Workforce Development

Boosting Skills, Workforce Quality and Employment

Abt Associates designs, executes and evaluates workforce development programs, policies and systems. We identify best practices to help workers find and retain jobs and advance in a career. Our experts partner with government agencies, education institutions, employers and community-based organizations to develop effective workforce strategies. They include everything from job search, reemployment and apprenticeships to career pathways, health workforce strengthening and youth empowerment.

In Haiti, for example, the Abt-led U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) Health Finance and Governance project partnered with the Ministry of Health to strengthen the accreditation of private nursing schools and increase the quality of the nursing workforce.

Our evaluation of Year Up, a training program for young adults that was part of the Pathways for Advancing Careers and Education (PACE) study, found it increased participants’ average quarterly earnings by more than 50 percent in the first year and a half. These are the largest gains in earnings measured to date in random assignment studies of workforce programs for youth and adults.

“The PACE evaluation validates what we’ve seen firsthand... Year Up is having a material impact on young adults seeking meaningful employment opportunities.”

Jeff Weiner, CEO, LinkedIn
Economic Growth and Mobility

Expanding Inclusive Trade, Investment and Entrepreneurship

Abt experts in economic growth and mobility ensure that women and men operating at the margins of society share in the benefits of economic development across the globe. Our work helps create inclusive markets, stronger agriculture value chains, sound trade policy, business-enabling environments and investment and access to credit for small and medium enterprises (SMEs).

Abt leads the Australian Aid-funded Investing in Women Initiative to expand women entrepreneurs’ access to—and control over—economic resources. The project partners with large employers to prioritize gender equality in the workplace and works with impact investors to expand women’s access to capital. We are partnering with Root Capital, which recently received $2 million from the project for the initial phase of a planned 10-year program focusing on lending to women-led agricultural SMEs in Indonesia, the Philippines and Vietnam.

For the USAID-funded West Africa Trade and Investment Hub, we bridged skills and investment gaps for West African firms in the agriculture and apparel sector.

“The Root Capital-Abt partnership is a major step forward for the impact investing and agricultural finance sectors. Together with Investing in Women, we will catalyze the growth of women-led businesses throughout Southeast Asia—and in so doing, will significantly improve the livelihoods of both women and men in rural communities.”

Willy Foote, Root Capital’s Founder and CEO

UNDER THE WEST AFRICA TRADE AND INVESTMENT HUB ABT FACILITATED:

$100 MILLION in investments
$136 MILLION in exports
$174 MILLION in sales and generated more than 20,000 NEW JOBS
Economic Well-being

Strengthening Work Incentives and Supports

Disability benefits, food and cash assistance, social insurance and other government programs can improve the well-being of people who face challenges to earning enough to support themselves and their families. Our research and technical assistance focus on removing program disincentives to work and identifying effective employment strategies for participants. That’s why, for example, we’re helping the U.S. Department of Labor learn which interventions can most effectively keep workers with disabilities at their jobs or help them return to the workforce.

For the Social Security Administration, we are implementing and evaluating national demonstrations to test alternative federal disability benefit rules intended to encourage work. The Benefit Offset National Demonstration (BOND) is one of the largest social experiments ever conducted, with a combined research sample of nearly 1 million federal disability beneficiaries.

Additionally, we explore how family and medical leave policies can help new parents, caregivers and people experiencing health issues protect their jobs and maintain connections to the workforce.

“BOND provides robust, nationally representative, causal evidence about how an alternative benefit policy affects the earnings and benefits of Social Security Disability Insurance recipients.”

Michelle Wood, Abt Principal Associate and BOND Project Director
Abt has been at the forefront of rigorous workforce development research and evaluation for more than 30 years. Our studies and technical assistance have illuminated groundbreaking findings, helped people gain skills for family-sustaining jobs and strengthened the healthcare workforce. They have increased employment and self-sufficiency for those with disabilities and other barriers to employment and improved cash and food assistance and social insurance.

But we don’t stop there. To achieve inclusive economic growth, we have focused on small business financial services, industry sector needs assessments, women’s economic empowerment, working conditions and the promotion of trade and investment. That inclusive perspective, combined with broad and deep multi-disciplinary expertise, is at the heart of what we do.
Abt Associates is an engine for social impact, dedicated to moving people from vulnerability to security. Harnessing the power of data and our experts’ grounded insights, we provide research, consulting and technical services globally in the areas of health, environmental and social policy, technology and international development.