**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

Fostering positive and meaningful youth participation in development programming.

The YAC held a conference call on the 10th of January to discuss how their work connects to EQUIP3 initiatives.

#### 2. Youth Community of Practice (YCOP)

Linking professionals and practitioners to help design more effective, sustainable youth programs, and promote youth participation.

The USAID Youth Community of Practice (YCoP), managed by EQUIP3, hosted a brownbag presentation featuring Abdinasir Nur of the Somali Youth for Peace and Democracy at USAID in December 2006.

In addition to hosting events, the YCoP manages a listserv that continues to provide information related to youth issues and best practices in youth programming to a community of over 260 members, including USAID staff, practitioners, NGO representatives, and young people themselves.

To join YCOP Links, contact Chuck Wattles at cwattles@edc.org, or Lisa Austin at laustin@edc.org.

#### 3. EQUIP3 Website

Under Leader Award Activities:

- Model program descriptions now available on the website. These program descriptions are illustrative examples of EQUIP3's capacity to design and execute programs in support of youth in many different contexts.

- A resources page that contains publications and other resources developed by EQUIP3 has also been added to the website.

Under Associate Awards Activities:

- The *Haiti* page has been updated with the activities planned for the coming two years. Products from the first years and lessons learned have been added to the page.

### 4. Expert Group Meeting on Young People in Emergency and Transition Situations

Melanie Beauvy, Associate Director for Youth Involvement, was invited to and attended an Expert Group Meeting on Young People in Emergency and Transition Situations sponsored by UNICEF. The meeting took place in New York, 11 to 13 December, 2006 at the Coleman Center.
The Cross-Sectoral Youth (CSY) Program has been moving forward by establishing communication and a working relationship with USAID/India during December and conducting a CSY Technical Planning Workshop in preparation for the field visit to India at the end of January.

Technical Planning Workshop
An all-day CSY Technical Planning Meeting took place on January 4th in Boston. During this event, the technical team developed a common vision, solidified the CSY Framework, and discussed its main components.

CSY India Field Visit
The CSY technical team, led by Alejandra Bonifaz and David James Wilson, visited India this January to work with the USAID/India Mission and the implementing partner organization, Center for Urban and Regional Excellence (CURE), to design the CSY India component and to coordinate individual and joint contributions to the project. CSY India will build upon the existing Cross-Cutting Agra Project (CAP) that aims to increase livelihood opportunities for youth and their communities around an alternative Heritage Walk that promotes historical monuments around 5 slum communities across the river behind the world-famous Taj Mahal, a region of Agra that is often overlooked.

The trip began with an engagement session with CURE and USAID/India. This initial session served as a successful tone-setting activity, as these various stakeholders prepared for open and cross-sectoral collaboration. Following this meeting, the team organized field visits to better understand the many components of the project and to conduct a few youth focus groups to collect input directly from youth. The team also consulted with local authorities, who provided valuable insights to the project and future direction. Building upon the work during the first days, the entire team (including CURE and USAID/India) engaged in a two-day project design session to identify the overall direction and specific areas of focus for the CSY India project as a continuation and deepening of CAP. The next steps are to finalize the project description and issue a subgrant to CURE to start field activities of CSY India.

Looking Forward
As part of the continued effort to engage additional USAID country Missions in the CSY Program, a formal solicitation will be issued by USAID Washington to a pre-selected list of country Missions. The goal is to identify country Missions that are interested in strengthening their approach to cross-sectoral youth programming through a project implementation activity or a youth assessment.

For more information please contact Alejandra Bonifaz, abonifaz@edc.org
Education for All / Youth Challenge Grant Program

Generating knowledge by supporting cross-sectoral partnerships that apply innovative non-formal educational approaches to addressing basic education.

Sharing & Learning Component
The Learning & Sharing Component of the EFA Youth Challenge Grant Program continued during December and January with its discussion series among implementing partners of EFA Jamaica, EFA South Africa, and EFA Uganda, who are interested in learning from one another and discussing best practices.

The conversation in December focused on Project Expansion & Replication. Participants started this session by explaining how replication and expansion play a role in each project and continued by discussing key aspects that should be considered when planning to expand or replicate a similar project. Participants discussed the different ways in which ‘expansion’ occurs. The project may increase the number of participants in one same location, grow implementation into other communities, and/or incorporate additional activities to the scope of the project. Based on field experience, a common theme through the discussion was the importance of setting clear expectations with all stakeholders from the beginning (families, local community, private sector, etc.) and building trust in order to generate sufficient buy-in to allow the project to run and then expand.

In January, the discussion focused on “Support & Motivation for Project Participants.” During a reflection session on the level of participants’ motivation in each EFA project, participants discussed concrete strategies that worked or didn’t work during the past year. Some of the underlying questions included “How much of participants’ motivation is intrinsic and how much is extrinsic?” “What is the desired balance?” “To what degree can the project influence these types of motivation among participants?”

The next teleconference is scheduled to occur at the end of February.

EFA Jamaica – Panel Discussion on the Role of Young Men in Reducing Gender Violence
In December of 2006, EFA Jamaica contributed to a panel discussion on the Role of Young Men in Reducing Gender Violence. This event, which was part of the 16-Day Activism Against Gender Violence organized by USAID Washington, highlighted programs that work to strengthen the ability of young men to prevent violence against women and form relationships that are based on mutual respect instead of power and violence.

One of three invited panelists, Alejandra Bonifaz of Education Development Center (EDC) presented the work of the EFA Jamaica project and described how this cross-sectoral youth project is using the “3 E’s” approach, which focuses on education, example, and encouragement in order to foster positive gender attitudes among young men in an inner city community with high rates of violence.
West Bank/Gaza: Palestinian Youth Empowerment Program

Empowering youth in the West Bank and Gaza through community involvement in humanitarian services, in preparation for active, productive roles in the working world, civil society and family life.

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

EQuALLS Phase 2 Program: Access to Education in the Philippines

Partnering to strengthen and increase access to quality education and livelihood skills in selected areas of the Philippines, particularly those most affected by conflict and poverty.

Bolstering community support for education

Increased community support for improved education in the Autonomous Region of Muslim Mindanao (ARMM) is a key element of USAID-funded Education Quality and Access for Learning and Livelihood Skills (EQuALLS). Some 12,000 parents from 8 municipalities across the Muslim-populated ARMM region have been engaged through program activities enabling parents to play a critical role in supporting education improvement. A 50% percent increase in parental involvement has been noted as a result of engagement in project activities. Parents have taken practical steps to help their children perform better in school, and have started working together with the local government on education improvement efforts. 2,400 parents have committed to mentor other parents and take steps to organize community support for education improvement. USAID, through EQuALLS, is building the capacity of local communities to implement and sustain education improvement in Mindanao.

For more information, please contact Nancy Devine, ndevine@edc.org.
Providing education and livelihood preparation opportunities to out-of-school youth in Haiti, and research to inform the process.

Mapping of new areas

During the week of December 4-8th former youthmappers and field agents, representing seven geographic departments, came together for a training-of-trainers facilitated by Raul Ratcliffe of AED. These trainers then worked with youth mappers in four new departments, Petit Goave and Miragoane; St. Marc and Gonaives; Cayes; and Cap Haitien, during the week of the 18th, with the mapping taking place late December to mid-January.

IDEJEN staff have been visiting the new areas to identify Community Based Organizations to serve as youth centers. The application selection process started in January and is continuing through February.

Senator Nelson of Florida visits CIDE

On Saturday, January 13th, Senator Nelson (D-FL) visited the IDEJEN center at CIDE. During his visit, he spent time observing the youth during their vocational training and had the opportunity to hear their life stories.

Website

The page was updated with the new activities for the coming two years, as well as some products and lessons learned from the first years of activities. Please visit www.equip123.net/equip3/haiti for more information.

For more information, please contact Melanie Beauvy, mbeauvy@edc.org

Afghanistan Literacy and Community Empowerment

The LCEP program officially ended on December 31, 2006, after 30 months of implementation. Staff are currently writing up final reports. In addition, the data collection phase of the Afghanistan Applied Research Study also concluded in December. Data entry and analysis are currently underway.

Administrative Updates

Travel

David James-Wilson and Alejandra Bonifaz, EDC, were in India in January 2007. Raul Ratcliff, AED, was in Haiti in December 2006.