EQUIP3 / YOUTH TRUST NEWSLETTER

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Academy for Educational Development *
Catholic Relief Services * International Council on National Youth Policy *
International Youth Foundation * National Youth Employment Coalition *
National Youth Leadership Council *
Opportunities Industrialization Centers International * Partners of the Americas *
Plan International Childreach *
Seasame Workshop *
Streetkids International * World Learning

In this article:

EQUIP3 / Youth Trust is a USAID-funded mechanism created to improve the quality of education and learning opportunities for youth and young adults, with specific expertise in addressing livelihood preparation, youth assessment, and youth involvement. EQUIP3 / Youth Trust is comprised of the Education Development Center, Inc. and 12 partners, who are a cohesive group with diversified capacities and areas of expertise.

Core Award Activities

1. Youth Participation
To foster positive and meaningful youth participation in development programming, EQUIP3 / Youth Trust articulates its approach and activities around key components that aim both to better focus on what youth can do and to create an environment conducive to youth participation.

Members of the Youth Advisory Committee have been working on a survey of national youth councils in the Philippines, Uganda, Pakistan, Morocco, Jordan and Palestine. Their findings will be integrated into a report outlining the elements of a successful youth council infrastructure. The two-year period of service for the first YAC cohort is drawing to an end. Nomination guidelines and forms for the upcoming selection process will be circulated to consortium members starting on May 1st.

2. Youth Assessments
Angola
A youth assessment was carried out in Angola to identify program options in holistic youth development. The program would potentially center on creating sustainable livelihoods for youth and could include components that focus on HIV/AIDS education, skills building, and linkages to families, communities and other opportunities for constructive civic engagement. In February 2006 EQUIP3 sent Mr. Ramon Balestino to Angola as a consultant for the assessment.

3. Collaborative Inquiry Program
In March 2006 a proposal was submitted to the World Bank and to USAID to assist in implementing a research study to examine what makes large-scale non-formal education programs successful. The proposed research would focus on three programs:

(i) The National Youth Service Program in Jamaica offers an opportunity for at-risk Jamaican youth to gain important life skills, contribute to civil society, and gain employment skills by participating in a structured three-month internship program.
Core Award Activities, continued

3. Collaborative Inquiry Program
(ii) The Alternative Learning System Program in the Philippines offers out-of-school youth an opportunity to master (through a flexible modular learning program) core literacy, numeracy, and employability skills and also gain an elementary or secondary school certificate.
(iii) The Umsobomvu Youth Fund in South Africa provides out-of-school, unemployed youth with career counseling and access to real jobs and livelihood opportunities.

Findings from the study of these three programs would be used to identify elements in programs that have made them successful to assess their sustainability and replicability.

4. Making the Case for Investing in Out-of-School Youth

A full length version of the paper will be available on the EQUIP3 website in spring 2006. The paper makes the case for greater investment in programs and policies to address the needs of out-of-school and un- or underemployed youth in developing countries. It asserts that engaging the resources and human capital of out-of-school and unemployed youth is one of the most important issues many countries face, and failing to do so has significant consequences for a country’s economic growth, political stability, and social cohesion.

The research found that for large scale impact, the programs and policies should concentrate on achieving the following results with and for young people:
(i) Greater access to relevant and high quality education and training opportunities;
(ii) Increased ability to access positive employment opportunities and to acquire marketable skills and knowledge;
(iii) Greater participation as agents of change within society, enabling youth to make decisions that affect their lives and society as a whole Significant strides can be made towards achieving these results by investing in the expansion and strengthening of programs that provide quality non-formal education; employment preparation and opportunities; engagement in community service and civil participation.

5. Youth Community of Practice

The Youth Community of Practice provides a forum for professionals and practitioners at USAID and its partner organizations to gather, consolidate, archive, disseminate and exchange information, knowledge, ideas and best practices, particularly related to the incorporation of youth participation in USAID development projects. The Youth Community of Practice consists of an informal body of volunteer members, reached through a global list serve and Washington-based chapter. Both forums include USAID staff, youth practitioners outside of the Agency, and youth themselves.

In order to accelerate the flow of information in the future, Youth Community of Practice’s management has been transferred to Gustavo Payan and Alejandra Bonifaz. During this transition, it has been found that co-managing this platform allows for prompt responses to participants.

6. Journal of Education for International Development

The first 2006 issue of JEID can now be read online at www.EQUIP123.net/JEID. The six articles in this volume, “Moving From Access to Relevance,” examine practical education programs at both the global and local scale.

Youth development practitioners are encouraged to submit article for upcoming issues. Issue 2:2 is a general issue which will include a variety of articles examining new knowledge and understanding in the field of international education in development. Issue 2:3 will focus on aspects of early childhood development. Interested contributors are encouraged to visit the JEID website for further details.
The Education for All/Youth Challenge Grant Program (EFA) was created to build the capacity of organizations and agencies to provide relevant skills training for out-of-school youth. It helps USAID Missions analyze and strategically address youth basic education and livelihood issues. The EFA program also helps to build partnerships that address youth issues in an integrated and creative manner. The program is active in three countries:

**Jamaica: Addressing urban boys’ education and employment challenges**
The Jamaica project targets unattached young men in troubled communities. The goal is to provide them with positive development opportunities in support of their acquisition of the core livelihood assets and key livelihood capabilities required to prepare and engage them in positive roles in the world of work, family and community life.

Over the past three months, the program has focused on selecting the implementing organization and identification of the project site for the EFA Jamaica. After a rigorous application and review process, People’s Action for Community Transformation (PACT) was selected as the implementing organization. The project site, Grants Pen, was selected after consultations with USAID and government officials because the high rates of disengaged youth present a potential for effective cross-sector work with other USAID projects in the area.

**Uganda: Using sports as a convening mechanism for peace building and to increase primary school enrollment.**
On April 19, 2006, USAID/Uganda issued the Award for the EFA Youth Challenge Grant Program in Uganda. The new award will allow the full implementation of this sports-based project, subcontracted to The Kids League, for in-school and out-of-school youth in the districts of Kumi and Lira.

Prior to this Award, Mr. David James-Wilson conducted a second site visit in January 2006, during which he provided technical assistance to TKL on the design, development and delivery of Monitoring and Evaluation tools and worked with TKL staff to finalize the operational budgets and project implementation plan. Additionally, at the Mission’s request, a Branding Strategy was developed to ensure that the USAID logo and tagline are included in all project activities and materials.

**South Africa: Adapting a viable US youth-service model on African context to address employment, civic engagement and education issues.**
City Year South Africa (CYSoA) started its second year of implementation with growth on various fronts. Eight new partner schools joined the program this year, bringing the total number of service partners to 15. The 2006 Service Program was launched with 200 service leaders, a 70% growth from the previous year, committed to a full year of service in their communities. New members were officially welcomed during an Opening Day Ceremony on March 24, to which more than 200 guests attended, including community members and sponsors.

For more information, please contact Alejandra Bonifaz, abonifaz@edc.org
West Bank/Gaza: Palestinian Youth Empowerment Program

The West Bank/Gaza program, Ruwwad is currently undergoing a major programmatic transformation due to the political shifts in Palestine. In response to changes in the Palestinian government, USAID has shifted their mandate to provide only humanitarian support to the Palestinian people. Ruwwad is currently working with USAID to adopt its youth program to support the delivery of this humanitarian aid.

Ruwwad was originally designed to address USAID Strategic Objective 13 of "Enhancing Palestinian Human Capital." The program was set up to provide, enhance and facilitate positive opportunities for youth to engage in productive roles in building a viable Palestinian economy and society. The goal of the Ruwwad program is to demonstrate sustainable youth engagement in career development, family life and civil society by engaging both in-school and out-of-school youth.

Initially, Ruwwad was designed based on a rapid appraisal of the current situation of Palestinian youth, conducted in July and August, 2005. The appraisal lens focused on the strengths and assets of youth and the institutions that serve them, respecting the ways in which young Palestinians already contribute to family and community well-being.

For more information, please contact: Chuck Wattles, cwattles@edc.org

Recent Highlights

•Project staff and youth participants are committed to supporting USAID’s humanitarian assistance to the Palestinian people. Ruwwad is in communication with USAID to review program goals and structure.

•At the beginning of 2006, four subgrants were awarded to youth serving organizations for pilot projects including: an anti-smoking campaign, a sports festival, enhanced youth participation in the elections, and professional media training for youth to communicate youth issues through short documentaries.

•In winter 2005, a Ruwwad Youth Forum was established to facilitate workshops on youth leadership issues.

Haitian: Out of School Youth Livelihood Initiative / IDEJEN

In October 2003 the “Haitian Out-of-School Youth Livelihood Initiative: IDEJEN” was launched by EQUIP3 with support from USAID. The project is designed as a learning project to better understand the situation of out-of-school youth, age 15-20, in Haiti and the approaches for education and livelihood preparation that can be offered to this target group.

The main objectives of the IDEJEN project are:
1. Strengthen organizations who work with youth, to prepare youth for a livelihood.
2. Increase the level of basic education and technical skills of out-of-school youth between the ages of 15 and 20 years.
3. Apply lessons learned from starter activities to a long-term strategy for serving out-of-school youth so they can earn a livelihood and improve their economic condition.
4. Involve youth in conducting each phase of the project, including the needs assessment, design, implementation and monitoring and evaluation.

The project includes an ongoing assessment of the out-of-school youth population, their needs and assets, the services available in education and livelihood preparation, and the economic opportunities for this group. IDEJEN is currently testing its approach to livelihood accompaniment with 650 youth.

For more information about this project, please contact: Melanie Beauvy, mbeauvy@edc.org

Recent Highlights

•In March 2006, 12 Youth Centers participated in a 10 day entrepreneurship training, facilitated by Street Kids International.

•This spring, 450 youth will graduate from the program, entering a 6 month livelihood accompaniment phase. This will include small business creation, job placement, internships, and continuing education programs.

•Also in March 2006, Fondation L’Avenir received positive media coverage for the launch of the first cyber center.
The Literacy and Community Empowerment Program (LCEP) provides rural Afghan communities with tools to identify and address their strengths and challenges, develop effective institutions for local governance, and increase economic productivity. It is a community driven program that supports the articulated learning needs of Afghan communities in the areas of literacy, governance, and economic empowerment. The program also includes strategies to ensure women’s full participation.

The two main goals of the program are to: enhance the role of women and young people to participate in the change process through increased literacy and skills for income-generation, and to strengthen democratically-elected institutions of civil society that give a greater voice to women and young adults, and that deepen grass-roots participatory governance.

For more information, please contact Cornelia Janke, cjanke@edc.org

Recent Highlights

- The program has been expanded to three additional districts in the existing provinces of operation (Bamyan, Parwan, and Heart) and added one district to two new provinces (Farah and Kandahar).
- LCEP staff have facilitated four program implementation trainings.
- District managers participated in a three day exchange visit in Bagram. The visited introduced managers to the Savings and Investment Component of the program and allowed managers to share best practices to date.
- The number of youth committees and community activities carried out by the committees continues to grow.

Story from the Field

Creating New Opportunities for Out-of-School Youth in Haiti

Two years ago a pastor on a church mission to Belle-Anse, Haiti came to visit Jesula Jerila’s parents. Jesula’s family is very poor – her mother is a coffee merchant and her father a gardener. Despite their poverty, the pastor spoke politely with her parents and was kind to her and her twelve siblings. The priest offered to help the family by taking two of their children.

The next day, Jesula’s parents sent her and her older sister to Port-au-Prince with the pastor. She and her sister were split up to work in two different homes as restaveks. Restaveks are child servants who are bound to servitude and frequently denied their right to education. It is such a norm in poor communities across Haiti that many are never aware of their rights.

Jesula went to live with Madame P in Petit Place Cazeau, and her sister went to work for a family in Petionville. Madame P’s family is also poor and doesn’t earn enough to provide for all of the family. Jesula is responsible for caring for the eight children, hand-washing the laundry, mopping, cleaning, and making food. She alone does all the household chores, and when she is finally finished for the day she finds a place to sleep on the floor. On the days that there is not enough to eat, she goes to sleep hungry. Despite her misery, Jesula remains loyal to the family, who she says have never really mistreated her, but admits that he is not happy to be living with them. Since leaving her family two years ago, she has not once seen her sister or family, but continues to see the pastor each week at the Evangelist Church. She misses her parents but will not go back to them because she doesn’t want to be a burden.
Administrative Updates

Staff Changes
Due to USAID budget cuts in fiscal year 2006, EQUIP3 has experienced a reduction in this years obligated funds. To accommodate this dramatic and unforeseen change in the core budget, EQUIP3 has had to make some difficult changes to the project activities. After many thoughtful reviews, it was realized that the budget cuts also affected the project team. EQUIP3 has eliminated the positions of Associate Director for Program Development, Knowledge Management and Communications Coordinator, and has substantially reduced the time of the M&E Specialist.

Travel
• On April 3-13 Melanie Beauvy traveled to Haiti to monitor key IDEJEN activities, to meet with USAID mission representatives, and to prepare for the upcoming IDEJEN retreat in June.
• On March 21 – April 4, David Wilson, Nancy Devine and Brenda Bell traveled to the Philippines to conduct a youth assessment.
• On April 18-28, David Wilson and Nancy Devine participated in a follow up trip to the Philippines to lead a design/development workshop for local partners.
• On March 27-29, Micheline Hjardemaal, the Haiti financial manager, traveled to Newton to attend a financial management training.

Planned Trainings
• The next Youth Assessment one-day training is in the process of being planned, but no date has been set as of yet.
• The Annual Retreat for the Haiti EDJEN project is planned for the week of June 12 in Haiti.
• A USAID Branding and Marking training is set for EQUIPs Chiefs of Party in South Africa this July.

Jesula was excited to learn about the programs at the Rocher d’Horeb, a USAID funded youth centre part of the IDEJEN project, from another young girl in the community, and received permission from Madame P to be able to participate. The youngest of Madame P’s children attend school at the same time that Jesula goes to the centre, so there is no conflict with her responsibilities to care for the youngest children.

At the IDEJEN centre she attends reading and writing classes and is learning how to sew and how to do macramae. She wants to finish school and sees that learning how to sew is her key to living independently. Once she finishes the program, she plans to look for work in a factory, and then rent a small house for herself. Maybe, then, she’ll have the courage to ask the pastor where her sister is and they can be together again. She’s confident: “I’ll find my own route! I am proud of myself for the things that I do and because I work hard. I don’t get into trouble like other kids who are on the streets, and I respect people very much. It is a great chance for me to be going to the centre.”