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

   By the end of November, there were 266 people subscribed to the Youth Community of Practice. This number includes people based around the world who are working with youth, interested in youth issues, and young people themselves.

   In addition to providing a forum for sharing information, the YCoP hosted an event at USAID on Monday, November 20th. Ashok Regmi from IYF introduced Abdinasir Nur, director of the Somali Youth for Peace and Democracy and winner of the YouthActionNet award. Mr. Nur gave a presentation about the current state of Somali youth and ways in which his organization works to build a sense of citizenship and democracy in a country where there is no effective government.

   To join the Youth Community of Practice or share resources with YCoP subscribers, contact Lisa Austin at laustin@edc.org or Chuck Wattles at cwattles@edc.org.

2. **EQUIP Evaluation**

   EQUIP3, along with EQUIPs 1&2, is participating in an evaluation. The objective of the evaluation is to generate knowledge on the effectiveness of the EQUIP Leader With Associates (LWA) mechanisms in serving EGAT/ED and USAID missions’ needs, and to identify areas for improvement. This information will be used in two areas: 1) shaping future EGAT/ED use of the EQUIP LWA; and 2) shaping future EQUIP Leader activities.

   The evaluation examines the efficacy and effectiveness of the Leader Award activities, the management functioning of the EQUIP, and the general responsiveness and utility of the LWA mechanism to Mission needs, especially in, but not limited to, education.
EQUIP3 is pleased to announce the Cross-Sectoral Youth (CSY) Program, a new associate award that aims to strengthen and advance a cross-sectoral approach for youth programming, from the design and funding stages through youth assessment and project implementation activities.

In collaboration with USAID’s cross-sectoral working group, USAID country Missions, Pact Inc., and EQUIP3 consortium member International Youth Foundation (IYF) over an 18-month period, CSY hopes to:

1. Assist USAID country missions in identifying opportunities for innovative, synergistic, cross-sectoral, youth-oriented programs.
2. Provide catalytic technical assistance to USAID country Missions and implementing in-country partners in the design, management, and assessment of specific activities that can advance cross-sectoral youth-oriented programs.
3. Advance future efforts in implementing cross-sectoral youth programming through documentation and dissemination of successes and lessons learned.

Upcoming activities include a field visit to India between January and February to work with the country Mission and the implementing partner of the Cross Cutting Agra Project (CAP), a youth livelihoods development program. In preparation, CSY technical specialists will come together for a workshop in January to jointly frame the technical assistance work within the CSY program.

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

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**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.*

**EFA Learning & Sharing Component**

*Monthly Discussion Series*

The Learning & Sharing component of the EFA Youth Challenge Grant Program continued in November with its series of discussions among implementing partners of EFA Jamaica, EFA South Africa, and EFA Uganda. The conversation this month focused on Sustainability: What do we mean by sustainability? What are the main challenges and strategies being used?

In an attempt to define sustainability based on the EFA projects’ experiences, participants discussed financial and programmatic sustainability as well as emotional and individual sustainability. Emotional, because sustainability should take into account whether or not the project is causing a positive emotional impact on the target population in a way that prevails after the project. Individual, because the individual subsistence of volunteers also plays an important role when it comes to sustainability. Based on field work experience, participants pointed out that for a project to be sustained, it should be generational, participatory, and replicable.

*Continued on next page*
Based on experience from the EFA initiative, some of the strategies identified as successful in increasing sustainability include: engaging the private sector, identifying opportunities within the government, building a volunteerism component into the program, involving the local media, and exploring opportunities for incorporating a fee for service component.

The next topic of conversation will be Project Expansion & Replication.

**EFA Website**

The EFA team is pleased to announce that the EFA website will be launched in December 2006 as part of the EFA Learning & Sharing Component. As a platform for information sharing, the EFA website aims to (i) showcase the EFA projects in each country (Jamaica, South Africa, and Uganda); (ii) share field experiences that provide a closer look at day-to-day activities; and (iii) exchange and document valuable resources (documents on best practices, practical tools, etc.) among projects, implementing partners, USAID country Missions, youth, and broader youth development stakeholders.

Please visit the EFA Website: [www.efa.edc.org](http://www.efa.edc.org). While some sections are still under construction, feedback is welcome and appreciated.

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### 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.*

#### Brown Bag on Palestinian Youth Engagement in the West Bank/Gaza,

On November 1, Maher Awartani, Youth Engagement Specialist for the Ruwwad program in the West Bank/Gaza spoke to twenty or so EDC colleagues in Newton and DC during a Brown Bag on Palestinian Youth Engagement.

Maher explained that Ruwwad was initially designed as a five year youth empowerment program but was suspended in the aftermath of the elections for geopolitical reasons. However, marking the first event since suspension, on October 18, Maher helped gather 150 youth from around the West Bank/Gaza to participate in a civic youth forum with leaders from government and civil society in commemoration of World Youth Day for Democracy.

Maher highlighted about nine challenges to civic engagement. Youth were cynical and disillusioned and they lacked trust in donors. There was a wide gap between youth and politicians; youth lacked platforms to interface with private sector, civil society and government leaders; and youth had few coaching opportunities to transform their voice into action. Checkpoints and lack of access made commuting difficult and time-consuming or impossible, a barrier both physically and figuratively to the building of a sense of community and belonging. Another challenge is that of competing needs. Maher stated that “civic participation is seen as make-up, as a luxury – important but not one of the pillars for living” like food and health.

For more information please contact Chuck Wattles, cwattles@edc.org.
In November, EDC organized the second retreat-cum-workshop for EQuALLS 2 partners in Island Cove near Manila, Philippines with the aim of (a) developing a deeper understanding of EQuALLS 2 program strategies and the roles of key stakeholders, (b) starting the process of developing common criteria and standards for program interventions, and (c) developing an understanding of the emerging grant application process for the next round of cooperative agreements. The retreat was well attended by key officers of the Department of Education (DepED) national office and field offices of Regions 9, 12 and the Autonomous Region of Muslim Mindanao (ARMM), partners and service providers, local government units (LGU), USAID, and the EQuALLS team led by Chief of Party Bill Potter. Also in attendance was Maureen Malley from EDC home office. EDC staff members Brenda Bell and David James-Wilson facilitated the retreat-workshop.

In the above photo, key players of the Project attempted to illustrate the “coming together” of partners by joining hands while wearing green and yellow bayanihan (mutual help) bands. This symbolizes the willingness of each organization to put their expertise to work in increasing access to quality education for school children and enhancing lifeskills of out-of-school youth in Muslim Mindanao. Green and yellow are the organizational colors of the ARMM and EQuALLS has adopted them as its own corporate colors. From left to right are Beth Fontanoza of USAID/Philippines; Ces Ochoa of Assistance for the Comprehensive Educational Development of Mindanao (ASCEND-Mindanao); Jaytun Jama, District Supervisor of Talipao, Sulu; David James-Wilson of Education Development Center (EDC); Sam Molao, Alternative Learning Systems service provider from the University of Southern Mindanao; Bruce Matabalao, Project Manager of Improving English Language and Teaching in Mindanao (IELTLM); Teodora Casipe (partly hidden) a local government unit representative; and Miriam Pahm, Director of Technical Programs of EDC EQuALLS 2 Project. EQuALLS is USAID’s principal education intervention in ARMM and conflict-affected areas in Mindanao.

For more information, please contact Nancy Devine, ndevine@edc.org.
A Success Story: Surrounded by Afghanistan’s desert sand dunes, hope springs eternal in rural Parwan

In Afghanistan, where around 4.3 million of the rural population is critically poor and the female adult literacy rate is estimated at 4 to 10 percent, people yearn to maintain a sense of hope. By providing men and women living in these rural areas with education and other opportunities, USAID’s Literacy and Community Empowerment Program (LCEP) works as a catalyst for hope. During a recent visit to the village of Qalaye Panjara in rural Parwan, LCEP staff members witnessed this firsthand as the program’s empowerment goals became realities through the experience of one particular woman.

This woman is unmarried, disabled (there are an estimated 800,000 to 1 million disabled people in Afghanistan), and lives with her brother and his wife. She and her brother are survivors of her family; many are dead. This is not unusual. A significant number of women have been widowed or otherwise abandoned as a result of years of armed conflict. She is mistreated at home, and on the day that LCEP staff members arrived at her house to escort her to the LCEP Literacy Center, it was clear that she had been crying earlier.

Despite starting off the day with tears of sadness in her eyes, that day was special for this woman and other LCEP students. The twenty women participated in this particular ceremony received a certificate of program completion from the LCEP staff. On that day, she proudly sat among the young girls waiting to receive her certificate, which signified completion the LCEP program. Those who hold the certificate achieved a third grade level of education through the program (many participants enter illiterate and innumerate) and are publicly encouraged to use this accomplishment as a stepping stone towards entering the formal school system. Over the course of 14 days, LCEP awarded nearly 5000 women this certificate.

Upon receiving her certificate, she was greeted with a standing ovation from the other women of the village. In this moment, she was once again nearly crying, but this time she cried tears of happiness. When asked what she will do with her new skills, she explained “I want to become a teacher for the other women who have supported me.” Her response elicited approving nods from the other women. In Afghanistan, where conflict, disorder, and despair are often the norms, the women of Qalaye Panjara were grateful for the pride which radiated from her face that day. Through the lens of this woman’s experience, they can all see opportunities on the horizon.

For more information, please contact Cornelia Janke, cjanke@edc.org.
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 formal extension of the program approved and activities underway, IDEJEN staff spent several days in November visiting the new areas to identify community based organizations to manage IDEJEN youth centers. The new communities are Cap Haitien, Saint Marc/Gonaives, Petit Goave, Cayes and Nippes. IDEJEN has been working in collaboration with the Ministry of Youth and local youth-serving organizations to recruit field agents for the four new communities.

Frantz-Harold Seide, program officer, attended the Environmental Considerations, Competitiveness and Regulation 216 workshop in Mirebalais November 13-17th.

This workshop was designed to promote environmental best practices, to develop the ability to incorporate economic incentives and competitiveness into program design, and to provide training on compliance with USAID Regulation 216 requirements and Haitian environmental procedures. This will be particularly important as the IDEJEN program supports income generating activities for their young participants and youth centers.

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

Administrative Updates

Staff Changes
Lindsay Lincoln has completed her internship with EQUIP3 and is now working as a consultant on the Together We Can initiative at the Red Cross. Our heartfelt thanks to her for her contributions to the team.

Call for Interns
The EQUIP3 team in DC is in search of interns starting January 2007. If you know of any current undergraduate or graduate students who may be interested in working with us, please ask them to contact Lisa Austin at laustin@edc.org.