

# SUPPORTING BASIC EDUCATION IN DEVELOPING COUNTRIES: Perspectives from the Private Sector and Policy Stakeholders

## BEPS

### Basic Education and Policy Support (BEPS) Activity

CREATIVE ASSOCIATES INTERNATIONAL 

*In collaboration with*

CARE, THE GEORGE WASHINGTON UNIVERSITY, AND GROUNDWORK



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**SUPPORTING  
BASIC EDUCATION IN  
DEVELOPING COUNTRIES:  
Perspectives from the Private  
Sector and Policy Stakeholders**

**Draft Report**

**The Basic Education and Policy Support  
(BEPS) Activity**

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## 1. INTRODUCTION

In response to a request from the US Agency for International Development (USAID), Creative Associates International, Inc. conducted research between April and August 2002 to assess the perspectives of public and private sector leaders on international basic education. The intention of our research was to identify key considerations regarding advancement of international basic education and the development of partnerships.

This report summarizes the findings and implications from a series of interviews conducted. It is helpful when reading the findings to remember that they represent perceptions, not necessarily objective facts. These perceptions, however, provide a window into the thought processes of key decision-makers who could eventually play a role in supporting international basic education.

This paper summarizes responses from the private sector and policy stakeholders. Included from each group are the themes that emerged, decision-making criteria for support of education, and language that appeared to resonate with the interviewees.

## 2. METHOD

This report is based on 20 interviews — 10 with private sector leaders and 10 with policy stakeholders. Private sector leaders included company Chairmen, Presidents, Vice Presidents, Senior Advisors, and other influential members of the business community. Policy stakeholders represent the broad spectrum of the policy community including think tanks, congressional staff, and lobbyists. A profile of interviewees can be found in Appendix A.

Interviewees were identified who had an interest in international development and/or education, but were not education experts. The objective of the interviews was to reach beyond the current “choir” of individuals already engaged in promoting international basic education, to gain input from groups that could potentially be involved in supporting international basic education.

The interviews began with general international development topics, becoming increasingly specific during the conversation. The questions used can be found in Appendix B. Interviewers did not mention basic education until midway through the interviews, except when it was necessary to explain the research project in greater detail before an interview could be granted. All interviewees were informed that the information was being collected to gain insight from a group of people and that the interview data would not be attributed to individuals.

Several steps were taken to eliminate bias in interpretation of the interviews. All interviews were recorded and transcribed and a copy of all transcripts has been provided to USAID. Interview transcripts were reviewed and analyzed by four senior-level independent reviewers - two representing the private sector and two representing policy stakeholders. Reviewers were asked to respond to four questions:

1. What are the broad themes emerging from the interviews?
2. What are decision-making criteria and key considerations for support of basic education and for participation in basic education partnerships?
3. What are the language and values that resonate with policy stakeholders or private sector leaders?
4. What are the implications of these interviews for USAID?
  - a. What should USAID do to better communicate and collaborate with the policy and business communities?
  - b. What should be done to form better alliances for shared development purposes?
  - c. Are there any other implications?

Reviewers developed their interpretations independently from each other and then shared their feedback in sessions facilitated by Creative Associates staff. A senior-level consultant to Creative Associates also provided input separately. This report is a summary of the interview data and the reviewers' interpretations. Observations included here are those that were agreed upon by most or all reviewers

### 3. PRIVATE SECTOR RESPONSES

#### 3.1 Private Sector Themes

##### *Perceptions About the Need for Development Assistance and the Importance of Education*

- **Private sector interviewees agreed on the need for development assistance, with some reservations.**

All interviewees agreed that there is a need for development assistance. For example Interviewee #4 expressed that aid is a “*critical part of our responsibility as a nation in the incredible position of leadership we are in.*” However, five mentioned concerns about the existing context within which assistance is provided. Interviewee #13, one of those expressing skepticism, said they favored aid “*if, in fact, the aid is effective*” but thought many government recipients were too inept or corrupt to use it well. Others expressed concerns about 1) a lack of partnership with the private sector in making decisions about aid, 2) the creation of a long-term dependence on aid, and 3) conflicting resource needs for domestic and international priorities.

- **Private sector interviewees also agreed on the importance of education as a development strategy.**

All but one of the private sector interviewees cited education as an important development strategy. According to Interviewee #1, “*Education is the basis for existence... it is what creates opportunities for other people.*” Interviewee #12 said, “*...in some cases education is the way out for countries as well as individuals in*

*terms of developing their economies.” Interviewee #7 said, “Where investment has more of an impact is in countries that are developing, where you have very poor school systems, very few economic choices, smart people who just have no opportunities...One of [the] first priorities [to address these issues] might be education.”*

Most also suggested that education, in particular, should be a critical focus for investment in education. Interviewee #3 specified, *“I think that education dollars are best spent in the early years of education because if you don’t get that foundation, how is it possible to go on to something else?”*

- **While most private sector interviewees agreed on the importance of education, they also viewed education as part of an integrated development strategy, with critical linkages to other USAID programs.**

When asked to rank education in a list of development priorities, most interviewees were unwilling to do so. Many interviewees saw education as tied to other development goals such as improved governance, political stability, basic sustenance, promoting economic opportunity, and maintaining personal health. Interviewee #13 summarized this by saying, *“So I think education is not a stand-alone strategy. Education is a strategy that has got to be integrated with your health care strategy, your economic development, so education is seen as relevant to the people you are trying to target.”*

- **The positive linkages between economic development and education were of specific interest to private sector interviewees.**

Private sector interviewees said that education and economic development, in particular, must be closely tied. Interviewees commented that the ability to participate in income generation should be an essential goal of education initiatives in developing countries. Many also discussed the idea that people should not have to leave their own country or come to America to find education or economic opportunity and therefore economic and education strategies should be positively linked.

Interviewee #3 addressed the economic importance of education and an integrated development strategy saying, *“I think that international assistance should be aimed 100% at increasing productivity in the developing world and that means the emphasis should be on education, policy reform, dealing only with governments that are not corrupt, and population control.”*

### ***Perceptions about the Definition of Basic Education and Knowledge of USAID Educational Programs***

- **The definition of basic education among the private sector interviewees included the “3Rs”, but many had an expanded view.**

Most private sector interviewees associated basic education with reading, writing, and math or the “3 Rs”. Seven interviewees mentioned concepts related to the 3Rs, three of those used the specific term “literacy”. Eight went beyond these traditional definitions to include basic civic concepts, non-violence training, critical thinking skills, basic economic skills, health and basic market information, scientific and social literacy, and personal health. Interviewees also emphasized training to live in a world of technology rather than education for the sake of education.

Interviewee #18 expressed the need for an expanded view of basic education: *“I think we try to teach literacy by teaching people using historical methodologies for reading, and they leave there learning to read but they don’t necessarily learn anything other than reading in the process.”* Interviewee #1 also explained, *“...especially at a young age, if you give them just the ABCs, it’s still not going to help them when they get beat up at home, its not going to help them when they hang out on the street corners all day long”*

Interviewee #13 explained the need to include life skills in basic education, saying, *“The obvious answer is literacy. But...more effective farming techniques, safe water, and the like, education in terms of markets perhaps might be more immediately effective than to raise literacy rates.”* Interviewee #7 spoke about the strengthening link between education and the workplace, *“education can’t and won’t be ever again as isolated from the workplace realities as it was in the past.”*

- **Interviewees showed a significant lack of awareness regarding specific USAID educational activities.**

While there was general support for investing in education in developing countries, the majority of private sector interviewees had little knowledge of USAID activities in the area of education, especially with regard to USAID’s successes. One reviewer, when interpreting the transcripts, said, *“Private sector representatives seem to lack fundamental knowledge about USAID programs or that many of its activities are conducted through NGO/PVOs. While there were some bright spots of understanding, clearly USAID needs to do a better job of explaining its program. If Washington representatives of companies don’t understand USAID, who in their company does?”*

### ***Perceptions about the Potential for Public-Private Collaboration on Development Issues***

- **A perceived match of interests and resources could provide a foundation for public-private collaboration on international development.**

Interviewees expressed that under the right circumstances USAID can be a valuable partner on international development initiatives. The private sector named various assets that USAID could contribute to an alliance with the business community, including credibility, expertise in development issues, and established in-country relationships. Interviewee #10 said, “[USAID] has a history of solid programs that they, I hope, know what works and what doesn’t and they can bring that to the table....The second value is that [USAID has] people on the ground...who really know the culture, know what the problems are...”

The private sector also cited a variety of commercial interests that could be enhanced by working with USAID on international development: extension or creation of markets, workforce training, product development, branding, expanding business networks, and reputation enhancement.

- **Private sector interviewees explained that business could offer more than just financial resources to address international development issues.**

Private sector leaders expressed their desire to be involved in international development initiatives beyond providing money. They felt they could offer human resources, marketing expertise, industry knowledge, infrastructure, equipment, and networks to address international development issues. Interviewee #22 captured this when he said, “*Why is the only partnership ‘give me the money,’ why can’t it be ‘give me the knowledge’?*”

Interviewee #10 spoke about providing technical expertise to organizations that will help identify solutions to their problems, “*I think anytime you help somebody solve a problem, come up with a solution for the problem, other than just throwing some money at them, everybody learns from the situation. It builds great relationships and we all learn from each other.*”

One reviewer noticed an interest in using business capabilities to assist with the “enterprise of education,” the management structures and systems that support the development and delivery of effective basic education.

Interviewees also expressed an interest in being involved early on, from the design phase of a project. According to interviewee #12, “*Businesses do have people who are very astute in strategy and project management. I think the government could and should ask for that kind of assistance early on before they begin to [request assistance] on something that was created only by government.*”



- **Private sector interviewees also discussed the importance of involving local businesses in education alliances.**

Interviewee #13 spoke about the value of involving local business and other organizations in a development alliance: *“I would talk to local farmers, I would talk to local merchants, I would talk to local entrepreneurs and have them on board for institutionalized dialogue about what kind of skills are needed, what educational system approaches are best, what is best suited for current needs.”*

Interviewee #22 emphasized the importance of working with the local businesses within a multinational organization, not just the headquarters: *“...don’t come to see me, tell your person working in Katmandu to tell our person working in Katmandu...”*

### ***Perceptions about the Effectiveness of Development Assistance and Barriers to Public-Private Collaboration on Development Issues***

- **Private sector concerns centered on funds provided to corrupt governments and the perceived difficulty of working with the USAID bureaucracy.**

One theme picked up by all reviewers was the private sector concern about corruption in foreign governments. Reviewers based their observation on comments from interviewees such as #13 who explained, *“My sense of it is that government-to-government aid tends to get dissipated. It is either pocketed by government agencies or those agencies are ineffective in lesser developed nations.”* Interviewee #3 also commented on corruption saying *“...Kenya, the reason it doesn’t make any progress is its government is so corrupt.”*

There was also significant concern about the perceived inefficiency of the USAID bureaucracy and the private sector’s difficulty penetrating the bureaucracy. Interviewee #13 had a strong negative impression of the USAID bureaucracy, stating, *“USAID, I will tell you has a horrible reputation [for bureaucracy]. Businesses don’t want to deal with it...”*

Interviewee #20, who has ultimately developed a positive relationship with USAID, noted that *“we don’t know how to talk to each other”* and *“It took many years to penetrate USAID and convince them that we had something to offer and vice versa”*. Interviewee #1 echoed the difficulty bridging cultural differences in a US government-business alliance, *“The experience for me personally hasn’t been very enriching, not organized enough, and not hands on enough as in the private sector”*

- **Private sector interviewees expressed lack of appreciation by USAID for their emphasis on profitability.**

All reviewers noticed that while many private sector persons welcomed the idea of working with the US government, there was a general sense of hesitancy. The private sector interviewees believed that USAID looks down upon their emphasis on the bottom line.

Feeling disrespected is evident in the comments of Interviewee #22 who stated, *“If you treat me like an equal, and understand that my mission in life — it might sound horrible, but it’s decent and has a social value — is doing business that creates wealth, which, although it is based on greed is good for society, then we can speak.”* One reviewer explained the mistrust between USAID and the business community, *“Clearly there is suspicion [of USAID] on the business side. Unspoken in these interviews is the mistrust of many in USAID about the motives of business.”*

Interviewee #20 recommended that the best way to get past the suspicion and mistrust is to focus on common goals, saying that his alliances with USAID and UNICEF focus on *“what I believe is in the best interest for our company [which is also] in the best interest for the world...”* and the approach that has worked is to *“focus on the goal.”*

### **3.2 Private Sector Decision-Making Criteria**

Private sector interviewees, in their discussion, revealed explicit and implicit criteria they used when making decisions about support for international development projects. These criteria may be helpful when determining how to approach the private sector for partnership or support of basic education initiatives.

#### ***Criteria Related to Existing Relationships and Perceived USAID Capacity for Public-Private Alliance***

- ❑ Previously established relationships, trust, and shared values between USAID and the private sector entity.
- ❑ Confidence that resources contributed will not end up in the pockets of a corrupt government or lost in the bureaucracy.
- ❑ Perception that USAID Contact can understand and relate to the business work style and respect private sector goals.
- ❑ Recognition of USAID contact that each company’s culture is unique and each must be appropriately approached.

### ***Criteria Related to Project Design***

- Two-way communication with the private sector on how they would like to be involved, what they have to offer, what experience they bring to the table, and what role they would like to play.
- Flexibility in project design, with the private sector being brought to the table at an early stage in project planning.
- Clarity around roles and responsibilities, including who will “own” the initiative.

### ***Criteria Related to Project Content***

- Link between development initiative and business interests. For example, the initiative goals are in line with the company’s core business and/or core values, the initiative assists a country where the company has established operations, or the initiative provides an opportunity to expand networks, distribution mechanisms, or markets, etc.
- Link between education programs and larger development goals and in particular, economic development.
- Appropriateness of the project to the local context and inclusion of partners from local business.

### **3.3 Language and Values That Resonate with the Private Sector**

The following words and values were identified by readers as meaningful to the private sector interviewees when discussing international development. This list is based on a qualitative, not quantitative, analysis (e.g. word counting). Terms are not presented in any particular rank order.

- **Technology.** Private sector interviewees expressed a strong interest in the use of technology and alternative delivery methods to improve education, as well as in teaching students to use technology to improve their lives.
- **Workforce development.** Private sector interviewees frequently mentioned workforce issues when speaking about education.
- **Literacy.** The term literacy was used throughout the interviews when talking about education and the definition of basic education.
- **Corruption.** As mentioned in the section on themes, corruption was a term that resonated with strong negative connotations for interviewees.
- **Bottom-line/shareholders.** When explaining their interest and motivations for providing philanthropic or other support for international development, many interviewees referred to the concept of a bottom line or responsibility to their shareholders.

- **Teachers.** There was, in general, value placed on the role of teachers and on the importance of supporting the recruitment and training of teachers.
- **Gender (education for girls and women).** During our discussions interviewees brought up gender issues, displaying awareness of the importance of educating girls and women.
- **Health (AIDS, nutrition, sanitation, clean water).** Interviewees frequently brought up health issues, and many brought up AIDS as an important development challenge.
- **Infrastructure.** The issue of building infrastructure was raised in relation to the business infrastructure that could be brought to bear on development projects and in relation to the infrastructure necessary to make education possible.
- **Emigration/Immigration.** As mentioned in the themes section, many related that individuals should not have to leave their own country to find economic and educational opportunity.

### 3.4 Implications of Private Sector Interviews

- **There appears to be an opportunity to promote increased collaboration between USAID and business in the area of basic education.**

Business representatives did place a value on education and basic education, citing links to workforce development, economic growth, and overall political stability. Business representatives also felt that they could play an important role in support of international basic education and that their commercial interests could be served by doing so. They also believed that, while there might currently be some barriers, USAID had a number of assets to offer for collaboration on international development. The match of interests and assets indicates the potential for increased collaboration on international basic education.

- **The creation of alliances could be facilitated within a broad framework for private sector involvement in international basic education.**

USAID should carefully consider the value of public-private alliances for education. If it is decided that USAID wants and will accept private sector input they should first identify which businesses or types of business should or could be interested. USAID's Education Unit would benefit from building proactive, cooperative relationships with the individuals in the business community. These relationships could act as a foundation for identifying areas of mutual interest and for developing a backdrop against which future private sector participation can be requested.

Reviewers believed that USAID's Education Unit could become a convener of business leaders interested in international development and education. Reviewers also felt that USAID would benefit from knowing which businesses are currently working on education in which countries and use that information to identify organizations that might be interested in working with USAID on education in the future.

Interviewees and reviewers offered several possibilities for establishing relationships with businesses: 1) promotion of USAID education activities to businesses that have been active in the area of international development, but not education and 2) promotion of USAID education activities to business groups that support education in developing countries, but currently without USAID participation. One interviewee recommended holding a USAID-sponsored Project Fair to alert businesses of ways to get involved with USAID education projects.

– **The future of public-private education alliances would be enhanced by building a compatible culture between USAID and business.**

The interviews suggest that USAID could do a better job at creating a culture compatible with that of the private sector partners. USAID can approach this objective by creating a climate that truly values private sector input and by showing long-term consistent responsiveness to private sector ideas, interests, and concerns. Interviewees stressed that they want to be respected as equal partners and not demeaned for their commercial interests.

Interviewees told stories about the people that first engaged them in international development or USAID initiatives, suggesting the importance of a cultural match between the USAID contact and individuals in the business community. The Education Unit could identify a liaison to build one-on-one relationships with the private sector. This person should be able to communicate with business-friendly language, understand the key business decision-making criteria, and would not feel or convey condescension toward private sector interests. This person would be able to communicate a consistent message about basic education initiatives that resonates with the private sector.

The Education Unit could enlist the help of businesses currently in successful alliance with USAID but not in the area of education in reaching new partners. Representatives from currently involved businesses could invite the participation of other businesses not yet involved.

- **There is a need for proactive communication on the issues of development assistance to corrupt governments and on USAID bureaucracy.**

Our research revealed a concern among some business leaders that much of aid goes through corrupt foreign governments and is therefore an inefficient and ineffective approach to affecting change. These perceptions impact the interest and willingness of business leaders to work with USAID. USAID could benefit from stressing how it has already begun to address this issue by giving some assistance through NGOs and PVOs instead of through foreign governments.

The Education Unit might also address concerns about the USAID bureaucracy. One approach would be to produce a business guide to working in alliance with USAID on education. The guide could be developed with input and review from the business community. It could include a short overview on USAID's education success stories, the value proposition of working in alliance with USAID, organizational layout, names and contact information, steps for establishing a relationship with USAID, and a description of existing USAID alliances.

- **Increased communication about other public-private development alliances that have worked could benefit USAID.**

According to reviewers, business people are attracted to successful initiatives. USAID could benefit from communicating the mission and the impact of previous successful development alliances. USAID should also communicate clearly the business-related impact that previous education initiatives have had.

## 4. POLICY STAKEHOLDER RESPONSES

### 4.1 Policy Stakeholder Themes

#### *Perceptions about the Need for Development Assistance and the Importance of Education*

- **Policy stakeholder interviewees expressed support for development assistance in general, but also expressed concerns.**

Virtually all interviewees supported development assistance and saw it as linked to US interests. Most thought that aid should be related to US interests, with national security being a primary driver. However, many interviewees added that US national security and other national interests should not be the only criteria. Interviewee #5 said the US should be involved because “*we are humanitarian people*”.

While acknowledging the reality of the importance of aid for US interests, a few expressed concerns. According to Interviewee #11, “*Aid is given mostly for political reasons...*” and “*...countries don’t develop or advance because of aid.*” Interviewee #8 is not sure if “*those in government are clear to what our interests are.*” Interviewee #23 thinks that aid should be given “*more of a developmental cast...taking into account the capacity of countries to use aid, and the countries’ need for it.*” Interviewee #21 thinks aid is very important to our interests, but has been oversold in the security context and therefore, receives its fair share of criticism.

- **Education did not always emerge as the highest priority development issue, but when questioned, interviewees did believe that it was an important development issue.**

With a few exceptions, education did not emerge spontaneously as the element interviewees thought was the most important component of development assistance. When asked what development concerns and issues were important many cited governance, rule of law, and civil rights, some cited economic growth and education.

Interviewee #8 said, “*democratic governance around the world*” is most important followed by “*curing of poverty.*” Interviewee #14 acknowledged the importance of education but then spoke mostly about family planning.

Interviewee #6 was one of those who thought there were higher priorities, stating “*I think the road to development maximizing human potential and resources is very important. Obviously, to do that though, we must make a more stable political environment and infrastructure that’s adequate to support that kind of development. And I think that’s the United States’ best bang for the buck.*” Interviewee #16 expressed that priorities will depend on the particular country conditions: “*I hesitated when you asked that question because I mean there are some countries that are dealing with subsistence, that’s clearly a first priority in my mind.*”

However, when asked where education ranks as a development issue, six of the ten policy stakeholders ranked it highly. Many noted that education was important, but had to be tied to other development strategies. Interviewee #5 said, *“Education is ranked highly, although education has to be in the context of other development priorities. Otherwise it will not have much meaning.”* Interviewee #23 adds, *“If you just focus on education you won’t get anywhere, if you leave out education you probably won’t get very far either.”*

One interviewee, #11, did not believe education was an important component of a development strategy, but did note that *“if there is a [educational] necessity for development its basic education.”*

– **Policy stakeholders held different conceptions of the term “education.”**

When asked about how important education was as a development priority, some interviewees responded based on a concept that focused on higher education. Some had a concept that emphasized the formal education system, while others thought of a very broad concept of education that included life-skills, lifelong learning, and on-the-job training.

Interviewee #17 articulated a broad definition of education: *“When I think of education I think of it in the broadest sense, which includes, yes, support for the educational system, but also support for training and vocational and technical education that may be outside of a traditional education system.”* Because of this broad definition, the interviewee explained, *“Any development strategy at the national level, the macro strategy, has got to be supported by education in almost every way.”*



### ***Perceptions about the Definition of Basic Education and Knowledge of USAID Educational Programs***

- **Policy stakeholder definitions of basic education centered on reading, writing, and math.**

Many of the policy stakeholder definitions of basic education focused on reading writing and math. Six interviewees discussed concepts related to the “3Rs” when asked to define basic education and three of those used the specific term “literacy”. Three individuals mentioned “primary education” or education for people under age 15.

Some had a much broader definition, like #16 who said, *“It would be a process of empowerment with respect to finding a position of self in society and then developing skills that one might be able to translate into a livelihood.”*

- **Interviewees in the policy community knew very few specifics about USAID educational programs.**

All independent reviewers agreed that the lack of specific information about USAID education programs on the part of policy stakeholders was striking. Many interviewees confessed a lack of sufficient background or knowledge of overseas education programs and were reluctant to provide ideas/advice when pressed to get specific. Interviewee #6 stated, *“I’m not that familiar with US supported education initiatives abroad.”* Interviewee #11 states *“No, I don’t know any particulars.”* Even those demonstrating considerable knowledge about USAID and international development seemed to have a limited understanding of USAID’s education or basic education programs.

Interviewees were asked to name an example of a successful international educational initiative. Five of the ten interviewees could not identify any successful initiatives. Of the five that could answer, two spoke about initiatives with a higher education focus (“American Schools and Hospitals Abroad” and “American Universities in the Middle East”). One interviewee mentioned an elementary education program for girls in Cairo, one spoke about the Civitas International civics education in Bosnia, and the other spoke of reallocating school funds to elementary and secondary schools in Brazil.

### *Perceptions about Attributes and Outcomes of Effective Basic Education Initiatives*

- **A variety of qualities were cited as attributes of an “effective” basic education initiative.**

Policy stakeholders did not have well-defined opinions on the attributes of an effective investment in basic education. A variety of attributes were mentioned, but no pattern emerged. Below is the list of program attributes mentioned throughout the interviews.

- Sound academic basis
- Teaching broad concepts, not rote memory
- Focus on educational curriculum
- Innovative teaching methods
- US embassy support
- Emphasis on teacher training
- Capacity to recruit and keep quality educators
- Long-term goals
- Design aligned with local country context
- Compatibility with the rural environment and infrastructure

Many mentioned that education initiatives should be related to income-generating capacity so that education could be put to use. Some expressed concern about emigration from developing countries. Interviewee #6 mentioned, “*I would hope that education policy [would] make citizens secure in their ability to support themselves in their own country...*” Interviewee #21 described one US interest this way, “*The better the economic situation is in these countries the fewer the people who want to get to this country...*” Interviewee #18 spoke of technology and believes USAID could take advantage of the new opportunities computers and the Internet provide to education.

Some thought that countries must meet certain basic standards before educational assistance or other assistance could become useful. Interviewee #5 saw transparency and standards of governance as important, while Interviewee #11 saw the desire or receptivity of peoples and governments to change as essential.

Interviewee #2 mentioned that what is most important is opening minds: “*Programs that help instruct the youth of these countries in a way that shows them something maybe their parents don’t have a reference for, [are] going to be helpful.*”

- **Many interviewees cited economic outcomes that should result from educational initiatives; other desired outcomes were also cited.**

When asked what should be the outcomes or results of an investment in education, interviewees most commonly cited measures related to economic participation. Below is a list of suggested economic outcomes mentioned by interviewees.

- Increased ability to form businesses
- Increased involvement in the economic mainstream
- Improved ability to be self-supporting
- Improved ability to find jobs
- Improved ability to earn a livelihood
- Increased generation of economic activity
- Development of practical skills
- Improvement of knowledge of appropriate technology
- Increased generation of economic activity
- Nation experiences fuller employment

Some changes to the educational systems were stated as desired outcomes of investments, including reformed bureaucracy, reformed educational system, more trained teachers, and higher completion rate of basic education. Interviewee #23 believes the key to effectiveness in education is the reform of the education bureaucracy in developing countries: ministries of education and the teachers unions.

Others mentioned more human interest expectations such as people being able to read, having more hope, getting involved in civil service, and feeling connected to rest of the world.

#### **4.2 Policy Stakeholder Decision-Making Criteria**

The criteria below are those that policy stakeholders appear to use when evaluating support for educational initiatives. They have been developed based on reader analyses and a review of the interview transcripts.

- Initiative serves US interests and also serves a humanitarian purpose.
- Country has a transparent government, mostly free from corruption, or aid goes through non-government entity.
- Short-term and long-term measures of success are identified.
- Outcomes are related to economic development.
- Education programs are based on sound joint planning involving donor and recipient, and the program is appropriate for the local context.

### 4.3 Language and Values That Resonate with the Policy Stakeholders

Reviewers could not identify any particular language or values that resonated with the policy stakeholders. Although, in general the language used by policy stakeholders tended to be loftier than the simpler, more direct language used by the private sector.

Some of the colorful terms used by policy stakeholders include “*generate hope*,” “*vibrant economy*,” “*maximize human potential*,” “*empower*,” and “*economic mainstream*.”

The policy stakeholders also seemed to place a great value on the ability to self-teach, on employment, and on the need to balance education, economic, and public health development goals.

### 4.4 Implications of Policy Stakeholder Interviews

- **An opportunity exists to fill an information void regarding basic education in developing countries.**

The lack of information on the part of policy stakeholder interviewees indicates an opportunity. None of the interviewees had a strong impression, positive or negative, of USAID success in the area of education. At this point, USAID has an opportunity to fill that void with accurate information about the value of basic education in developing countries. The newly completed *USAID: Progress in Education, 2000-2001*, is a good start in accomplishing this objective.

- **USAID could investigate several communication channels for reaching the policy community.**

USAID needs to establish a public affairs strategy that carefully articulates its overall goals, methods, and results in education. Such a strategy would include almost all the concerns articulated by the policy stakeholders.

An effective USAID outreach program could start with those already interested in basic education. National interest, carefully and broadly construed, and an appeal to altruism could forge an alliance among disparate groups to support education activities of USAID.

Communication strategies could include circulating written materials as well as training USAID staff to be able to clearly articulate USAID’s education strategy. One reviewer suggested that all people at USAID should be able to provide a broad, 15-minute overview of what USAID is doing on basic education.

USAID should seek to increase personal connections with congressional staff and other policy stakeholders through briefings and one-on-one meetings. One reader, a senior-level congressional staff member, expressed concern that he has never been briefed on USAID’s basic education programs. On-site field trips would also help

key staff relate to and understand basic education goals, strategy, and results. Another reader suggested instituting regular lunchtime briefings on basic education for those who are interested in the topic.

- **A few illustrative case studies should be identified and developed to highlight and tell the story of USAID’s educational successes.**

Policy stakeholders seemed to want stories, examples, of what kind of basic education programs USAID supports. The identification and repetition of a few compelling stories could be an effective tool in creating a common picture of basic education in the minds of policy stakeholders. USAID could start by identifying a few stories to tell, possibly from *USAID: Progress in Education, 2000-2001*, which could be repeated through various communications to build understanding of the meaning and importance of basic education.

Communication could also emphasize basic education results to help policy stakeholders understand the success and challenges of basic education initiatives. Policy stakeholders expressed an interest in both long-term and short-term results. One, in particular, stated that they would like to know more about the increase in literacy rates.

A link between education and economic outcomes should be communicated, as much as possible, when describing intentions of the basic education program. It should be made clear that basic education is part of a larger, multi-faceted development strategy.

Lastly, some communicated that information distributed by USAID in the past has been difficult to understand. One reader explained that the information frequently contains a great deal of jargon and suggested making a concerted effort to use plain language that can be easily understood by those who are not experts in the education or development field.

## 5. CONCLUSION

The evolution of an increased partnership approach at USAID holds great promise to leverage resources, maximize efficient delivery of development assistance, and increase success of development initiatives. If the USAID Education Unit chooses to seek greater collaboration with the public and private sectors, it will need to develop proactive, cooperative relationships with these stakeholder groups. The information contained in this report will provide a starting point for understanding the perspectives of the private sector leaders and policy stakeholders. The process of increasing understanding between USAID and these external parties can be greatly elaborated and further clarified through long-term relationships with key individuals from the business and policy communities. It is clear that the opportunity for increased partnership on education initiatives exists, and if developed with a sensitive and cooperative approach, could be a significant asset in improving education for children in developing countries.



## APPENDIX B

### Interview Questions

#### PRIVATE SECTOR

1. Can you tell us about your company's involvement in international affairs?
2. Does your company participate in supporting international development or community philanthropy?
3. Do you support any education initiatives? If so, tell me about them. (Why did you decide to support those efforts?)
4. a) How does your support for education benefit your company/industry?  
b) (*If they don't support initiatives*) do you feel support for educational initiatives would benefit your company/industry?
5. Do you think that the U.S. Government should provide international assistance? (*If so*), what kinds of activities should the U.S. Government support?
6. Within that context, how would you rank education among the priorities? (*If they say education is not important then...*) Why would you rank education in that way? (If they ranked as #1 then, What would you say would be number 2 and 3?)
7. Some people talk about the need to help developing countries provide basic education for their citizens. How would you define basic education? (*if they don't cover the development of capacities...*) What capacities do you think should be developed?
8. How would you recommend the U.S. government spend its education dollars in developing countries? Why? (probe if needed)
9. How can the business community, at large, work with the US Government to support education in developing countries? (*if not covered....*) Do you think it would be worthwhile to support basic education?
10. If an opportunity arose, how would a company like yours make a decision about whether to partner with the U.S. Government in supporting education in developing countries?
11. What do you think are some of the most promising opportunities or trends for the future, in terms of public-partnerships to support education and international development?
12. Can you think of a successful example of public-partnerships to support education?

## POLICY STAKEHOLDERS

1. Can you talk briefly about your views on US engagement in foreign assistance? Do you support it and why?
2. How relevant are US interests to providing support for international development?
3. What development concerns and issues do you think are key for international development?
4. How would you rank education among other development priorities? (If not addressed, how would it rank among priorities like health, economic growth, agriculture, environment, etc.)
5. How would you define the term “basic education” within the context of US foreign assistance? What capacities should be developed through a basic education program?
6. Do you think US support of education abroad contributes to US national security?
7. What do you think would be the attributes of an effective investment in education abroad?
8. What do you see as the expected outcomes or results of US-supported education activities?
9. By those measures, do you think US supported education activities are effective? How could they become more effective?
10. Can you tell us about example of a successful or unsuccessful US-supported education activity abroad? Where do you get information on US Supported education programs in developing countries?