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

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

The Youth Community of Practice has a new moderator. Her name is Ann Hershkowitz and you can contact her at ahershkowitz@edc.org. We also have a new membership coordinator: for any question or update of the YCOP membership, please contact Tracey Hatcher at thatcher@edc.org.

Youth Advisory Committee

Ann Hershkowitz is the new EQUIP3 Youth Advisory Committee Coordinator. For any question on the YAC, please contact her at ahershkowitz@edc.org.

Youth Council Research

Anike Akridge, our EQUIP3 intern who worked on the Youth Council Research with the Youth Advisors completed her case studies. Ann is now taking over to finalize all research in one single report. The case studies are on youth councils in Uganda, Kenya and Mozambique, as well as two global youth councils. If you know of resources that can inform this research, please contact Ann.
Independent Evaluation of the Pilot Phase:

In March 2007, the project commissioned an independent evaluation of the pilot phase. The evaluation was carried out by a team of consultants composed of: Dr. Michael J. Midling, international consultant, and Carole Sassine, national consultant. The report was finalized in June and is currently being reviewed by the USAID CTO.

The report recognizes the success of the pilot phase in several key areas, including: the development of partnerships with government agencies and non-governmental organizations; the development of a knowledge base about youth and youth-serving organizations in Haiti; the improved education and skill levels among participants, and; the improved capacity of youth-serving CBOs, particularly in terms of business management and service delivery.

The report also makes several recommendations. These include: 1) Obtaining greater knowledge about the Haitian labor market to link the trainings to the demand for labor; 2) Coordinating closely with other USAID-funded development projects in Haiti; 3) Continuing to work with the Ministry of Education to develop pathways to mainstream education for project graduates; 4) Expanding the categories of vocational skills taught; 5) Identifying and supporting the CBOs that are most likely to become “poles of excellence,” and; 6) Developing the capacity of CBOs to deliver post-program services for youth.

IDEJEN Centers:

IDEJEN is now operating in a total of 44 Youth Centers, managed by 30 Haitian youth serving organizations. Two of the Centers are Centers for Family Education (CFEs) run by the Ministry of Education and Vocational Training. A total of 2,200 youth are currently in training.

During the week of June 18-22, 2007, the project officially launched the new centers in four new departments. In Port-au-Prince, a special ceremony was organized with the support of USAID at Cité Soleil. The Minister of Youth Sports and Civic Action and the Chargé d’Affaires of the US Embassy in Haiti participated in this ceremony. The event was heavily covered by Haitian media.

During the month of July, the project pursued its efforts in training the new centers’ staff, including training in management, leadership and communication for the CBOs’ managers, and training of the educators in technical training with the support of the National Vocational Institute (INFP). IDEJEN also pursued its efforts in linking the youth graduates to job opportunities, including the collaboration with two new institutions of the private sectors (ACRA-Universal Motors), and work with a Haitian Business “Youth Champion” to support two youth entrepreneurial groups in macramé and potteries with training support, market search and facilities to access micro-credit.

Support to the Ministry of Education and Vocational Training:

The IDEJEN project co-organized a workshop on non formal basic education on June 27-29. The objectives of the workshop were to identify the best strategies used by different stakeholders in the implementation activities of Non Formal Basic Education (NFBE) that can guide the development of a policy in non formal education. The opening ceremony was launched by the Minister of Education and Vocational Training who recognized NFBE as a priority and a good strategy for the Ministry to attain the objective of Education for All.
Youth Build Feasibility Study:

A team of two international experts and one local consultant (Peter Twitchell, Alix Cantave and Joseph Lafontant) from Youth Build was in Haiti from June 16-26 to conduct a feasibility study for a Youth Build program, in search of economic opportunities for out-of-school youth in the construction field. Sites visit were organized in St-Marc, Petit-Goâve and les Cayes.

International Youth Foundation/Youth Action Net pilot project:

Karen Philips from the International Youth Foundation visited the IDEJEN project on June 4-9. The objective of this visit was to start a small pilot aiming at the implementation of a local Youth Action Net institute that offers capacity building, technical and financial assistance to young leaders and support youth development in ways that are effective, efficient and culturally relevant. She met with the Ministry of Youth, the private sectors and main national NGOs working with youth. The result of this visit has shown the need to have a more structured program for youth in leadership that can be used by all youth NGOs in Haiti. The next step will be the selection of a local institution which will manage the local activities for this pilot project.

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

Cross-Sectoral Youth Project

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

During the months of June and July marked the inclusion of Morocco into this multi-country initiative. While CSY India, the first CSY country site, is moving along with the implementation of a 12-month project in Agra, Morocco joined the CSY project to carry out a cross-sectoral youth assessment that took place between June and July.

CSY Morocco – Morocco Cross-Sectoral Youth Assessment: Testing the Support to Dar Chebabs Concept

A rapid youth assessment took place in Morocco between June 25th and July 9th to test an existing concept, Support to Dar Chebabs. The purpose of testing this concept was to provide recommendations to USAID/Morocco that inform the design and implementation of future cross-sectoral youth programming for marginalized youth at risk of disaffection.

The assessment took place in urban and peri-urban areas in Rabat, Casablanca, and Sale. It involved youth, government officials, youth experts, academia, international donor agencies, and local non-government organizations. The assessment team was cross-sectoral in nature and had a balance between international and local staff. It consisted of 3 members from USAID/Morocco, 3 from USAID/Washington, 3 from CSY Technical Team (EQUIP3/EDC), and 2 local youth specialists. The team ensured participation from all USAID-Morocco sectors including Education, Economic Growth, and Democracy & Governance as well as Washington-based Democracy & Governance, Conflict Management & Mitigation Office, and Asia/Near East Bureau.
The assessment approach was market-driven in order to uncover the perceptions of key actors. The assessment team worked in a cross-sectoral fashion by dividing itself into three sub-teams organized by cross-cutting themes rather than by sectors. The sub-teams were as follows: (i) vulnerability and opportunities context; (ii) assets and aspirations; and (iii) spaces and structures of marginalized youth at risk of disaffection. Data collection mechanisms included stakeholder meetings, roundtables, and interviews as well as 18 youth focus groups and a youth survey. The team triangulated the perceptions collected, developed an analytical framework to link the data gathered to the scenario in question, and identified areas for strengthening, refinement, and revision to the scenario.

Based on the assessment findings, the CSY team is producing a report with a set of recommendations to USAID/Morocco for cross-sectoral youth programming addressing the Support to Dar Chebabs concept.

For more information, please contact Alejandra Bonifaz, abonifaz@edc.org.
USAID prepares 129 out-of-school youth for gainful employment

USAID’s Education Quality and Access for Learning and Livelihood Skills (EQuALLS) Project has helped prepare 129 out-of-school youths (OSY) from Cotabato City for employment – and in some cases self-employment – opportunities. On June 30, the OSYs graduated from an intensive eight month course that offered participants technical training in the following areas: automotive mechanics, basic electrical wiring, computer technology, or food management. EQuALLS partner, the Education and Livelihood Skills Alliance (ELSA), provided the technical training in coordination with Notre Dame University, Cotabato City. Local businesses contributed to the program through on-the-job training for the OSYs. Several establishments hired the OSYs following their graduation from the EQuALLs training program.

A young man from Cotabato City applies the skills he learned during an EQuALLS-supported eight month vocational course to his new job in an automotive repair shop.

For more information, please contact Nancy Devine, ndevine@edc.org.
West Bank/Gaza: Ruwwad Youth Volunteers for Community Assistance

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.

USAID Mission Director Convenes Special Meeting To Hear Ruwwad Youth’s Concerns

After a highly successful June visit with Ruwwad youth in Ramallah, USAID Mission Director Howard Sumka met again with leaders from the Ruwwad Youth Corps in Jerusalem on July 18. While the first encounter focused on the Ruwwad project as a whole, this more intimate second meeting gave Sumka a chance to hear the concerns and ambitions of Ruwwad youth through a focused, frank conversation. “This type of dialogue really means a lot to us,” reflected young participant Mohammad Kilani, age 25, from Jenin. “The fact that someone like Dr. Sumka—with his authority and busy schedule—would take the time to meet with young people like us is amazing”. Added 19 year-old Majdal Nimr from Ramallah: “The older generation usually ignores us. That’s why this is so different. But from our side, we also need to listen to USAID—because we as youth tend to talk without hearing others’ voices as well”. For his part, the Mission Director was clearly satisfied with the chance to speak directly with youth at the grassroots level: “I could easily spend all afternoon talking with you about your vision for the future of the West Bank and Gaza,” Sumka responded to the youth. “USAID will continue to support the ambitions of young people like those of you here today.”

“Jerusalem Through the Eyes of Youth” Ends on a High Note

Ruwwad’s ground-breaking project in Jerusalem’s Old City came to a close in July with another USAID “first”: A special tour of the City for youth from across the West Bank, led by young guides who had been trained as part of the month-long initiative. For many of the West Bank youth, the event marked the first time they had actually set foot in the historic quarters of the Old City since the closure of the area to most Palestinians nearly a decade ago. With reporters from the national al-Quds newspaper on hand, the young men and women expressed their joy at reconnecting with a key part of their history and culture.

The tours also struck another chord—this time, with a French investor who stumbled upon the Ruwwad-trained youth guides near the Church of the Holy Sepulchre. Impressed by the leadership skills of the young men and women showing their peers around the church, he pledged funding on the spot—giving this unique project a solid future after Ruwwad’s incubator support comes to an end. “Ruwwad’s coaching and funding were key to our early success,” explained young tour organizer Yasser Qos. “This new gift will ensure that our dream stays alive”. 

Monthly Snapshot: July 2007

$250,000 in new sub-grant funding earmarked for four local NGOs.

10 new youth-led projects approved for launching.

75 Ruwwad youth leaders and volunteers actively involved in Ruwwad initiatives across the West Bank.
Ruwwad Youth Corps Launches in Southern West Bank

After reaching out to high-needs communities in the Northern West Bank—and mobilizing more than 50 Ruwwad Youth Leaders in the Nablus and Jenin areas—Ruwwad is now focusing on another key region: The south. Leading the youth recruitment drive in the southern Hebron district is Bilal Hasouneh, age 27, who’s just joined the project as its Southern Region Youth Coordinator. “Ruwwad’s outreach to youth in these areas is critical,” stresses Hasouneh. “This area is always neglected by NGOs, but youth have real needs here: There are very few jobs, and very few chances for youth to develop leadership skills”. Adds Ruwwad Program Manager Duaa Qurie: “Bebron youth specifically asked for Ruwwad to start leadership training in their region, because they heard of our successes in the North. We now have a unique chance—and a responsibility—to empower these youth, so that they can make a difference in their local communities”.

Building Lifelong Bridges Between Young Christians and Muslims: Ruwwad’s Bethlehem Peace and Tolerance Camp

“I don’t have enough words to describe how much I’ve changed this past month,” says Oriana, age 17, at the end of another day at the Bethlehem Peace Camp. “The camp has made me a different person: It’s made me able to trust people more, because now I see that whether we are Christian or Muslim, we are all Palestinians. We are all part of the same community”.

Bethlehem has long been recognized as one of the holiest sites in Christianity— but over time, a large Muslim population has also come to call the city home. Quietly and peacefully, Christians and Muslims have coexisted in the area for centuries. However, the growing economic crisis in the West Bank has raised concerns that this relationship might become strained in the future—as has been the case in other parts of the world.

Enter the Bethlehem Peace Camp: A month of summer fun and “coexistence education” organized by Ruwwad and the Youth Center of the Salesian Brothers, the Palestinian branch of a global movement dedicated to peace and charity. Through generous support from the USAID West Bank/Gaza Mission, the Camp brought together more than 300 Muslim and Christian children from Bethlehem for tolerance-based games, field trips, and programs aimed at strengthening the ties between the two communities. It also gave 50 youth counselors like Oriana the chance to become “tolerance role models”, and build their own leadership skills by supervising younger children.

The overall theme of Peace and Tolerance— “with those around you and those you do not know”— was learned through daily writing and performing of sketches, songs, discussions and role plays. “Everyone loses with violence”, the counselors explained to the young Muslim and Christian campers, aged 6 – 15. Offers Sonia Ghanem, the young camp director: “We are optimistic. USAID’s Ruwwad project focuses on creating opportunities for youth to become leaders. This means a great deal to us in Bethlehem, because we want to create a future where young Muslims and Christians work together—taking the lead to solve problems in their communities.” Back in Ramallah, another city where Christians and Muslims coexist peacefully, Ruwwad Chief of Party Hisham Jabi agrees: “Our project is committed to supporting moderate voices in the region; the Bethlehem Peace Camp is a shining example of the tolerance we can promote across the West Bank and Gaza—with youth as the catalysts for this social change”.

For more information, please contact Sara Hay, shay@edc.org.
Staff Changes:

The following staff changes happened over this period:

Chuck Wattles left EDC and is now pursuing new opportunities. Good luck, Chuck! Sarah Hay (shay@edc.org) took over his responsibilities to backstop the Ruwwad project. Sarah has been working as International Program Coordinator at EDC on non related EQUIP3 project. Welcome to the team Sarah.

Ann Hershkowitz started with EDC as International Program Coordinator. Ann will coordinate the activities of the Youth Advisory Committee (YAC), be a moderator for the Youth Community of Practice (YCoP), assist with project backstopping for the IDEJEN project in Haiti, and assist with general research on youth issues. She is located in the Washington DC office. Ann received her MA in International Development from American University in May 2007. She was a Youth Participation Intern for EQUIP3 from June – December 2005, and has also interned with the Overseas Cooperative Development Council (OCDC) and Twana Twitu, an NGO that supports children orphaned by AIDS in Kenya.

EQUIP3 had two interns this summer, Emily Stiles, currently studying at Georgetown University, and Sabrina Cintron, studying at American University. We want to thank them both for the great team work they did together. Emily and Sabrina contributed to many research efforts and co-created the two YCOP Links issued in July.

Paul Sully is no longer Project Director of EQUIP3. Paul moved into a new position as Senior Youth Advisor, Global Learning Group, Education Development Center. In this new role with the Global Learning Group of EDC, his principle tasks are to identify strategic opportunities that correspond to GLG strengths with regards to youth programming and develop projects and secure support to implement them.

EQUIP3 is recruiting a new Project Director. Meanwhile, please contact Nancy Devine at ndevine@edc.org or Melanie Beauvy at mbeauvy@edc.org for any question related to EQUIP3 activities.