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: Youth and the Least Developed Countries (LDCs):** The 4th United Nations Conference on the Least Developed Countries (LDCs) in Istanbul, Turkey, last week brought together heads of state, U.N. officials, parliamentarians, civil society and private sector representatives to discuss and evaluate progress in developing the 48 countries that make up the LDCs. Several sessions and roundtable discussions at the conference focused on the role of youth in this process. Specific themes addressed were youth entrepreneurship, youth participation in civil society actions, and the role of youth in implementing the Brussels of Program of Action, which was adopted in 2001 with the goal of making “substantial progress toward halving the proportion of people living in extreme poverty and suffering from hunger by 2015” and promoting “sustainable development of the LDCs.” A revised plan of action, adopted at the recent conference, calls for halving the number of LDCs (from 48 to 24) in the next decade. This issue of YCoP Links identifies resources that focus on the role of youth in developing the world’s poorest countries, including a sampling of youth-focused projects and organizations that work in one or more of the 48 LDCs.

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**Announcements:**

**Society for International Development World Congress 2011**

[http://www.sidcongress.org/site/](http://www.sidcongress.org/site/)

The 2011 session of the SID World Congress, held in Washington, D.C., from July 29th to 31st, is called “Our Common Challenge: A World Moving Toward a Sustainable Future.” The second day of the event will feature a session on youth: “New Approaches and Tools for Engaging Citizens in Development Choices: Lessons from Youthful Rebellions,” looking at the so-called youth bulge and civic engagement in light of the recent rebellions in the Middle East. Invited speakers include Arthur Muliro, Deputy Managing Director of the Society for International Development Secretariat; William S. Reese, President and CEO of International Youth Foundation; Charles Onyango-Obbo, Executive Editor, Africa and Digital Media Division, Nation Media Group; Dalia Ziada, Director, North Africa Bureau, American Islamic Congress; and Ladan Boroumand, Research Director and Co-Founder of the Abdorrahman Boroumand Foundation.
The Global Citizen Corps (GCC) program accepts applications from high school and university students to participate in its community organization activities. GCC is an international network of youth from Gaza, Haiti, Lebanon, Jordan, Iraq, Indonesia, Pakistan, the United States, and the United Kingdom who educate and mobilize their schools and communities. Leaders work with Mercy Corps staff to get the training and tools to organize Global Action projects that address challenges linked to poverty, hunger, climate change, education, global health, and conflict. Through the online network, live video conferences and international exchanges youth leaders share their projects and experiences across cultures, communities and countries. Participants can either join the online leadership program (with training opportunities throughout the year) or attend the program’s intensive national leadership training in Portland, Oregon, from July 5th to 9th. Students will receive trainings from Mercy Corps experts, engage in a videoconference with their international peers, and gain the skills necessary to take meaningful action.

Projects and Initiatives:

Cisco’s Least Developed Countries Initiative
http://www.cisco.com/web/about/ac227/ac222/society/socioeconomic_development_programs/least_developed_countries.html
Technology giant Cisco’s Least-Developed Countries Initiative was started as a result of the G-8 Summit in Okinawa, Japan, in 2000. The program has offered education and training in information technology to more than 35,000 students, approximately 30 percent of them female, in more than 50 countries. The program was implemented in partnership with the United States Agency for International Development (USAID), United Nations Development Program (UNDP), and other organizations, with a focus on gender opportunity, workforce development, and financial sustainability.

Akazi Kanoze: Youth Livelihoods Project (Rwanda)
http://akazikanoze.edc.org/
Akazi Kanoze is a project in Rwanda that provides youth, ages 14-24, with market-relevant life and work readiness training and support, hands-on training opportunities, and links into the employment and self-employment job market. Akazi Kanoze is a project funded by the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) through the Educational Quality Improvement Program 3 (EQUIP3), in collaboration with multiple local and international partners. In a most recent activity, the project developed a radio soap opera that touches on work readiness topics.

YouthSave — Nepal
http://youthsave.org/country/nepal
YouthSave is a consortium project led by Save the Children in partnership with the Center for Social Development at Washington University in St. Louis (CSD), the New America Foundation (NAF), Consultative Group to Assist the Poor (CGAP), and supported by The MasterCard Foundation. The YouthSave Consortium and its local
partners—financial institutions and researchers—are committed to developing, delivering, and testing savings products accessible to low-income youth in Colombia, Ghana, Kenya, and Nepal. Through this project, the Consortium will share lessons and resources on delivering savings services sustainably, while improving the life chances of low-income youth in the developing world. YouthSave’s work in Nepal involves partnerships with the Bank of Kathmandu, which has established a campaign to encourage saving among young Nepalis, and New Era, a private development research firm with expertise in education, health, and labor.

**Federation of Liberian Youth**

http://www.flyliberia.org/

The Federation of Liberian Youth is an umbrella organization of nearly 100 youth and student groups in Liberia. The federation engages in activities such as civic education, school-to-work transitions, income generation, and other work. The federation is currently working to mobilize young voters in Liberia by calling on young people ages 18-35 to register and turn out to vote in the upcoming election in Liberia, scheduled for October 2011.

**Mali Out-of-School Youth Project/PAJE-Nièta**

http://idd.edc.org/projects/mali-out-school-youth-project

PAJE-Nièta (Projet d’Appui aux Jeunes Entrepreneurs or Support to Youth Entrepreneurs Project) is a five-year EQUIP3 youth development initiative funded by USAID/Mali’s Basic Education and Accelerated Economic Growth divisions. (Nièta means progress in the local language Bambara.) The project, awarded in 2010, will provide 10,000 rural, out-of-school youth with improved basic education, work readiness and technical training, social and leadership development, and accompaniment towards livelihood activities. A Mali Youth Volunteer Corps strategy will be developed by the project, together with Government of Mali’s Agency of Youth Employment. The strategy calls for 200 educated, unemployed youth to be recruited and trained to serve as community-based literacy, work readiness, and youth leadership trainers. The project will also integrate appropriate information technology to support linkages to agriculture market information, workforce opportunities, and job networking and cell phone multimedia lessons to enhance instruction and learning.

**Educating Adolescent Girls in Support of Community Development in Mauritania**

http://www.unicef.org/adolescence/index_15245.html

This project of the United Nations Children’s Fund aims to improve the lives of adolescent girls in Mauritania through 1) contributing to the Government of Mauritania's efforts to reduce gender and regional disparities in terms of education and future opportunities; and 2) contributing to an equitable and sustainable development by reinforcing the capacity and participation of girls in the social economic and political life of the country. Specifically, the project will improve secondary schools; facilitate school access and registration for girls; reduce the female student dropout rate, and offer life skills training.

**Mozambique — Entrepreneurship Development for the Youth**
This United Nations Industrial Development Organization project partners with the Government of Mozambique to carry out secondary school system reform to make education more practical and relevant for the economic and social needs of the country. Part of the government’s poverty reduction strategy, this collaboration aims to help youth create jobs through an entrepreneurship training and curriculum. This entrepreneurship curriculum, funded by the Government of Norway, was expanded between 2007 and 2010.

**Shaqodoon: Somalia Youth Livelihood Program**

*http://idd.edc.org/projects/shaqodoon-somalia-youth-livelihood-program*

Funded by USAID and a part of the Educational Quality Improvement Program 3 (EQUIP3), Shaqodoon was created to provide Somali youth with greater access to training, internships, work and self-employment opportunities in order to productively engage youth and add to the stability and development of the region. Shaqodoon, which is Somali for “job-seekers,” works with employers to better understand their needs for skills, assist education and training providers to develop programs more focused on meeting labor market demand, and build upon existing technical training programs via direct financial support distributed through an open, competitive process. The project uses innovative technology to help achieve its goals: Shaqodoon is producing interactive, Somali-language audio programs on financial literacy and entrepreneurship and linking youth to opportunities through the use of cell phones and web-based technologies. The program is active in Somaliland, Puntland, and South Central Somalia.

**Resources for Practitioners**

**Population Dynamics in the LDCs: Challenges and Opportunities for Development and Poverty Reduction (2011)**

*http://unfpa.org/public/home/publications/pid/7599*

This recent report from the United Nations Population Fund states that investments in young people are critical to boosting least developed countries’ productive capacity and speeding their escape from poverty. According to the report, the world’s 48 least developed countries (LDCs) have a large and rapidly growing youth population, with some 60 per cent of their population under the age of 25. These young people can drive economic growth and poverty reduction if they enjoy health, education and employment — especially young women and girls, the report adds.

**Building Human Capacities in Least Developed Countries to Promote Poverty Eradication and Sustainable Development (2011)**

*http://unesdoc.unesco.org/images/0019/001915/191597e.pdf*

As a major contribution to the preparation of the LDC conference, the United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) has produced a report on the role of education, the sciences, culture and communication and information in poverty eradication and sustainable development. The report provides information on the progress of the LDCs in achieving the goals of the Brussels Program of Action. In
response to a call for a “new international support architecture” in favor of the Least Developed Countries, to be discussed further in the run-up to UNLDC IV, the report sets out an agenda of what should be included in this support mechanism. Drawing on experience from a range of countries, it identifies problems and sets out solutions that can help make education, the sciences, culture and communication and information a force for sustainable, equitable human development in the LDCs.

**From Brussels to Istanbul: Key Development Challenges Facing the Least Developed Countries (2011)**
http://www.unctad.org/Templates/Download.asp?docid=14890&lang=1&intItemID=5548
This report is a compilation of documents from pre-conference events organized by the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD) in preparation for the LDC conference in Istanbul. This includes the report from a 2010 meeting in Geneva on building capacity in LDCs; issues for discussion drawn from a pre-conference event, also in 2010; and proposals stemming from a meeting on tourism for development in LDCs, among other documents.

**Growth, Productive Employment and Decent Work in the Least Developed Countries**
This report from the International Labor Organization (ILO) addresses key issues in growth and employment in LDCs in Africa, Asia, and the Pacific. It reviews trends in growth, employment and decent work in LDCs, highlighting challenges and opportunities for structural transformation, job creation and poverty eradication. It offers policy recommendations to be tailored to country needs and circumstances, with the goal of contributing to productive transformation and social progress in LDCs. The report states that there has been a weak increase in productive employment, especially for young people, and that the youth population must be addressed in any policy recommendations.

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.