

# EQ Review

Educational Quality in the Developing World



*EQ Review is a newsletter published by USAID's EQUIP1 to share knowledge about issues fundamental to improving educational quality and to communicate successes, challenges, and lessons learned by USAID Missions.*

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## Changing the Future for Out-of-School Youth



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Educational Quality Improvement Program  
Classrooms • Schools • Communities

Addressing the education and training needs of out-of-school youth is one of the greatest challenges facing basic education today. In most developing countries large populations of young people (ages 12 to 24) have either never had access to formal education or failed to complete primary or secondary school; those youth who have managed to complete primary school often receive a low-quality education and graduate despite lacking basic skills.<sup>1</sup> Although these young people constitute the future of their countries, many languish and waste their potential due to a lack of access to programs that can help them.

Developing effective employment and livelihood-related education and training for out-of-school youth is not an easy task. It requires the delivery of programs with effective content that can be provided in a flexible manner, thus easing program access for youth with family and community responsibilities. Above all, it requires programs that go beyond the delivery of education and training to provide youth with opportunities to grow their own futures.

Such opportunities come in three ways. They come through efforts, for example by gaining entrance into primary, secondary, or university-based schooling, that enable youth who complete nonformal education and training to get subsequent access to formal education. They come through programs that offer youth a primary, secondary or vocational certificate for course completion. Or they come through programs that place youth in a job or other workforce experience.

The successful development of nonformal education programs for out-of-school youth often requires the integration of expertise from different disciplines and sectors. A successful program depends on sound and engaging educational instructional design, a pedagogical approach that enables young people to learn by working with the private sector as interns or apprentices, and also provides career counseling, micro-finance (for those who want to start a business) and occupational mentorship. It is useful to engage youth themselves in the design of youth education and training programs. They provide insights and suggestions that help customize the design of such programs, and enable them to meet the learning needs of their intended audience.

This issue of the EQ Review focuses on employment and livelihood-related education and training for out-of-school youth. It provides four examples of programs (Haiti, Bangladesh, the Philippines and Eastern Europe) that effectively integrate basic literacy and numeracy education with work readiness and vocational skills training. Although the programs differ in size and content, they share a commitment to quality education and training, and to helping youth gain access to jobs, livelihood opportunities, or further schooling.

Three of the four articles describe programs that take the extra step and increase the chances of participating youth to have a successful future. The fourth article focuses on a related topic, corruption in education in Eastern Europe, which also illustrates how lack of effective education and training can make it difficult for youth to have successful futures. Each of these articles is based on a project implemented by EQUIP3, a USAID effort to increase the effectiveness of education and training programs for out-of-school youth in countries around the world.

For more information please contact Ron Israel, Director, Youth and Workforce Programs at the International Development Division, Education Development Center, Inc. (EDC) at [risrael@edc.org](mailto:risrael@edc.org).

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<sup>1</sup> World Development Report 2007: Development and the Next Generation:  
<http://siteresources.worldbank.org/INTWDR2007/Resources/1489782-1158107976655/overview.pdf>

## Haiti: Out-of-School Youth Livelihood Initiative

The USAID-funded Haitian Out-of-School Youth Livelihood Initiative, or IDEJEN as it is known locally, provides youth aged 15-24 job training and education. IDEJEN provides program participants support in the areas of basic and vocational education, job placement, and small business development. The project was launched in 2003, has worked with more than 7,000 youth to date, and will reach over 13,000 youth across the country by September 2010.

The IDEJEN project uses an integrative combination of educational objectives and livelihood counseling to help out-of-school youth forge their own way to economic self-sufficiency. The project model has two phases: a 12-month Basic Employability Training, followed by a 6-month Accompaniment Phase. All youth in the program benefit from basic literacy and numeracy instruction, life skills, and technical training, which is provided at more than 100 Youth Training Centers run by local community-based organizations. After they complete the initial training, youth receive an additional six months of livelihood support services, consisting of career counseling and job placement, entrepreneurship training and small business development, or assistance transitioning to further education. Livelihood accompaniment support is provided through nine Youth Career Centers, seven of which are hosted by regional Chambers of Commerce.

In challenging contexts such as Haiti, where poverty is rampant and the formal employment sector is extremely small, creative solutions are necessary to find livelihood opportunities for youth. The project uses several strategies to help youth develop their livelihoods. These strategies include links with other donor-funded workforce development projects, where jobs for youth have been identified, and development of strategic partnerships with government ministries that sponsor public works programs, such as the Ministry of Agriculture, Ministry of Trade and Industry, and Ministry of Environment.

To remain sensitive to the employment needs, IDEJEN continuously appraises the market for immediate- and medium-term economic opportunities for youth, which informs the choice of vocational training offered in each project location. Finally, IDEJEN's priority has been not only to find employment but also to help create employment through the development of small, youth-led businesses by groups of 4-6 youth, who receive entrepreneurship training, assistance with developing a business plan, and coaching as they begin their businesses. Employment is also created through income-generating activities (IGAs) organized by the IDEJEN centers and run by youth. Examples of IDEJEN IGAs include fruit processing and building services. Each IGA provides ongoing employment to an average of 5-10 youth.

In 2008, among 2,200 graduating youth, around 200 youth started small businesses, 950 youth enrolled in school, and 900 went into paid jobs or internships. The program has a pass rate of over 75 percent for both its literacy and technical training components. Fifty-five hundred youth, who are just now beginning the program, make up the latest cohort of future IDEJEN graduates.

For more information, please contact Hervé Jean-Charles, AOTR for the IDEJEN Project, at [hjean-charles@usaid.gov](mailto:hjean-charles@usaid.gov).



*IDEJEN Youth Learns How to Make Sandals*



*IDEJEN Youth Practices his Skills in Mechanics Class*

### Below are some reference materials on Workforce Development:

#### [Youth Livelihoods Development Program Guide](#)

This guide from EQUIP3 provides a practical set of suggestions and reference materials to improve youth livelihood development practices and to expand programming in this increasingly important area. The guide can be found at: <http://www.equip123.net/docs/e3-LivelihoodsGuide.pdf>

#### [Workforce Development Program Guide](#)

This guide from EQUIP3 is intended to assist those engaged in designing new in-country workforce development programs. Workforce development refers to programs and policies that promote the mastery of new job-related knowledge and skills, access to employment opportunities, and real jobs. The guide is on EQUIP website at: <http://www.equip123.net/docs/e3-programguidesworkforcedevelopment.pdf>

#### [Microfinance, Youth and Conflict: Central Uganda Case Study](#)

The EQUIP3 team helped to develop a series of Youth Livelihood Mapping Tools that form the basis for this case study in Uganda, which is part of the Microfinance, Youth and Conflict research initiative. The case study is located at: <http://www.equip123.net/docs/e3-UgandaCaseStudy-FINAL.pdf>

#### [West Bank - Gaza Case Study](#)

This case study is part of the Microfinance, Youth and Conflict research initiative. It examines the impact of conflict on employment for youth, the supply and demand for finance, and the roles of microfinance institutions, youth-serving organizations, families, and other entities in meeting the demand. The case study can be located on this link: <http://www.equip123.net/docs/e3-YMFCWBcasestudy.pdf>

## Bangladesh: Youth Employment Pilot (BYEP)



*BYEP Girls Participate in Horticulture Training*



*BYEP Youth Change the Aeration Pipe in Prawn Farming Tank*

The USAID-funded Bangladesh Youth Employment Pilot (BYEP) project is an 18-month pilot that aims to provide relevant education, training, and jobs for out-of-school youth. Launched in February 2009, BYEP offers out-of-school youth an education and training program that combines work-related literacy and numeracy courses with hands-on technical skills training and real work experience. The project actively involves the business community in identifying skill needs and works to place youth in wage employment and/or enable their self-employment.

This pilot focuses on a sub-sector of Bangladesh's fast-growing aquaculture industry – specifically, the fresh water prawn, or *galda*, farming sub-sector, which has an urgent need for skilled labor. Aquaculture products have a huge demand in the local and international market, and they provide better earnings than other agro-farming or processing work. Furthermore, the fresh water prawn farming sub-sector offers especially good opportunities for unemployed and underemployed male and female youth to engage in self-employment. Youth in Bangladesh prefer self-employment opportunities over wage employment for various reasons, including the ability to work from or near their homes and the higher earning potential that self-employment offers in occupations such as prawn farming.

This pilot project will train 360 out-of-school youth from Barisal for jobs or self-employment in the prawn farming industry. Youth participants will be introduced to all parts of the industry value chain to learn how the industry works and where in the industry their present and future employment opportunities might lie. Fresh water prawn hatcheries have a great demand for workers with skills in hatchery technology, which the project will provide to participating youth. Similarly, there is a strong market for farmers who know how to farm fresh water prawns efficiently and in ways that meet international standards.

The project is implemented by Education Development Center (EDC) in partnership with a local NGO that works closely with private hatchery enterprises. Training will be based on existing curriculum modules developed by the Bangladesh Department of Fisheries. These modules address international compliance standards and are consistent with the standards and competencies used in the UN Food and Agricultural Organization (FAO) hatchery management manual<sup>2</sup>.

For more information, contact BYEP AOTR Mohammad Shahidul Islam at [msislam@usaid.gov](mailto:msislam@usaid.gov).

## Philippines: Education Quality and Access for Learning and Livelihood Skills (EQuALLS2)



*EQuALLS2 Graduates Celebrate Completion of a Carpentry Program*

Abdulwahid (Abdul) Madidis is a 20-year-old high school drop-out from Datu Paglas, a town located in the Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao (ARMM), a region in the Philippines so affected by conflict and poverty that only about 40 percent of youth attend secondary school. Despite his challenging environment and lack of a high school diploma, Abdul imagines a better future in which he is owner of a furniture shop. Ordinarily such a dream may seem out-of-reach; however, in March 2009, Abdul graduated from a Carpentry Skills Training workshop offered by the USAID-funded Education Quality and Access for Learning and Livelihood Skills (EQuALLS2) Project.

Since 2006, Education Development Center (EDC) and partners have been implementing EQuALLS2, providing basic literacy and livelihood skills programs for out-of-school children and youth through two main categories: (1) Alternative Learning Systems (ALS), and (2) workforce development programs. The ALS programs improve basic education competencies of out-of-school children and youth, whereas the workforce development programs focus on enhancing workforce and livelihood skills. While youth who have completed the ALS program are encouraged to re-enter the formal education system, they have the option of continuing on into the workforce development program.

Within the workforce development component, special emphasis has been placed on expanding and strengthening work readiness and livelihood skills courses that are built around existing livelihoods, such as carpentry, masonry, plumbing, electricity and house wiring, small engine repairs, and production of traditional arts and crafts. These courses are developed in partnership with other agencies such as the Technical Education and Skills Development Authority and USAID-funded Growth with Equity in Mindanao (GEM) project. They are based on realistic market analysis of what livelihood opportunities for youth exist in specific locations. The courses provide work experience or internships and link participants to “next step” options, such as entrepreneurship courses or support with job search.

Both the ALS and workforce development programs aim to improve the basic education and livelihood skills of out-of-school children and youth. By 2011, EQuALLS2 expects to reach 100,000 out-of-school children and youth and open a new window for them to access better and improved livelihoods

For more information, please contact Tom Crehan, AOTR for EQuALLS2, at [tcrehan@usaid.gov](mailto:tcrehan@usaid.gov).



*EQuALLS2 Youth Listen to their Cementing Instructor*

<sup>2</sup> Guidelines for broodstock and hatchery management; Support for technical services: <http://www.fao.org/docrep/007/ae381e/ae381e00.HTM>

## Eastern Europe and Eurasia: Social Legacy Program

According to various accounts, following the fall of communism, corruption has become both more pervasive and a more accepted social phenomenon in several countries of Eastern and Southeastern Europe and the former Soviet Union. Corrupt practices in the education sector should be viewed as part of the overall corruption phenomenon because educational corruption develops and functions within the same system of incentives and disincentives as corrupt practices in the public sector or in business. The UNESCO's International Institute for Educational Planning defines corruption in the education sector as "the systematic use of public office for private benefit whose impact is significant on access, quality or equity in education."<sup>3</sup> Calculating objective estimates of corruption in the education sector is difficult not only because those involved in such transactions are reluctant to talk about it but also because there exists a considerable disagreement around what constitutes corrupt practices in the sector. The most prevalent corrupt practices in education include bribes, nepotism, favoritism, and embezzlement of state resources. What we know about the magnitude of these practices is based on surveys of individual perception of corruption and some surveys that document actual personal experience with corruption in education. While quantifying the effects of corruption in education on individual and national levels is difficult, scholars generally agree that corruption in education undermines education quality and, consequently, a person's ability to effectively compete in increasing global economy.

The education sector is ideally positioned to instill ethical values and behaviors and can play a major role in a country's strategy to fight corruption. Eliminating (or at least limiting) unethical behavior and practices in the education sector is, therefore, crucial to promote the broader goal of addressing national corruption. Reaching this goal requires a multi-prong approach. A broad engagement of civil society and especially of youth and youth NGOs is central to this strategy.

USAID's Europe & Eurasia Social Legacy Program works to reduce corruption in education in Armenia, Azerbaijan, and Macedonia. In 2008, the project created the Transparent Education Network (TEN) to bring together key individuals and organizations from the region to foster peer-to-peer collaboration and dialogue and share best practices, challenges, and resources in this field. TEN's membership includes, for example, youth-led and youth-serving civil society NGOs, such as the Student Self-Government Support Committee in Ukraine. TEN's goals are to: a) raise awareness about corruption in education and its impact on society; b) strengthen local capacity to analyze the effects of corruption; and c) promote a culture of transparency and accountability in tertiary-level schools.

To accomplish these goals, the project works with local organizations in the region, including NGO Center (Armenia); YUVA (Azerbaijan), and Youth Education Forum (Macedonia). TEN is conducting community-based/student-led awareness-raising activities in order to help all key stakeholders understand the impact of corruption in education at all levels, including its effects on graduates' employment opportunities. Further, TEN is coordinating with universities to develop codes of conduct for students, faculty, and staff, as a way to promote accountability and transparency at the school level.

TEN members are expected to work closely with business representatives and other employers to endorse the efforts of universities that are taking action in the fight against corruption in education and to help students understand how their employment prospects can improve upon more transparent education systems.

For more information, please contact Lubov Fajfer, AOTR for the E&E Social Legacy Project, at [lfajfer@usaid.gov](mailto:lfajfer@usaid.gov).



*Armenia TEN Youth Participants Brainstorm Corruption Issues*



*SLP TEN Azerbaijan Youth Prepare for Anticorruption Simulation Exercise*



*SLP TEN Macedonia Youth Participate in a Training Activity*

<sup>3</sup> [IIEP (2001) Background Document, Expert Workshop on Ethics and Corruption in Education. Paris: UNESCO]