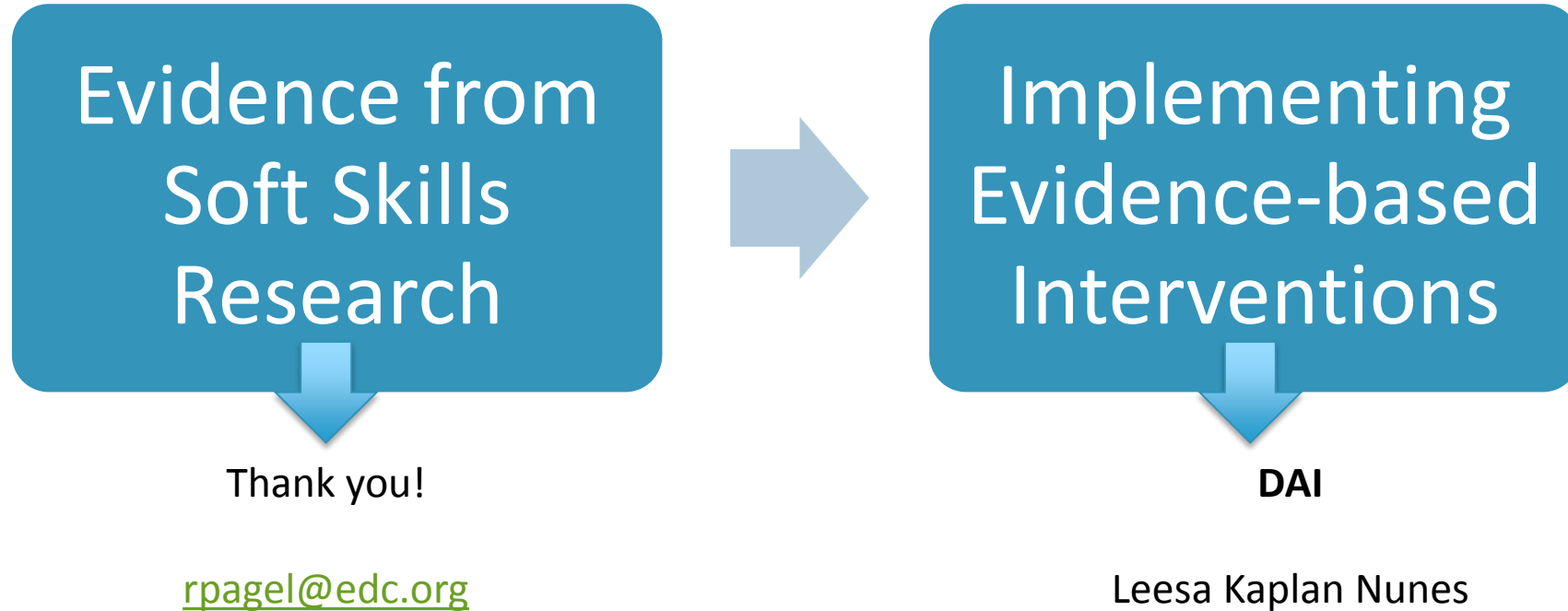
Ideals—youths and employers—can differ between work fields.

Personalize and adjust interventions to emphasize the extent of skills needed.

Train for success for the youth's desired outcome

Target interventions to work field

From Evidence to Implementation





ADDRESSING YOUTH SOFT-SKILLS GAPS IN AREAS OF CRIME AND VIOLENCE:

A focus on El Salvador

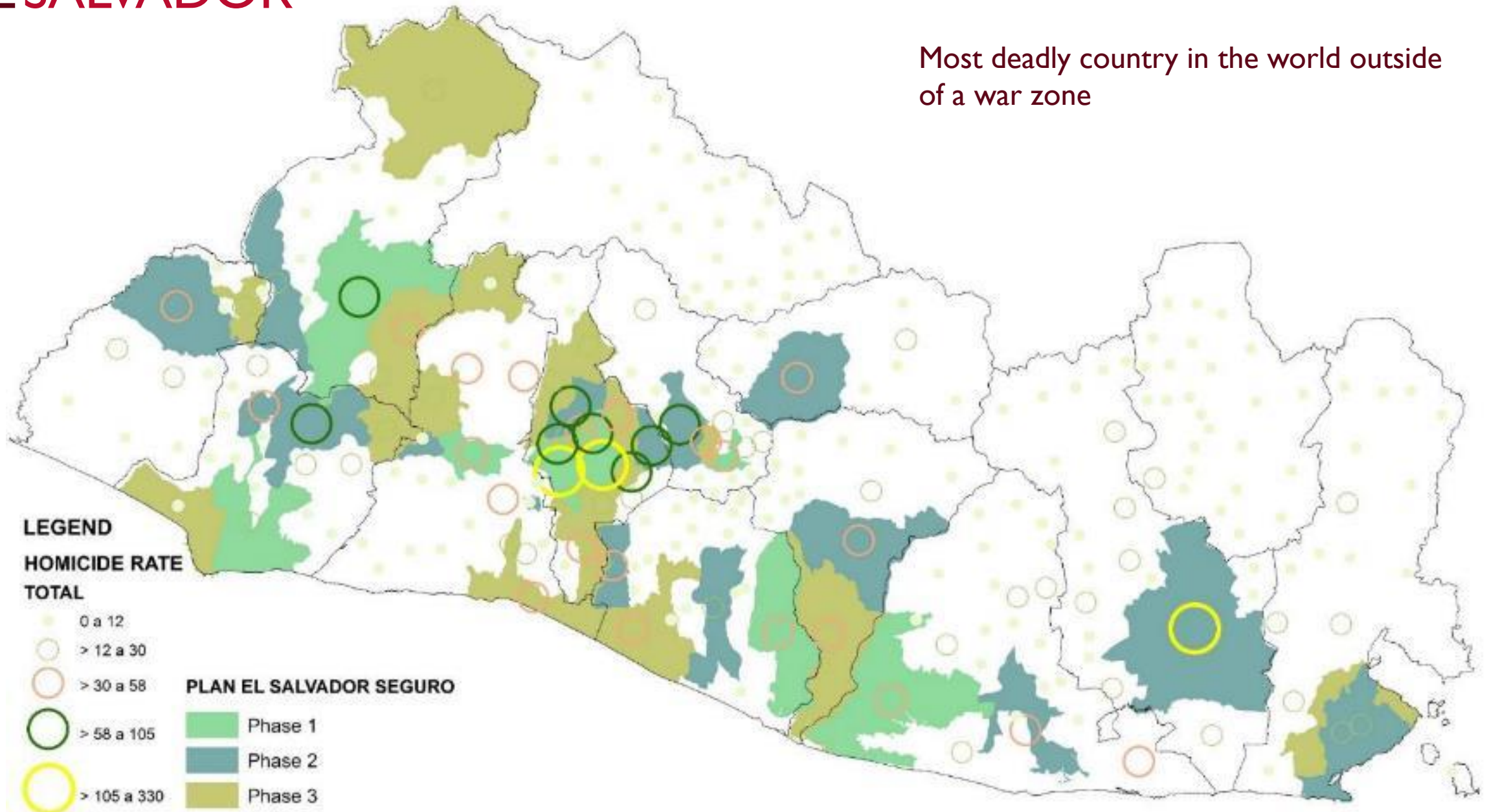
EL SALVADOR

- El Salvador is one of the most violent countries in the world, according to United Nations statistics, with a 2012 murder rate of 41.2 homicides per 100,000 inhabitants.
- Many youth in El Salvador's high-crime communities must make difficult choices for a tenuous livelihood among gang coercion, underemployment, and expensive and dangerous migration.
- Salvadorans face epidemic violence, challenges in institutional leadership and organizational capacity, a complex political and policy environment, and disjointed coordination at local and national levels.



EL SALVADOR

Most deadly country in the world outside
of a war zone



Background

In 2013, the unemployment rate was of 10.4% for 16-29 year olds.

The trajectory of El Salvador's development greatly depends on the ability of at-risk youth to choose viable options for employment in a system that works for them.



Summary

- USAID Bridges to Employment is implemented by **DAI Global LLC**, with its partners: **Plan International** and **JBS International**.
- **Supports the inclusion of at-risk youth** - including young women and other vulnerable populations, such as LGBTI youth and youth with disabilities
- **Collaborates with the Salvadoran government, companies, civil society organizations, and technical training centers** to improve employment opportunities for at-risk youth



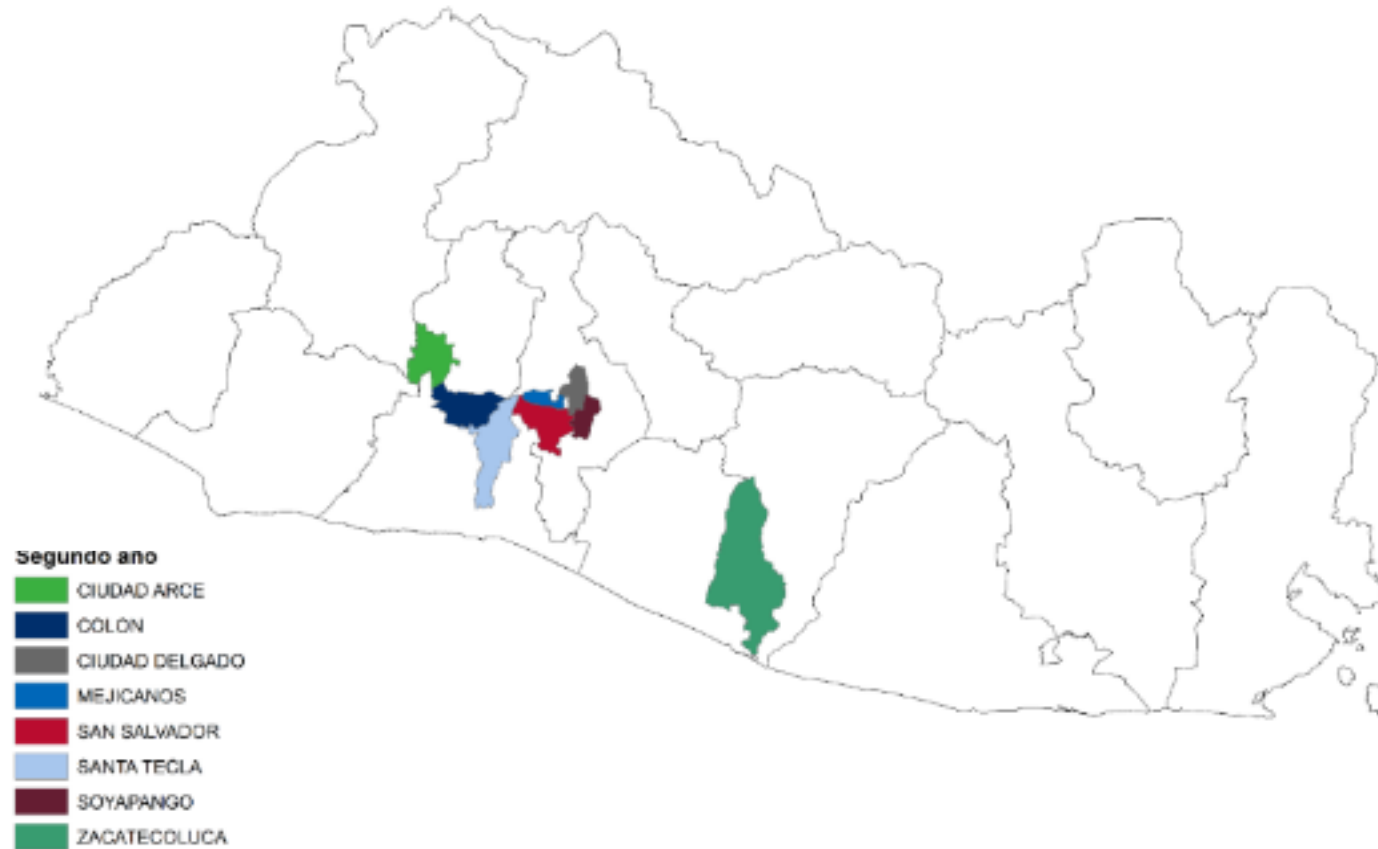


OBJECTIVE OF THE PROJECT

To increase and improve the participation of at-risk youth aged 16-29 in the labor market, so that they reach their life **goals**, whether to **continue their academic studies**, to obtain professional technical training, to have access to a **job**, and/or to become **entrepreneurs**.



GEOGRAPHIC FOCUS



Focuses on 15
municipalities identified
in Plan El Salvador
Seguro

Year 2 activities take place in the 8 municipalities:

Ciudad Arce, Colón, Santa Tecla, Mejicanos, San Salvador, Ciudad Delgado, Soyapango y Zacatecoluca

DEVELOPMENT OF CURRICULUM FOR LIFE AND SOFT SKILLS

- In 2015, Instituto Nacional de la Juventud (INJUVE) reviewed existing life/soft skills materials used by training institutions that work with youth in El Salvador and published the curriculum for life/soft skills in 2016
- USAID Bridges to Employment began an ongoing analysis of life/soft skills materials
- July 2016 - MOU between INJUVE and Bridges to Employment to use INJUVE materials and strengthen them with complementary modules
- Both entities transferred methodology, materials, contents, etc. to training centers



INJUVE'S CURRICULUM FOR LIFE AND SOFT SKILLS

- 1) I can be what I set my mind to be
- 2) A picture is worth a thousand words
- 3) The one and the other
- 4) We are not alone
- 5) Why should we be productive and active listeners?
- 6) Our life is made up of the choices we make
- 7) Good ideas that move us
- 8) Broadening horizons
- 9) This is how I see myself in the future
- 10) I plan my personal project
- 11) What's the cost of my project?
- 12) Reaching the goal in the best condition
- 13) Getting to know the business world
- 14) Social and business ventures
- 15) Presenting my project

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Most Supported Skills in the Literature Within the Domains of Workforce Success, Violence Prevention, and Sexual and Reproductive Health

WORKFORCE SUCCESS

Social Skills

Higher order thinking skills

Self-control

Positive self-concept

Communication

Hardworking & dependable

Self-motivation

Teamwork

Responsibility

Positive Attitude

Top 5 skill across all three domains

Top 10 skill across all three domains

Other skill

VIOLENCE PREVENTION

Self-control

Social skills

Empathy

Higher order thinking skills

Positive self-concept

Integrity/ethics

Resilience

Communication

Responsability

Positive attitude

SEXUAL AND REPRODUCTIVE HEALTH

Positive self-concept

Self-control

Communication

Goal orientation

Higher order thinking skills

Integrity/ethics

Positive attitude

Social skills

Responsibility

Empathy

Gates, S., Lippman, L., Shadowen, N., Burke, H., Diener, O. and Malkin, M. (2016). Key Soft Skills for Cross-Sectoral Youth Outcomes. Washington, DCL USAID's YouthPower: Implementation, YouthPower Action

INJUVE CURRICULUM

- We are not alone
- Our life is made up of the choices we make
- I can be what I set my mind to be
- A picture is worth a thousand words
- Why should we be productive and active listeners?
- I plan my personal project
- What's the cost of my project?
- Good ideas that move us
- Broadening horizons
- This is how I see myself in the future
- Reaching the goal in the best condition
- Presenting my project
- The one and the other (gender)
- Getting to know the business world
- Social and business ventures

WHICH SKILLS MATCH?

YouthPower Top 10 skills

- Social skills
- Higher order thinking skills
- Positive self-concept
- Communication
- Responsibility
- Positive attitude
- Goal orientation
- Empathy
- Integrity/ethics
- Self-control
-
-
-


FILLING IN THE GAPS




- Develop complementary modules for skills not included in INJUVE curriculum:
 - Empathy
 - Integrity/ethics
 - Self-control
- Use creative educational techniques (games, e-learning, apps)
- Training of trainers

SOME CHALLENGES:

- ❑ Soft skills training is a constant practice, not limited to a number of hours.
- ❑ Soft skills should not be an isolated training component.
- ❑ Standardization of definitions, contents, and delivery techniques in the context of the Salvadoran youth



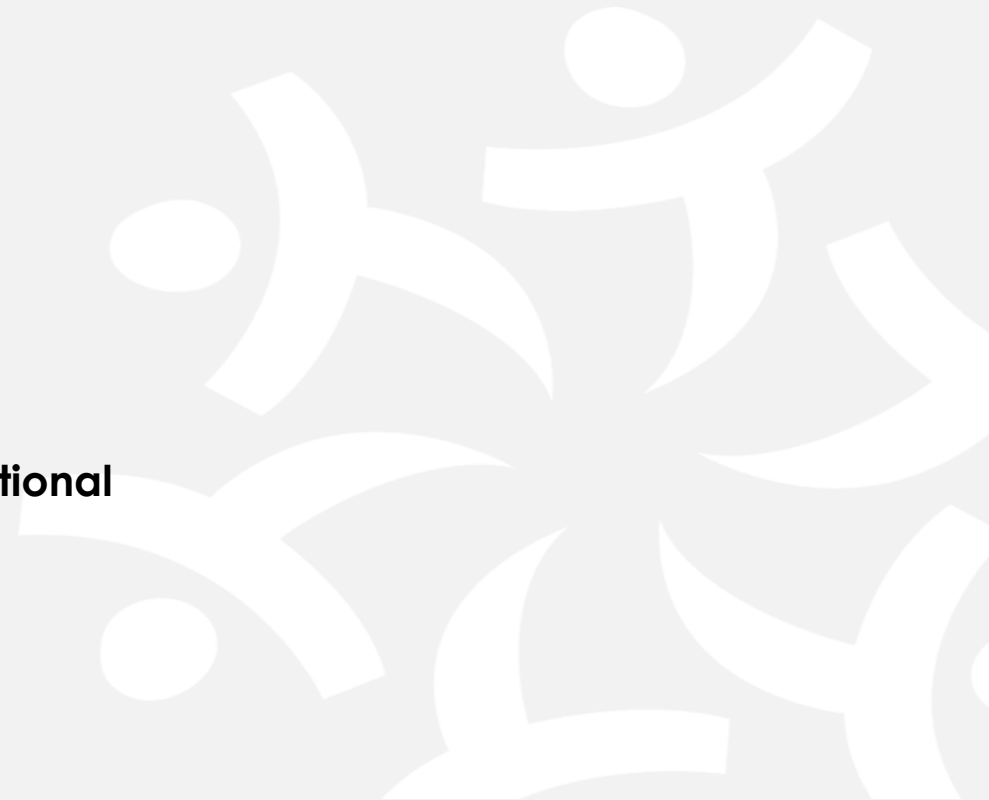
USAID BRIDGES TO
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Most Supported Skills



- **Positive self-concept:** *Self-confidence, self-efficacy, self-awareness and beliefs, self-esteem, sense of well-being and pride*
- **Self-control:** *Delay gratification, control impulses, direct and focus attention, manage emotions, regulate behaviors*
- **Higher order thinking skills:** *Problem solving, critical thinking, decision making*

Source: YouthPower Action



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ACEs and Brain Development



Active Temporal Lobes (L) and Inactive (R)

- On the left is a cross section of the brain of a child growing up in a stable family
- On the right is the cross section of the brain of a child growing up in an institution
- Over 75 studies from 20 countries document this impact



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QUESTIONS AND DISCUSSION



Thank you!

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