



USAID CATALYZE

WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT

USAID CATALYZE, implemented by Palladium, mobilizes private capital through blended finance initiatives to meet development goals. The United Nations' Sustainable Development Goal 8 sets out to promote inclusive and sustainable economic growth, employment, and decent work for all. In partnership with the private sector, USAID CATALYZE helps small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs), including non-state schools, accelerate fair and inclusive progress, productivity, and prosperity through a skilled, educated, and competitive workforce.

Using performance-based incentives, we design blended finance solutions to develop sustainable investments in businesses in sectors traditionally cut off from affordable and adequate financing. Many of these sectors, such as education, early childhood care and development, and agriculture, employ high numbers of women and youth. USAID CATALYZE uses a gender-lens investing approach to ensure viable enterprises access the financing they need to grow their business and expand opportunities for youth and women. We also partner with the private sector and local stakeholders to prepare women and youth for the workforce through on-the-job training, technical vocational training, and more.

WHAT WE DO

WORKFORCE NEEDS, GAPS, AND SYSTEMS EVALUATIONS

CATALYZE analyzes labor markets and skills gaps and assesses non-state education quality, access, and improvements in learning outcomes. We partner with education institutions, employers, and community-based organizations to develop effective workforce development strategies and evaluate promising programs for women and youth. We've conducted market assessments for seven countries in sub-Saharan Africa on critical education and finance challenges and opportunities.

EDUCATION, WORK LEARNING, JOB AND SKILLS Training

CATALYZE supports workers for today and tomorrow's labor markets through childhood education, primary and secondary school education, vocational and technical training, job training, and integrated work and learning programs. In Ethiopia, we fill labor gaps in partnership with private sector companies, designing tailor-made training programs to impart specific vocational skills to young unemployed (or underemployed) adults, adults seeking requalification, and employed adults looking for additional qualifications to become eligible for better jobs. We also help ensure non-state schools are equipped to deliver quality teaching and learning and strengthen links between education and employment. In Rwanda, we researched the financial needs of early childhood development (ECD) and Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) centers and established a fund mechanism that enables TVET graduates to pay back loans via a percentage of their employment income upon graduation.

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

From teacher-mentorships and school-based entrepreneurship to internships and career development centers, CATALYZE forges partnerships with the private sector to prepare workers for life-sustaining jobs and careers. We offer networking opportunities and support professional development through leadership and management training to school leaders and teachers to improve education quality and learning outcomes. Through our partner Technical Business Advisory Service Providers in the Western Balkans, CATALYZE trains SMEs on how to meet international standards and obtain certifications for export and guides them on product development and business development.

JOB PLACEMENT

CATALYZE collaborates with top businesses and SMEs in growth sectors to connect job seekers with employers and businesses with skilled employees. In Sri Lanka, our CATALYZE Returnship Program encourages businesses to rehire female professionals in the ICT sector who took a career sabbatical or maternity leave. Our networking and partnerships with the private sector have led to the development of job boards, job websites, and talent development associations, which connect service providers and businesses engaged in youth skill development and job placement. For example, in Ethiopia we awarded a grant to a local organization that facilitated job matching for 20,000 youth and women in agriculture both through wage labor and self-employment.

PRIVATE CAPITAL MOBILIZATION

We partner with business advisory service providers on performance-based awards to help entrepreneurs learn how to choose the most suitable financing for their business and teach them how to navigate the loan process. Through pay-for-results subawards to local partners, we improve the competitiveness of W-SMEs and the non-state education sector, including low-fee private schools, skills development centers, early childhood development centers, and other education enterprises through financial training and improved management strategies. In turn, this training helps SMEs access the capital they need to prosper. In Tanzania, our partners are helping financial institutions to add education sector loan products to their portfolios. CATALYZE is also hiring youth as transaction advisors, developing a pipeline of youth employable by financial intermediaries, and improving SME lending criteria to prioritize youth. In Iraq, CATALYZE is partnering with the private sector to expand youth employment, through networking opportunities and learning events.

RESILIENCY IN THE WORKFORCE

Businesses worldwide face ongoing challenges due to Russia's war in Ukraine and post COVID. CATALYZE builds the resiliency of SMEs to withstand such shocks through support systems, including grants and capital injections, that help businesses retain and hire workers. In Sri Lanka, we use supply chain financing facilities in partnership with a major retail grocery chain to unlock immediate working capital for suppliers. This helps suppliers meet critical financial needs and sustain and growth their workforce uninterrupted, thereby boosting food security and job security.

TO LEARN MORE ABOUT OUR PROJECT ACTIVITIES, VISIT [USAID CATALYZE](#) OR CONTACT: CATALYZE.COMMS@THEPALLADIUMGROUP.COM

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