Evaluating the Impact of Vocational and Life Skills training on Labor Market Entry for Adolescent Girls in Haiti

Researchers and practitioners have shown time and again that human capital investments for young girls can have positive multiplier effects for her family, community, and society at large. Young women with more education earn higher incomes, have greater access to reproductive health information and health services, are more likely to delay marriage and child birth, and have higher levels of overall wellbeing, on average. Nonetheless, within the scope of vocational training – one type of human capital investment – little is known about how to stimulate economic empowerment. What has become clear is that the success of job training is extremely context specific and that continued research is needed. Few studies have been able to assess the impacts on the agency of women who receive job training. These research questions motivate this impact evaluation, which aims to assess the impact of vocational and life skills training on labor market entry for adolescent girls, in Haiti, while at the same time improving our understanding of the role of agency in determining development outcomes.

Seventy percent of Haiti’s population is under the age of thirty, giving it the youngest age structure in the Caribbean. This, combined with the country's plagued history of slow growth, extremely high unemployment, and depressing natural disasters, explains the impetus for a program targeted towards investing in the human capital of adolescent girls in Haiti.

The Haiti Adolescent Girls Initiative (AGI) aims to socially and economically empower Haitian young women through vocational and life skills training and an internship to increase their future employment and earnings potential. The AGI tries to address employability within a holistic framework, by providing technical training relevant for adolescent girls in the current Haitian labor market context, while also providing life skills, counseling, support services, a cash stipend, and an internship within their field to increase the likeliness of a smooth transition from skills
training to (at least) temporary employment. Program participants have been split into groups and receive vocational training in fields that do not traditionally include women such as plumbing, heavy machinery operation, carpentry, and construction. The technical training spans about 6 months. Following the trainings, the AGI program staff will coordinate internships for participants. The life skills and support services offered throughout the AGI program were determined in coordination with local counterparts.

---

**Evaluation Design**

This evaluation applied a randomized phase-in strategy to estimate the direct effects of the program on vocational skills attainment and employment outcomes, as well as, effects on agency and empowerment. Girls between the ages of 17 and 21 self-selected into enrollment. All those enrolled took an exam that measured literacy, numeracy, and analytical ability. Half of the girls that passed the exam (about 1,000) were randomly assigned to either cohort one or cohort two. In accordance with the phase-in strategy, cohort one will be offered the program first and upon their completion of the training and internship cohort two will receive the treatment. Data has been collected for all beneficiaries and their households prior to the beginning of implementation and will also be collected in the interim between the completion of the first cohort and the beginning of the treatment of cohort two, at which point cohort two will serve as the control group for analysis of impacts of the program.

**Timeline:** Baseline data has been collected. Training for the first cohort of 500 girls, will be completed in May of 2013. A follow-up survey round will be collected shortly thereafter (before the second cohort starts).

February 2013

For more information on the **LAC Gender Impact Evaluation Initiative** please contact: Facundo Cuevas (fcuevas@worldbank.org), Maria Genoni (mgenoni@worldbank.org) or Megan Rounseville (mrrounseville@worldbank.org)