**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 following YCoP links were released this period:

- Assortment of Current Youth Issues in Development #14
- Youth and the Environment #15

They can be accessed at: [http://www.equip123.net/webarticles/anmviewer.asp?a=364&z=32](http://www.equip123.net/webarticles/anmviewer.asp?a=364&z=32)

**Youth Councils Research Paper**

The 2nd draft of the youth councils paper has been completed. It is currently under review by the Youth Advisory Committee and other youth development professionals. Please contact Ann Hershkowitz at ahershkowitz@edc.org with any questions about this work.

**EQUIP3 Website**

Updates this period under Associate Awards Activities:

- The Literacy and Community Empowerment Program (LCEP) in Afghanistan page has been updated with the final report. [http://www.equip123.net/docs/e3-LCEPFinalReport.pdf](http://www.equip123.net/docs/e3-LCEPFinalReport.pdf)

- The Haiti page has been updated. [http://www.equip123.net/docs/e3-EconomicRealities.pdf](http://www.equip123.net/docs/e3-EconomicRealities.pdf)
Associate Award Activities

East Timor – Youth Have Opportunities for Work JOBS Program

The final proposed design document and assessment team report was submitted on October 26, 2007. Gustavo Payan and Jerry Boardman are currently in Timor Leste to initiate program start up activities. We hope to have key staff in place by early December and anticipate a team technical visit in January 2008.

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

Haitian: Out of School Youth Livelihood Initiative / IDEJEN

Providing out-of-school youth with basic education, technical training and livelihood accompaniment for increased economic opportunities

Two Visits from US Government and USAID Officials to IDEJEN Centers

On October 11, 2007, Paul Bonicelli, USAID’s Assistant Administrator for Latin America and the Caribbean, and Alonzo Fulgham, USAID’s Chief Operating Officer, visited one IDEJEN’s youth centers. They visited the Self-Help Group for Children’s Development (GREDEVE/AJEC) center in the region of Port-au-Prince, where they met with the center manager, Léonpauldine Dalbérès; Guerda Prévilon, IDEJEN Chief of Party; William Michel, IDEJEN Youth Program Coordinator; Hervé Jean-Charles, IDEJEN CTO, and several youth who participate in the IDEJEN project. Mr. Bonicelli reportedly said that the testimony by one of the IDEJEN youth, who noted that IDEJEN had given him an understanding of what it is to be a responsible Haitian citizen, was a high point in his trip.

A delegation from the United States Congress visited one of IDEJEN’s centers in Cité Soleil on October 26, 2007. Senators Jeff Bingaman, Tom Harkin, and Bob Corker, along with Director of the Navy Senate Liaison, Captain Gene Moran, and members of their respective staff made a short visit to the Organization for the Promotion of Youth and Children in Difficulty (OPJED). They met with Guerda Prévilon, IDEJEN Chief of Party, and with a group of IDEJEN youth. The delegation came as part of two-day trip to see various humanitarian, economic and environmental preservation initiatives in Haiti.

Annual report:

The project completed its 4th year annual report. Major highlights this year included:

• Size: Project expansion allowed for the extension of the work of 11 of the 12 initial community-based organizations (CBOs) running IDEJEN youth centers. These CBOs now manage several youth centers each. In addition, 22 new youth centers in 4 new departments were created. 2200 out-of-school youth are now in training across 44 youth centers.
• Scope: Further elaboration with the Government of Haiti (GoH) for a National Youth policy and a National Strategy for non-formal basic education; Increased efforts to understand issues of youth accompaniment after graduation; Youthmapping activities in new intervention areas to better assess current youth conditions and opportunities.

• Capacity: Increased training and capacity building for staff, field agents, and CBOs to ensure the project’s successful expansion in new areas; Continued training and support to GoH Institutions.

• Impact: An independent evaluation of the pilot phase 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.

• Youth Livelihood Accompaniment: a recent meeting among the participating CBOs revealed that, out of the 650 youth from the pilot phase, 207 went back to school, while another 82 got an internship, 91 have been involved in the Income Generating Activities of the Youth Centers, and 73 are pursuing the development of a microenterprise.

For more information, please contact Melanie Beauvy, mbeauvy@edc.org.
Imagine this: a child watches his mother flash colorful visuals and mimic the sound of animal characters as she reads him a story. What could be more fascinating?

In the islands of Tawi-Tawi province parents are learning storytelling skills with flair. Under USAID’s Education Quality and Access for Learning and Livelihood Skills (EQuALLS) project, program partner Synergeia has been providing training to parents and barangay leaders that will equip them with tools to conduct storytelling sessions in their communities.

This training is at the core of Synergeia’s Village Reading Program which promotes the love for reading among children through developing learning communities. As the parents and barangay leaders become skillful storytellers and crafters of visuals that will enhance their storytelling, the possibility of conducting a regular village reading session increases.

The first reading workshop was conducted last August 29 at the municipality of Bongao. Surprisingly for the trainers, the attendance exceeded their expectations: more than a hundred participants, composed of parents, teachers and barangay leaders went to the venue.

In Panglima Sugala municipality two days later, the scenario was no different. The trainers could not turn away the additional participants whose faces beamed with enthusiasm and eagerness. Everyone was allowed entry and any cost in excess of the trainings’ budget was willingly shouldered by the mayors of the two municipalities.

The climax of the event was an enthralling demonstration of the art of storytelling by Oscar Garcia from Alitaptap Storytellers Philippines. In relating “Ang Mahiyaing Manok” (The Shy Rooster), he would ask a parent, a teacher, or a child from the audience to read a line or two from the storybook suggesting variations in their voices and facial expressions.

As the participants returned to their villages, they were even more eager to plan the next storytelling session in their communities. Soon, they will be telling the stories in their Village Reading Center which EQuALLS and Synergeia will help set up, complete with story books. By that time, the children of Tawi-Tawi will not only find a sparkle of interest in reading, but a flame that will spread an appetite for learning.

For more information, please contact Nancy Devine, ndevine@edc.org.
Ruwwad’s Youth Leaders Bring Free Health Care to Northern West Bank
Success Story: Jenin Medical Week,
October 2007 – Jenin Governorate, West Bank

The scene is painful to watch, but it’s full of hope: An elderly woman in a traditional embroidered robe, barely able to support her own weight—being propped up on either side by young Ruwwad Youth Corps volunteers. Slowly, carefully, they escort her up the steps of a local medical clinic, pausing after each footfall so she can catch her breath. Finally, they pass through the doorway and into the waiting room, where the physician greets her. This is Khaleda’s first visit to the doctor in more than a decade.

For children and the elderly in the West Bank, basic health needs are often neglected: Poor families spend their limited income on the working adults in the household. “There’s a huge number of people who can’t afford a [$15 US] doctor’s visit, and even those with health insurance get limited coverage,” explains ‘Azam Abu Soud, a Ruwwad Youth Corps Leader and one of six organizers of Ruwwad’s Jenin Medical Week. “This is why we came up with the idea of a medical aid campaign: to give free care, but also to draw attention to the access problems that exist”.

Throughout the first week of September, ‘Azam and five other Youth Leaders worked in marginalized villages across the northern Jenin governorate, organizing a drive to bring essential health care services to the doorsteps of children and the elderly. Over 500 high-needs patients benefited from free specialized care right within their own town – including ear, nose and throat exams and dental treatment, all delivered by local doctors and funded by USAID’s Ruwwad project. Medication was also given out to patients who needed it, based on the results of their check-ups. Nearly all of the local residents who saw doctors during the week (mainly women over 60 and students under 12 years of age) had not received medical care for over five years.

“We incubated our project within the Ruwwad Youth Corps, because we knew that our idea fit USAID’s mandate to bring humanitarian aid to the Palestinian people,” ‘Azam elaborates. “We also knew that Ruwwad is a leader in supporting youth-led initiatives, especially those that focus on community development”. Added fellow organizer Firas Zabaneh: “Ruwwad staff were extremely supportive and encouraging—and the reaction from the community has been overwhelming: The praise we’ve received, as well as the high turnout rate, makes us extremely happy. And it goes to show how essential this activity really is for the people in these Northern villages”. On his way out of the clinic, Hussein Atatrah, age 76, nodded in agreement. “Today I went to the doctor for the first time in four years. I am healthy, thankfully, but others around me are less lucky. All of the retired men and women in my village need some medical care; all of them are grateful that Ruwwad has given them the chance to get help today”. The challenge now facing these communities is how to ensure that affordable health care will be available in the future. The active cooperation between local Health Care Centers, NGOs, and women’s and youth groups during Jenin Medical Week is a strong start: Offered Aisha Abu-Rob, an NGO volunteer: “Ruwwad has shown us what is possible here; now we need to work hard to make this sustainable”.

For more information, please contact: Sarah Hay, shay@edc.org

Free eye exams for children: One of the many services provided through Ruwwad's Jenin Medical Week.