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.

   EQUIP3 is pursuing its research on Youth Councils, involving the Youth Advisory Committee, Lisa Austin and EQUIP3 new intern, Anike Akridge.

2. Youth Community of Practice (YCOP)
   Linking professionals and practitioners to help design more effective, sustainable youth programs, and promote youth participation.

   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.

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.
Associate Award Activities

Cross-Sectoral Youth Project

Advancing cross-sectoral youth programming among USAID bureaus and field missions.

The Cross-Sectoral Youth (CSY) Program is moving forward with the final design of the CSY India project. CSY India will build upon the existing Cross-Cutting Agra Project (CAP) that has been implemented by the Center for Urban and Regional Excellence (CURE) with USAID support since 2005. During a 12-month period, CSY India will expand and deepen the work of CAP, which aims to increase livelihood opportunities for youth and their communities around an alternative Heritage Trail promoting historical monuments in 5 slum communities behind the world-famous Taj Mahal.

The design process during February continues the work that was initiated in late January during the field visit conducted by the CSY technical team, Alejandra Bonifaz and David James Wilson. Design sessions facilitated by the CSY technical team during the field visit included USAID partners as well as local and headquarters staff from CURE and generated a diverse set of ideas that enhanced the design. Similarly, consultations at the community level and targeted focus groups with participating young men and women contributed of the project design. As a result, the final project design of CSY India hopes to successfully incorporate input collected from the various partners.

Looking Forward

In the next month, the CSY Program hopes to extend an invitation to USAID country Missions to become involved in this multi-country. 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 (EFA) Youth Challenge Grant Program – Close-out Strategies

It is often the case that projects end with no opportunity to reflect on the process, apart from the standard programmatic and financial reporting. In light of the learning spirit of the EFA Youth Challenge Grant Initiative, EQUIP3/EDC wanted to ensure that we have the opportunity to look back and gather some lessons learned. The design and implementation of a close-out strategy will be essential to properly close each project cycle.

EFA Jamaica and EFA Uganda have entered their last quarter of project implementation and EFA South Africa has ended in 2006. So, February has focused on the design and planning of project close-out strategies for each project.

EQUIP3/EDC has been planning a close-out meeting between City Year South Africa (CYSoA) and USAID/South Africa to take place in March and to be facilitated by EQUIP3/EDC’s representative Brenda Bell. The main goal of this meeting is to look back and revisit the main lessons learned during the implementation period and openly discuss success and challenges. This will involve a focused discussion on a lessons learned document produced to share specific aspects of the adaptation process of the City Year program into a South African context, a topic that was explored throughout this project.

Similar close-out activities are being planned for EFA Uganda. The implementing partner organization The Kids League (TKL) has been working closely with EQUIP3/EDC on identifying opportunities to share their experience incorporating a Monitoring & Evaluation Approach that builds upon the 40 development assets, from the Search Institute. A meeting at EDC in Boston and another one in USAID Washington are being planned for March.

Similarly, a close-out strategy for EFA Jamaica will be developed jointly with the implementing partner organization PACT and USAID/Jamaica in order to be carried out in the upcoming months. This may include (i) the facilitation of meetings with a variety of local partners, including the private sector; (ii) a strategy to use media at the local level; and (iii) the identification of opportunities to share lessons learned with a greater audience.

While February has been a planning and design month for the EFA projects, it is expected that the following three months will be active in the implementation of close-out strategies in order to complete each of the three project cycles.

For more information please contact Alejandra Bonifaz, abonifaz@edc.org.

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 more information please contact Chuck Wattles, cwattles@edc.org.
EQuALLS Phase 2 Program: Access to Education in the Philippines

Partnersing 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.

The future now looks brighter for out-of-school youth in Muslim Mindanao

Six thousand out-of-school children and youth (OSCY) now have more options on future career when they graduate in March from the Alternative Learning System (ALS) program implemented by EDC’s Education Quality and Access for Learning and Livelihood Skills (EQuALLS) Program in the Philippines.

The ALS program is participated in by 24 municipalities in the Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao, and the cities of Marawi, Zamboanga, and Isabela. It is an innovative 10-month literacy and livelihood skills program that prepares OSCY for reintegration into formal educational system or self-employment and employment with local industries. Most of EQuALLS’ ALS learners are seeking out a living for their families.

In Paglat, Maguindanao Mayor Abdulkarim Langkuno directly thanked the American people for giving 208 Muslim OSCY in the municipality an opportunity to strengthen their knowledge of English, math and science and gain relevant lifeskills through the ALS program. This, he said, is the first step to land them in jobs after they undergo the skills-specific training required by Saudi Arabian and Organization of Islamic Conference employers with whom the mayor has coordinated for job placement. He then thanked the Notre Dame University of Marbel for implementing the ALS and helping the municipality manage its out-of-school youth program.

For a long time, the municipality of Paglat was a military camp of the Moro International Liberation Front, a cessationist movement in the Philippines.

In ARMM, it is estimated that there is an almost equal number of in-school and out-of-school children and youth due to low enrolment and high student drop out rates. The ALS program is EQuALLS’ answer to improving access to relevant lifeskills training for youth as a strategy to keep them in the fold of a productive and peaceful society.

For more information, please contact Nancy Devine, ndevine@edc.org
Administrative Updates

Staff Changes

Anike Akridge, has joined us as EQUIP3 new intern and will be based in the Newton office. Anike has worked in the area of youth programming and community development for several years on a variety of projects in different capacities including; facilitating life skills training and violence prevention programs for youth, conducting program evaluations, and working on several health initiatives particularly that work on HIV-related issues. Currently she is finishing her master’s degree in International Public Health and African Studies at Boston University. Anike will be focusing on the Youth Councils Research.

Haiti: Out-of-School Youth Livelihood Initiative / IDEJEN

Providing education and livelihood preparation opportunities to out-of-school youth in Haiti, and research to inform the process.

With the support of USAID-Haiti, the IDEJEN staff completed the selection of the new community based organizations hosting the new IDEJEN youth centers. As part of its extension, the IDEJEN project is opening an additional 32 centers, including partnerships with and subawards to around 24 new Haitian CBOs. In addition to the current communities in Jeremie, Mirebalais, and Port-au-Prince, the project is extending in new slums of Port-au-Prince, as well as Cap Haitien, Gonaives, Saint Marc, Petit Goave – Miragoane and Cayes.

The IDEJEN project contracted two external consultants, Mike Midling from the US and Carole Sassine from Haiti, to undertake an evaluation of the first three years of the project in order to offer recommendations as the project is extending. The field visits were completed in February, with a report expected in March.

A small team drafted the outline of a longitudinal study/applied research to take place within the coming 18 months. The research aims to better inform the project on the medium term impact on a sample youth selected from the pilot phase. The outline and tools will be tested with IDEJEN staff and youth at the beginning of March.

The second international EQUIP3 partner’s Street Kids International training of trainer started at the end of this month, for 2 weeks. The educators, who were trained last May 2006 in the Street Kids International Business Toolkit, are now trained on the Street Banking Toolkit, which focuses on increasing banking skills of at risk youth.

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.

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

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