The Youth Community of Practice (YCoP) global listserv links professionals and practitioners at USAID and its partner organizations to effective youth development ideas, information and best practices to help:

* Design more effective, sustainable youth programs, and
* Better integrate youth participation in USAID development projects

In this Links: Global Youth Unemployment: The public protests currently taking place in the Middle East began with a single act of desperation by a young man named Mohamed Bouazizi, 26, who lit himself on fire outside a local municipal office in Tunisia. College-educated and unemployed, Bouazizi was working as a street vendor, and experienced beatings and humiliation by government inspectors who confiscated his goods and sole source of livelihood. By the time Bouazizi died in the hospital in early January, protests over his treatment had spread throughout Tunisia and ultimately led to the ouster of President Ben Ali. Bouazizi’s story, though tragic, is not uncommon. The uprising in Tunisia has inspired protests in Egypt, Yemen and Jordan, involving young people (and many non-youth too) demanding economic opportunity and freedom of expression. Youth around the world—especially given the global economic downturn—face enormous obstacles to obtaining the skills and opportunities for decent work. As the events in the Middle East demonstrate, governments and organizations must do more to meaningfully address the frustrations and aspirations of young people. This YCoP Links issue highlights resources, projects, and initiatives that are working to address global youth unemployment.

Announcements:

ILO Launches New Community of Practice on Youth Employment
http://papyrus.ilo.org/YE
The International Labor Organization (ILO) has launched the Youth Employment Knowledge Sharing Platform (YEKSP), an interactive, web-based resource that creates a Community of Practice around youth employment issues. The tool aims to respond to the needs of specialists, practitioners and those interested in the subject. The user is able to contact experts directly, ask for support, and will find working papers and other youth employment key documents, project and country information, links, youth employment areas of work, available tools and good practices. Visitors to the site must have an account with a U.N. organization.

Conference: Children’s and Young People’s Media in Africa: Evolving Markets, Producers and Audiences
This conference, organized by the Africa Media Centre, Arab Media Centre, Media Policy Group, Communication and Media Research Institute (CAMRI), and the University of Westminster, will take place March 11th and 12th, 2011, in Westminster, UK. The event will focus on how children and young people engage with the mass media on a continent where there is still a strong traditional culture and where media choices are often limited. The conference will feature panel debates by industry practitioners, education professionals, and policymakers. Some sessions will be devoted to presentation of academic research. The organizers also plan to include some screenings of prize-winning broadcast material. Papers to be presented at the conference may include, but are not necessarily limited to, discussions about production of mass media for children and young people in Africa, formats and themes adopted by African broadcasters, and interactive and other digital media and their reception by children and young people in Africa.
University of London Announces Scholarship Opportunity for Graduate Study
http://www.ioe.ac.uk/studentInformation/41462.html
The Institute of Education at the University of London has announced an award for nationals of a British Commonwealth developing country to attend one of the following programs: Education and International Development; Education, Gender, and International Development; Education, Health Promotion, and International Development; Educational Planning, Economics, and International Development; and Development Education. The award covers airfare, tuition, a monthly living allowance, and other expenses. Applicants must be nationals of a Commonwealth developing country. Students from India, Pakistan, and Nigeria are particularly encouraged to apply. The deadline is April 30th, 2011. For more information, including complete application details, visit the program website.

Projects and Initiatives:

EQUIP3's G-Youth Project, Kenya
http://www.g-youth.org/main/
The EQUIP3 G-Youth Project uses a youth-centered framework to help young people gain access to enabling opportunities. G-Youth’s objective is to create enabling environments that empower youth to design and lead initiatives that improve economic and social opportunities for themselves and their communities. Central to the project is the creation and support of a youth-led and managed local organization that will set direction for and oversee a range of activities related to employment, education and community participation. Increased numbers of Garissan youth will have greater access to livelihood opportunities and will be better prepared to enter and succeed in the world of work. The project also aims to increase youth retention and transition to secondary schools and higher education; and civics activities will promote principles and practices of tolerance and peaceful coexistence among diverse communities. The project began in 2009 and will work with more than 5000 youth by the anticipated end date of October 2012.

International Youth Foundation's Obra Project
http://www.iyfnet.org/obra
Obra (“work” in Spanish) was launched in 2009 with support from USAID. Building on foundational IYF programs, Obra works to ensure that at-risk youth have improved access to the programs and services needed to prepare them for citizenship, work, and life. In addition to creating multi-sector alliances to support those goals, Obra works to develop mechanisms for identifying and sharing best practices and apply these practices in specific education and employability projects. Obra’s outcomes include partnerships to support youth at risk in the Caribbean, Central America, and South America; 1,000 vulnerable youth in three target countries equipped with the knowledge and skills needed to pursue productive employment; and more effective programs and policies for at-risk youth.

MEDA YouthInvest, Egypt and Morocco
MEDA is an international non-governmental organization that designs and implements market-driven economic development programs to improve the livelihoods of millions of people living in poverty around the world. MEDA’s YouthInvest program partners with well-established MFI s and NGOs in Egypt and Morocco to increase financial and business support services for youth ages 15 to 24. Within five years, YouthInvest aims to connect at least 50,000 young people to innovative financial and non-financial products and services that will help them develop skills needed to secure employment opportunities. As part of these efforts, in 2009, YouthInvest conducted market-research with 500 youth and found that young people require a wider-range of financial products that include prioritized savings, training and internships, and practical work experience, in addition to loans. To meet these needs, MEDA has partnered with a range of institutions including MFIs, banks, training centers and governments to create and eventually scale up sustainable youth financial products and services.
Plan Sudan, Juba Technical High School
September 2010 marked the opening of the Juba Technical High School, a project coordinated by Plan International with funding from USAID. The new vocational and technical school will provide young people from Southern Sudan with an opportunity to learn the skills they need to prosper. The project was initiated after the results from two independent feasibility studies concluded that increasing vocational and technical training skills for youth is essential for helping to secure the stability and economic growth of South Sudan. To date, 150 youth have enrolled in the school, which provides marginalized youth and former child soldiers with skills training in subjects ranging from electronics to hospitality.

Papua New Guinea Urban Youth Employment Project
The World Bank’s Urban Youth Employment Project for Papua New Guinea aims to provide urban youth with income from temporary employment opportunities, and to increase their employability. There are three components to the project: 1) life skills training and public works job placement for 17,500 unemployed youth; 2) on-the-job training and work experience for about 4,000 youth; and 3) project management. The project, approved in January 2011, is scheduled to close in 2016.

Resources for Practitioners

Youth Employment Inventory
http://www.youth-employment-inventory.org/
The Youth Employment Inventory (YEI), a project of the German Ministry of Economic Cooperation and Development, the Inter-American Development Bank, the International Labor Organization, the World Bank and the Youth Employment Network, is a database with comparative information on youth employment interventions worldwide. Featuring more than 300 youth employment programs from about 90 countries, YEI documents program design, implementation, and achieved results. The programs range from interventions for improving the labor market information base (counseling, job search skills) to programs that aim at increasing the demand for youth labor (wage subsidies and public works) and those focusing on improving chances for young entrepreneurs (providing financial, technical, and training assistance).

International Labor Organization's (ILO) Global Employment Trends (2011)
The latest Global Employment Trends report has found that despite a sharp rebound in economic growth for many countries, global unemployment in 2011 is likely to continue at the record highs of the past three years, highlighting the need for long-term policies that prioritize quality job creation. Worldwide, 78 million young people were unemployed in 2010, well above the pre-crisis level of 73.5 million in 2007, but down from 80 million in 2009. The unemployment rate among youth aged 15-24 stood at 12.6 per cent in 2010, 2.6 times the adult rate of unemployment. The report also emphasizes that unemployment rates understate the extent to which the crisis impacted young people. Many youth are not counted among the unemployed because they are not actively seeking work.

Active Labor Market Programs for Youth: A Framework to Guide Youth Employment Interventions (2010)
This World Bank publication addresses the need to more efficiently integrate young people into the labor market by providing policymakers and youth-serving organizations with a framework to better diagnose constraints facing unemployed youth and to design evidence-based youth employment interventions. This
document considers Active Labor Market Programs (ALMP) designed to enhance labor market re-integration within existing institutional and macro-economic constraints. In other words, the authors take as given labor market regulations, the investment climate, and the general education system.

Taking Stock of the Youth Challenge: New Data and New Questions
http://www.brookings.edu/articles/2010/06_middle_east_youth.aspx
This recent research by the Brookings Institute attempts to shed light on the challenges that youth continue to face in the Middle East. An interactive map and corresponding fact sheets provide key statistics associated with youth issues for all 18 countries in the Middle East. In the accompanying note, the authors provide an overview of the data and their main findings.

Looking for YOUR input: We would like to hear from you! YCoP welcomes ideas, resources, and best practices on effective youth programs and youth participation. We would also like to encourage nominations of other youth practitioners or youth leaders to participate in the YCoP Links listserv. Hit “reply” to send information and feedback to YCoP Links.

To unsubscribe from the list, users should send an e-mail to listserv@info.usaid.gov with only “unsubscribe youthcop” in the body of the e-mail. (No signatures please).

Mission of YCoP: The Youth Community of Practice provides a forum for professionals and practitioners at USAID and its partner organizations to gather, consolidate, archive, disseminate and exchange information, knowledge, ideas and best practices, particularly related to the incorporation of youth participation in USAID development projects. The Youth Community of Practice is an informal body of volunteer members, reached through a global list serve and Washington-based chapter. Both the list serve and DC chapter forums include USAID staff, youth practitioners outside of the Agency, and youth themselves. It is jointly sponsored by the office of education in the bureau of Economic Growth, Agriculture and Trade (EGAT) at USAID and the Education Quality Improvement Program3 (EQUIP3), and implemented by the Education Development Center, Inc. (EDC).

Disclaimer: The information and opinions expressed in the materials provided through YCoP Links or posted by listserv participants is not official U.S. Government information and does not necessarily represent the views or positions of the U.S. Agency for International Development, the U.S. Government or EQUIP3. For a copy of the guidelines and/or charter, put the request in the subject line of the email and send to: youthcop@lists.info.usaid.gov. Participants should be aware that the list is public and not private communication. When participants voluntarily disclose personal information on a list serve, that information can be collected and used by others and may result in unsolicited messages from other people.