



USAID
FROM THE AMERICAN PEOPLE



EQUIP3 LESSONS LEARNED

Experiences in Livelihoods,
Literacy, and Leadership
in Youth Programs in
26 Countries

2003-2012







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PREFACE

In the period after September 11, 2001, there was a national moment of openness, reflection, and willingness to re-think our approaches. Within U.S. foreign assistance, there was a sense that business as usual would no longer do. One result of this soul-searching was USAID's first-ever conflict policy, promulgated in 2005, with its focus on conflict-sensitive development programming. Within USAID's Education Sector and the UNESCO Education for All effort, a major concern was the huge number of youth who remained outside of formal school systems. How could they be reached? What kinds of educational interventions were needed? What new forms of outreach and engagement were needed? EQUIP3 was born in 2003 out of this concern and as an experiment of sorts. There was clearly a demand from USAID missions and developing country governments for assistance in building formal education systems, but the realm of youth was uncharted.

USAID had invested in youth programming before EQUIP3, but these activities tended to be sporadic and unconnected to a broader USAID agenda. EQUIP3 was the first large-scale, global project dedicated to youth education. It could be built, but would they come? After a quiet start-up, nine years later, the answer to that question is an unequivocal yes. Not only did USAID missions robustly invest in youth programming (\$250 million over nine years in some 26 countries), but they did it along lines that had not been initially anticipated.

The first of these trends was that EQUIP3 programs were largely implemented in conflict-affected countries and regions: first, Haiti, then Afghanistan, West Bank/Gaza, followed by the Philippines/Mindanao, East Timor, Somalia, and Kenya (Garissa region). The clustering of youth projects in conflict-affected regions meant that USAID was responding to analyses linking large youth populations with increased vulnerability to civil conflict and counteracting this risk by offering youth constructive alternatives to violence. It was only as time went on and the international youth development field began to accelerate that USAID missions in more stable developing countries began to invest in EQUIP3 youth programming (such as in India and Rwanda).

A second trend involved sectoral expansion and integration, during which EQUIP3 expanded beyond the basic education focus of the original project framing. USAID missions brought a variety of funding sources outside of education, especially economic growth and conflict mitigation funds, and to a lesser extent, HIV/AIDS and democracy and governance funds. EQUIP3's analytic frameworks, including the cross-sectoral youth assessment methodology and project designs, became intentionally and deliberately cross-sectoral.

Our experience with EQUIP3 over the past nine years has contributed enormously to USAID's first-ever Youth in Development Policy, anticipated in 2012. The importance of a positive youth development approach, youth engagement in project design, community mobilization for youth programming, cross-sectoral and holistic programming, listening to youth, and engaging them where they are—these are all lessons learned from EQUIP3 that have enriched our approach to working with youth in developing countries. Youth-led community service, livelihoods development, use of SMS technology, youth media, and accelerated, flexible, and basic technical, work readiness and life skills development are among the wide range of program modalities that EQUIP3 utilized to reach out to and prepare youth for adulthood.

EQUIP3 has been a rich learning experience for us all: USAID and international partners, as well as the myriad of dedicated, dynamic local stakeholders, youth associations, partners, and communities who will continue to “grow” more and better opportunities for young people in the developing world. As EQUIP3 concludes, we are all better situated to create the next generation of youth programming and partnerships that will truly nurture, prepare, and inspire the youth of tomorrow.

— Clare A. Ignatowski, Ph.D.
EQUIP3 USAID AOR (2004–2012)
March 2012

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Nancy Taggart
Deputy Director, EQUIP3

Erik Payne Butler
Director, EQUIP3

ACRONYMS

AC	Affiliated clubs
AISPY	Al Saleh Institute Support Project for Youth
AOTR	Agreement Officer Technical Representative
AYP	Advancing Youth Project
BYEP	Bangladesh Youth Employment Pilot Activity Program
CBO	Community-based organization
CMM	Office of Conflict Management and Mitigation
CRS	Catholic Relief Services
CSO	Civil society organizations
DAP	Developmental Assets Profile
DFID	United Kingdom Department for International Development
DHS	Demographic and Health Survey
DRC	Democratic Republic of Congo
EEA	Education and Employment Alliance Program
EFA	Education for All
EFF	Equipped for the Future
EGAT	Office of the Economic Growth and Trade Bureau
ELSA	Education and Livelihood Skills Alliance
EQaALLS2	Education Quality and Access for Learning and Livelihood Skills Phase 2
EQUIP	Educational Quality Improvement Program
ESA	Macedonian Employment Services Agency
GDA	Global Development Alliance
GWIT	Global Workforce in Transition Program
IDEJEN	Haitian Out-of-School Youth Livelihood Initiative
ILO	International Labor Organization
INFP	Haitian National Institute of Professional Training
IYF	International Youth Foundation
KSA	Knowledge, skills, and attitudes
LCEP	Assessment of the Literacy and Community Empowerment Program
LGU	Local government unit
LAP	Livelihood Assessment Report
LRC	Livelihood Resource Center
LWA	Leader-with-Associates Mechanism
MEGA-Sky	Minority Education and Skills Training for Youth Program
METAS	Mejorando la Educacion para Trabajar, Aprender, y Superarse
NGO	Nongovernmental organization
PAJE-Nieta	Projet d'Appui aux Jeunes Entrepreneurs (Project to Support Youth Entrepreneurs)
PAS	Prepara Ami ba Servisu (Preparing Us for Work)
PEPfar	President's Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief
PTA	Parent-Teacher Association
RYON	Rwanda Youth Opportunity Network
SCANS U.S.	Secretary of Labor's Commission on Achieving Necessary Skills
SKYE	Skills and Knowledge for Youth Employment Project
STAY	Skills Training for Afghan Youth Project
SYLP	Somalia Youth Livelihood Program—Shaqodoon
TESDA	Philippines Technical Education and Skills Development Authority
TVET	Technical and vocational education and training
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
USAID	United States Agency for International Development
U Wits	University of Witwatersrand
YDSI	Youth Development Strategies, Inc.
YES	Youth Employability Skills Network
YEP	Young Entrepreneurs Program
YRDC	Youth Development Resource Centers
YSO	Youth serving organizations



INTRODUCTION



INTRODUCTION

The USAID-funded Educational Quality Improvement Program 3 (EQUIP3) was designed to improve earning, learning, and skill development opportunities for out-of-school youth in developing countries. EQUIP3 was one of three USAID-funded EQUIP programs that promoted improved educational quality in countries around the world. EQUIP was a partnership with USAID, a consortium of international partner organizations, and host country public and private institutions. The EQUIP3 consortium of international partners included Education Development Center, Inc. (EDC), as the prime and other organizations such as the International Youth Foundation and FHI360 (formerly AED).

EQUIP3 has been guided by the conviction that young people are assets, not threats or problems to be solved. EQUIP3 programs have engaged in services and instruction that support young people in considering their economic future—as employees, entrepreneurs, or participants in small-scale livelihood activities. Over the past nine years, the program has helped youth secure livelihoods, whether in the formal or informal sector, to serve as their starting point for productive participation in society and the economy.

To support the healthy and positive development of young people, EQUIP3 helped to equip them with a common set of skills and attributes:

- Practical, marketable skills, ranging from literacy and numeracy (the ability to process and use information) to hands-on vocational skills suited to local circumstances and labor demand
- Actionable information about training and education, work opportunities, better health, full participation in citizenship, and how to feel busy and productive
- Affiliation as well as useful connections that enable them to belong and have access to all of the above

Two broad categories of interventions help youth acquire these skills and assets:

- Supply-side interventions, which are direct interventions, particularly training programs

- Demand-side interventions, which target the socioeconomic environment in which youth are earning a livelihood

While some programs—within and beyond EQUIP3 projects—include both supply- and demand-side interventions, most focus resources on one or the other. EQUIP3 projects have emphasized primarily, but not exclusively, training and other supply-side activities.

EQUIP3 Leader-with-Associates (LWA) Mechanism

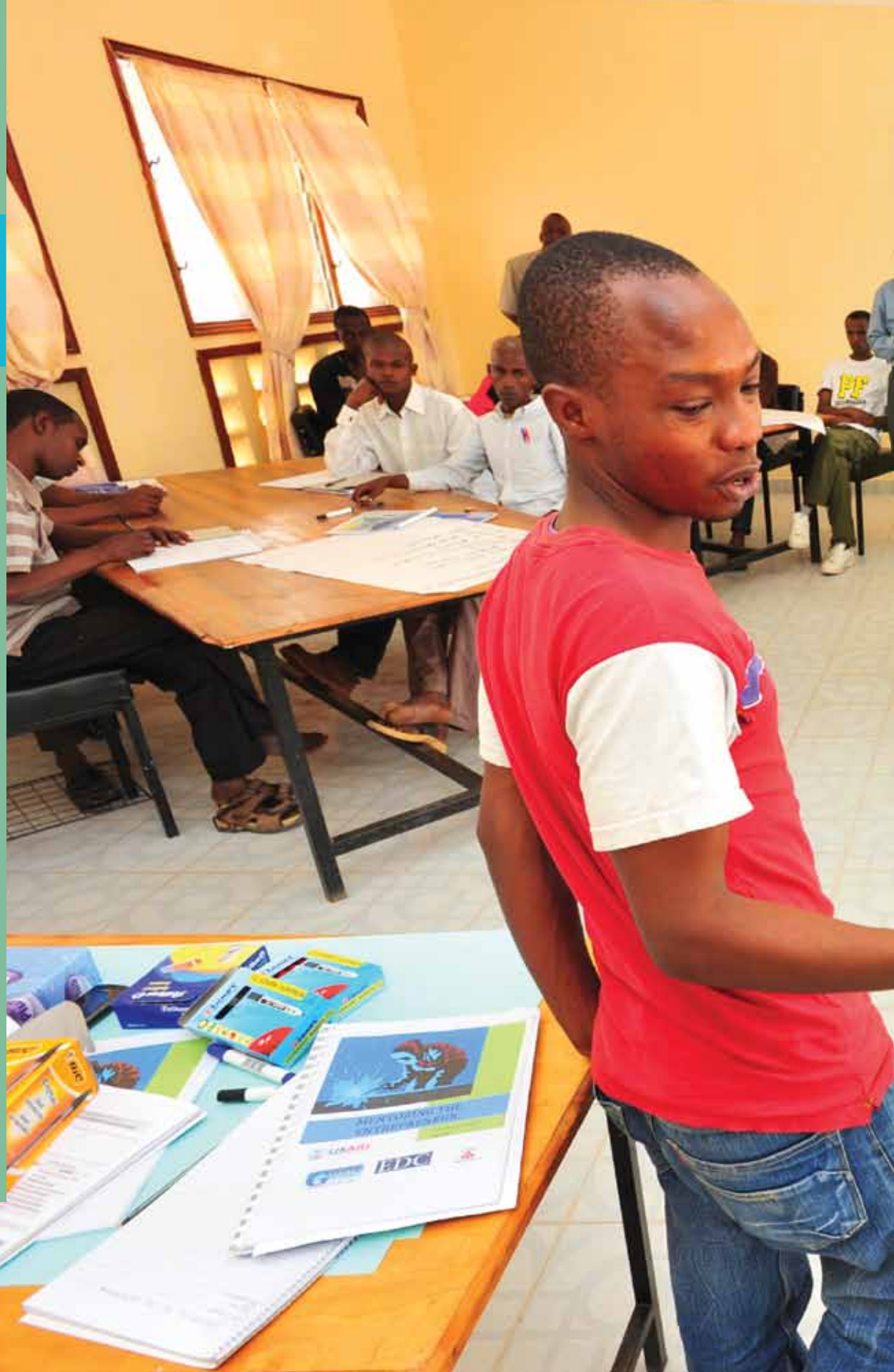
EQUIP3 operated with USAID under a Leader-with-Associates (LWA) Cooperative Agreement, which meant there was a single lead cooperative agreement under which multiple associated awards could be made. There were two types of EQUIP3 activities:

Leader Award activities focused on project design, research, and development, and dissemination of best practices and lessons learned.

Associate Awards were projects in the field funded by USAID missions that targeted at-risk youth.

EQUIP3 worked cooperatively with USAID missions, private, and public organizations, and host country stakeholders to:

- *Improve* the effectiveness of programs and policies to assist out-of-school youth.
- *Identify* youth-related quality-of-life issues through action, research, and monitoring and evaluation.
- *Design* initiatives that are tailored to the country and USAID strategies to help youth and their families improve their education, health, economic security, and civic participation.
- *Build* technical and management capacity among local organizations, government ministries, and private corporations.





CHAPTER I. HISTORY

I. HISTORY

EQUIP3 programs have spanned 25 projects in 26 countries in Sub-Saharan Africa, the Middle East, Asia, Latin America, and Eastern Europe and Eurasia. Among these countries, EQUIP3 has worked in some of the most challenging contexts, characterized by political instability, natural disaster, or ongoing conflict. In fact, most of the countries in which EQUIP3 projects have been implemented could be categorized as crisis- or conflict-affected. As of December 2011, the following had been accomplished:

- EQUIP3 has reached more than 200,000 youth, a number that will increase as 10 EQUIP3 projects are continuing, some projected until 2016.
- Projects have trained more than 50,000 youth in work readiness skills to prepare them for employment and livelihood opportunities. Nearly 60,000 youth have completed vocational training.
- While it has been a core focus of only a couple of EQUIP3 projects, more than 1,000 youth have completed civic leadership training, inspiring the creation of over 40 youth-led institutions.
- Projects have created more than 400 youth development partnerships or networks, including nearly 700 separate stakeholder institutions.¹ More than 500 youth-serving institutions² have benefited from training and capacity-building assistance.

When EQUIP3 was launched in 2003 by the Education Office of the Economic Growth and Trade (EGAT) Bureau in USAID, the projects focused primarily on the basic education needs of out-of-school youth. As projects were implemented, and EQUIP3 learned more about youths' diverse needs and priorities, the projects evolved to focus on youth civic participation and livelihoods as well. The program served as a valuable testing ground, both for adapting approaches from the United States and Europe and for developing whole new approaches tailored to country contexts. Over the past nine years, EQUIP3 programs have evolved, whereby the experiences and lessons from the first set of programs have influenced the design and been incorporated into the implementation of later EQUIP3 programs. Throughout this evolution, certain patterns can be seen in how programs have been designed. (Table 1 provides an overview of all of the associate award programs under EQUIP3.)



For example, the first few EQUIP3 projects—the Haitian Out-of-School Youth Livelihood Initiative (IDEJEN) in Haiti, the Literacy and Community Empowerment Program (LCEP) in Afghanistan, and the Palestinian Youth Empowerment Program (Ruwwad) in West Bank/Gaza—began with a specific focus, such as nonformal education and vocational training, literacy, or youth leadership. Through these experiences, EQUIP3 learned that complementary services and activities were needed in order to address the multiple factors that impacted young people’s capacity to participate productively in society and the economy. For longer running projects, such as IDEJEN and Ruwwad, the projects themselves were able to evolve and add components or services to meet targeted youths’ demonstrated needs. Basic support for young people seeking to start a business and coaching for young people following training were added to IDEJEN. Ruwwad added ICT (information and communication technology) and entrepreneurship training to give youth skills for media activities, which fostered youths’ civic engagement as well as positioned them for possible media-related jobs, or to help them build their own opportunities.



“With this training, I realized that I could earn money by processing fish here at home. It helps that my father is a fisherman, so I can use his fresh catch to make sardines and then I sell those and earn money.”

– Training Graduate from EQuALLS2, Philippines

These initial projects also shaped how subsequent projects were designed. For example the next group of projects—Education Quality and Access for Learning and Livelihood Skills (EQuALLs2) in the Philippines, the Bangladesh Youth Employment Pilot Activity (BYEP), the Al-Saleh Institute Support Project for Youth (AISPY) in Yemen, Prepara Ami ba Servisu (PAS) in East Timor, Akazi Kanoze in Rwanda, the Garissa Youth Project (G-Youth) in Kenya, and the Somali Youth Livelihood Program (SYLP) in Somalia—all included a work

readiness training component to equip young people with “soft skills” that supported vocational skills training and basic literacy and numeracy. Sometimes EDC offered this training, and sometimes partners offered it.

Another category of projects was influenced by Ruwwad as staff recognized the importance of strengthening youths’ leadership skills to reinforce their capacity to develop a livelihood. Therefore EQUIP3 added youth leadership to its package of services for youth development. This third component can be seen in the later programs of



G-Youth in Kenya and PAJE-Nièta in Mali. While all EQUIP3 programs provide an opportunity for young people to affiliate and belong, this effort was more purposeful and is evolving into a conscious strategy.


The latest phase of EQUIP3 projects—Young Entrepreneurs Program (YEP) in Kosovo, Mejoranda la Educacion para Trabajar Aprender, y Superarse (METAS) in Honduras, Youth Employability Skills (YES) Network in Macedonia, Partnership for Innovations Activity (PI) in Bosnia and Herzegovina, Skills and Knowledge for Youth Employment (SKYE) in Guyana, and Advancing Youth Project (AYP) in Liberia—have further developed work and livelihood training to include more strategic approaches to equip youth with entrepreneurship skills and to link youth to financing. These projects offer lessons about developing small enterprises in vastly divergent economies, from rural sub-Saharan Africa to the European Union pre-accession countries of Eastern Europe.

EQUIP3's approach has prioritized serving out-of-school youth through local institutions and building the capacity of community-based organizations and government through partnerships and networks. Some are organized within government agencies, such as the nonformal education division of a ministry of education. Others are organized at the community level, in partnership with local non-governmental organizations (NGOs).



As EQUIP3 projects have included increasingly cross-sectoral skills, projects have moved from single-sector USAID support (in education or only economic growth) to cross-sectoral support, and projects more frequently provided information about HIV and AIDS, and adolescent and reproductive health. As the needs of youth are diverse, the service strategies that evolved to those needs also diversified.

Finally, it is fair to note that since youth programming in developing countries was a relatively new field, the evidence base for what worked was small and the tools for how to measure what worked were few. Over the course of EQUIP3, a number of evaluation tools were piloted for the purpose of measuring outcomes from youth workforce programs that had not been captured or analyzed previously. These are now being adapted under later EQUIP3 projects and have helped to point to areas of investment for future programs. Moreover, methodologies and models developed under EQUIP3 have contributed to further investments by USAID in youth programming, such as YouthMap, a USAID-funded program that supports cross-sectoral youth assessments in Sub-Saharan Africa.



This report seeks to draw out the rich experiences and lessons learned from EQUIP3 youth programs with the goal of informing future program directions. The report is organized around the major areas in which the program worked:

- EQUIP3's three primary technical areas: livelihoods and workforce development, literacy, and youth leadership
- Lessons learned in the cross-cutting areas of program design and management, evaluation, and program sustainability
- Youth programming in fragile states

Each section discusses the results, challenges, and tools or products that have been developed.

-
- 1 Youth development partnerships or networks are defined as groups of organizations (public or private) that are working together on youth development. Stakeholder institutions are defined as each of the "member" organizations that comprise the youth development partnership or network.
 - 2 Youth-serving institutions are defined as non-government organizations or host country government entities that provide services for youth.

Table 1. EQUIP3 Associate Awards (by date)

BOSNIA –HERZEGOVINA	
Project Name: Partnership for Innovation (PI) Project in Bosnia and Herzegovina	Dates: 2011–2016
<p>Summary: PI is a 5-year, \$5-million USAID-funded project that aims to (1) improve the competitiveness of small and medium enterprises (SMEs), thus enabling them to meet market demand and preserve and generate jobs, and (2) provide new opportunities for employment and self-employment for young people (ages 18–35). PI will achieve these goals through the creation and support of Business Innovation Centers (BICs). BICs will provide:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Greater access to training in advanced technical skills, methodological skills to improve efficiency, and skills in technology screening, as well as access to advanced equipment and applications to SMEs • A range of resources to help young men and women gain or improve their access to the ICT (information and communications technology) labor market, or embark on an ICT-related micro-enterprise <p>Key outcomes will include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Establishment of 2 sustainable BICs • Improved efficiency in 200 firms as a result of BIC services • Employment of 100 youth <p>An external evaluation is planned.</p> <p>Website: No website yet</p>	
LIBERIA	
Project Name: Advancing Youth Project (AYP)	Dates: 2011–2016
<p>Summary: AYP is a 5-year, \$35-million project that provides increased access to quality alternative basic education services, social and leadership development, and livelihoods for out-of-school youth ages 13–35 who have no or marginal literacy and numeracy skills.</p> <p>AYP works closely with the Ministry of Education and community-based organizations to build their capacity to manage the system and programs that provide youth with the knowledge and skills they need to succeed.</p> <p>Key activities include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Developing three levels of curriculum in literacy, numeracy, life skills, and work readiness • Training facilitators to deliver alternative basic education • Providing youth with work-based learning opportunities, and links to skills and entrepreneurship training • Forming youth clubs and local alliances to support youth education and enhanced livelihoods • Developing private-public partnerships <p>AYP’s focus is on testing alternative models, conducting rigorous evaluation, and providing designs for sustainable national service delivery.</p> <p>A midterm external evaluation is planned and budgeted.</p> <p>Website: http://idd.edc.org/projects/liberia/usaidleria-advancing-youth-project</p>	

GUYANA

Project Name: Skills and Knowledge for Youth Employment (SKYE) Project

Dates: 2011–2013

Summary: SKYE is a 2-year, \$2.6-million project that:

- Expands employment, education, and skill-building opportunities for youth at risk
- Strengthens re-integration of youth offenders into society
- Improves the enabling environment for youth development

Approximately 600 youth ages 15–24 who are at risk for or already involved with the juvenile justice system receive alternative sentencing, work-readiness training, and livelihood coaching. Each youth participant works with a SKYE coach to develop an Individual Employability Plan. This plan outlines how the young person will reach his or her development destination of employment, further education, or small business development.

A final evaluation is planned and budgeted.

Website: No website yet

KOSOVO

Project Name: Young Entrepreneurs Program (YEP) in Kosovo

Dates: 2010–2013

Summary: YEP is a 6-year, \$3.27-million project that aims to better prepare Kosovo youth ages 18–35 for work in a growing market economy.

To meet this goal, YEP:

- Provides ongoing support and matching seed grant assistance to prepare young entrepreneurs
- Engages employers and other leaders to combine resources, skills, and policies to create a sustainable system of opportunities and supports for out-of-school and out-of-work young people
- Is investing in the development of a sustainable youth entrepreneurial support system. This system includes more youth-inclusive financial and consulting services and a peer-support network with links to networks of established entrepreneurs

Website: <http://idd.edc.org/projects/youth-employment-and-participation-yep-project-kosovo>

MALI

Project Name: Mali Out-of-School Youth Project, known locally as PAJE-Nièta (Projet d'Appui aux Jeunes Entrepreneurs-Nièta or Project to Support Youth Entrepreneurs)

Dates: 2010–2015

Summary: PAJE-Nièta (Nièta means “progress” in Bambara), is a 5-year, \$30-million project that serves rural, out-of-school youth in four regions—Sikasso, Kayes, Koulikoro, and Timbuktu.

PAJE-Nièta provides youth with:

- Improved basic education
- Work readiness and technical training
- Social and leadership development
- Accompaniment towards livelihood activities

Partners are CRS, Swisscontact, AJA, AMSS.

Website: www.equip123.net/webarticles//anmviewer.asp?a=711&z=123

Table 1. Overview of EQUIP3 Associate Awards-continued

HONDURAS	
Project Name: METAS (Mejorando la Educacion para Trabajar, Aprender, y Superarse)	Dates: 2010–2014
<p>Summary: METAS is a 4-year, \$10.585 million USAID-funded project. Project goals include the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Enable at-risk youth to gain the job skills, knowledge, attitudes, behaviors, and life perspectives needed to create positive futures • Provide Honduran companies with the skilled workforce needed to compete in international markets • Establish private-sector alliances to help youth secure jobs in the local labor market <p>Website: http://proyectometas.org/</p>	
AFGHANISTAN	
Project Name: Skills Training for Afghan Youth (STAY) Project	Dates: 2010–2011
<p>Summary: STAY was a 1.5-year, \$13.5-million project that provided vocational education and training, community-based skills development, and alternative education to empower 15–24 year olds in five provinces of the south and east regions of Afghanistan.</p> <p>The vision of the STAY project was to mobilize and strengthen youth to contribute to the economic development and security of the country. The goal was to engage and prepare youth for positive and productive roles in work, society, and family life.</p> <p>Website: http://afghanistan.usaid.gov/en/USAID/Activity/188/Skills_Training_for_Afghan_Youth_STAY</p>	
MACEDONIA	
Project Name: Youth Employability Skills (YES) Network in Macedonia	Dates: 2010–2015
<p>Summary: The YES Network is a 5-year, \$6.69-million project that teaches youth relevant skills to enable them to participate in the modern economy.</p> <p>The program targets:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Students in their final year in Macedonia’s Vocational Education and Training (VET) schools • Unemployed registrants with the Employment Service Agency (ESA) • Out-of-school youth ages 15–24. <p>The YES Network has already achieved national adoption of the work readiness curriculum—developed in NGO settings—by the formal Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) system.</p> <p>An external evaluation is planned.</p> <p>Website: http://macedonia.usaid.gov/en/sectors/education/YES.html</p>	

KENYA

Project Name: Garissa Youth Project (G-Youth), Kenya

Dates: 2008–2012

Summary: G-Youth is a 4-year, \$6.9-million project in Garissa Town in the North Eastern Province of Kenya. It is designed to create enabling environments that empower youth using a youth-owned, youth-led model.

G-Youth:

- Provides youth ages 16–30 with greater access to livelihood opportunities
- Promotes tolerance and peaceful coexistence among diverse communities through civic education
- Is an example of having youth participation as the centerpiece of the program as well as integrated throughout the program

An external evaluation is planned.

Website: www.g-youth.org

RWANDA

Project Name: Akazi Kanoze: Youth Livelihoods Project in Rwanda

Dates: 2008–2013

Summary: Akazi Kanoze is a 4-year, \$9.8-million project that seeks to improve the livelihood options of 12,500 youth, ages 14–24, in Kigali, Rwanda.

To achieve this goal, Akazi Kanoze provides youth with:

- Market-relevant life and work readiness training and support
- Hands-on training opportunities
- Links to the employment and self-employment job market

Akazi Kanoze has generated enthusiasm within the national government, leading to their supporting the integration of work readiness curricula within secondary schools.

In 2012, a midterm evaluation was underway.

Website: <http://akazikanoze.edc.org/>

PHILIPPINES

Project Name: EQuALLS2: Education Quality and Access for Learning and Livelihood Skills (EQuALLS) Phase 2

Dates: 2006–2011

Summary: EQuALLS2 was a 5.5-year, \$60-million project that aimed to uplift Mindanao, Philippines, through serving its youth.

EQuALLS2:

- Empowered communities to support better education
- Built teachers' capacity and resources
- Offered out-of-school children and youth alternative learning and livelihood opportunities

EQuALLS2 was coordinated in partnership with the Philippines Department of Education and three lead implementing organizations: International Youth Foundation, Save the Children, and Synergeia Foundation.

The project has generated significant national will and capacity to continue the youth services and programs, largely through local government institutions.

An external evaluation is being planned.

Website: www.equalls2.org/

Table 1. Overview of EQUIP3 Associate Awards-continued

SOMALIA	
Project Name: Somalia Youth Livelihood Program (SYLP)-Shaqodoon	Dates: 2008–2011
<p>Summary: SYLP, known locally as Shaqodoon, was a 3.5-year, \$10.2-million project aimed at providing over 8,000 unemployed and out-of-school youth ages 15–24 across the Somali regions with greater access to training, internships, work, and self-employment opportunities.</p> <p>Shaqodoon:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Equipped Somali youth with work and life skills to improve their futures and increase the stability of the region • Used Souktel’s SMS-based Info-Match tool to match job seekers and potential employers on the mobile phone-based platform <p>An external evaluation was conducted in late 2011 by IBTCL.</p> <p>Website: www.shaqodoon.org</p>	
WEST BANK & GAZA	
Project Name: Palestinian Youth Empowerment Program (Ruwwad) in West Bank/Gaza	Dates: 2005–2012
<p>Summary: Ruwwad is a 7-year, \$19.675-million project that gives Palestinian youth ages 14–30 opportunities to explore their potential and to learn the tools to become local leaders across the West Bank and Gaza.</p> <p>Ruwwad:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provides platforms for youth, including those in marginalized areas, to incubate their ideas, launch them into reality, and promote social change across the West Bank and Gaza • Creates a network of youth clubs and centers in the West Bank that provide diverse services to youth in their communities, giving them foundational skills to apply for work and internships <p>An external evaluation was conducted by JBS International in 2011.</p> <p>Website: www.ruwwad.org</p>	
KOSOVO, MONTENEGRO AZERBAIJAN, MACEDONIA, GEORGIA, AND ARMENIA	
Project Name: Workforce Competitiveness under the Social Legacy Program (SLP)	Dates: 2006–2011
<p>Summary: SLP was a 5-year, \$1-million project that reached out to youth and other vulnerable groups in Eastern Europe, helping them develop the tools they need to become local leaders of social change.</p> <p>SLP supported activities aimed at:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improving workforce competitiveness in Kosovo and Montenegro • Strengthening disability coalitions of NGOs in Armenia and Georgia • Promoting transparency in education and higher education institutions in Armenia, Azerbaijan, and Macedonia <p>Due to widespread socioeconomic insecurity and a dramatic collapse in basic social services, the region struggles to transition towards becoming market-oriented, democratic societies. SLP worked within labor markets and education systems, as well as enhanced social services and safety nets for vulnerable groups (especially people with disabilities).</p> <p>Website: http://ten.edc.org/</p>	

INDIA

Project Name: USAID/India's Minority Education and Skills Training for Youth Program (MEGA-SkY)

Dates: 2009–2011

Summary: MEGASkY was a 2-year, \$2-million project to create educational and skill-building opportunities for marginalized children and youth, especially within the Muslim community.

- MEGA operated at the formal and nonformal levels to facilitate access to quality educational opportunities for the acquisition of livelihood and life skills.
- SkY (Skills for Youth) worked at the policy level to incubate and replicate successful private sector vocational programs.

Website: <http://mega-sky.edc.org/>

EAST TIMOR

Project Name: PAS: Prepara Ami ba Servisu (Preparing Us for Work)

Dates: 2007–2011

Summary: PAS was a 4-year, \$5.5-million project that improved the capacity of local institutions to provide accessible and relevant workforce development and work readiness training to rural youth as a means to earn a better livelihood.

PAS training was geared to the specific learning needs and socioeconomic circumstances of minimally educated, low-skilled, out-of-school young women and men, ages 16–30, in rural districts of Timor-Leste.

An external evaluation was conducted in 2010.

Website: www.equip123.net/webarticles/anmviewer.asp?a=647

HAITI

Project Name: Haitian Out-of-School Youth Livelihood Initiative (IDEJEN)

Dates: 2003–2011

Summary: IDEJEN was a 7.5-year, \$17-million project that provided education and job training to 13,000 youth ages 15–24 who had little to no formal education.

IDEJEN provided program participants with support in the following areas:

- Employability and skills training
- Basic and vocational education
- Job placement and small business development

IDEJEN also provided technical support to different government ministries in the development of youth policies.

The IDEJEN Project's training allowed marginalized youth to deliver services and earn incomes in their communities, which increased their credibility with the adults in their communities. Now youth are seen as resources and positive contributors to development.

IDEJEN spun off a local NGO by leveraging new non-USAID funding. This NGO continues activities with a refined implementation model and generates revenue through specialized vocational training schools for youth.

Website: <http://idejen.edc.org/>

Table 1. Overview of EQUIP3 Associate Awards-continued

YEMEN	
Project Name: Al Saleh Institute Support Project for Youth (AISPY)	Dates: 2009–2011
<p>Summary: AISPY was a 1.4-year, \$1.65-million project designed to assist the Al-Saleh Foundation in supporting youth from Marib, Shabwah, and Al Jouf in developing work and livelihood skills.</p> <p>These skills helped youth find gainful employment or start businesses in their governorates, which contributed to their own economic well-being as well as the future prosperity of their communities and country.</p> <p>Website: www.amideast.org/yemen/professional-development/al-saleh-institute-human-development-support-project-aispy</p>	
BANGLADESH	
Project Name: Bangladesh Youth Employment Pilot Activity Program (BYEP)	Dates: 2008–2010
<p>Summary: BYEP was a 2-year, \$538,570 project that focused on the challenges and opportunities of improved vocational skills for youth in the fast-growing aquaculture industry.</p> <p>BYEP used a youth-centered approach designed to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Add value to the golda (fresh water prawn) industry • Provide education skills such as literacy and numeracy • Create employment opportunities for young women and men <p>Website: http://idd.edc.org/projects/bangladesh-youth-employment-pilot-byep</p>	
INDIA, DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF THE CONGO (DRC), AND MOROCCO	
Project Name: USAID Cross-Sectoral Youth (CSY) Program	Dates: 2006–2009
<p>Summary: The CSY program consisted of three demonstration projects in DRC, India, and Morocco targeting youth ages 15–24.</p> <p>The program activities focused on the following sectors:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Youth advocacy • Work readiness • Basic education • Health awareness • Civic engagement <p>Website: www.equip123.net/webarticles/anmviewer.asp?a=645&z=123</p>	
UGANDA	
Project Name: Education for All (EFA) in Uganda—The Kids League	Dates: 2005–2006
<p>Summary: The EFA program in Uganda focused on using sports as a convening mechanism for education and peace building. It targeted 270 youth and children ages 9–14 in conflict-affected areas.</p> <p>EFA also adapted Search Institute’s Developmental Assets Profile (DAP) approach as part of the monitoring and evaluation of the program.</p> <p>Website: www.equip123.net/webarticles/anmviewer.asp?a=655&z=123</p>	

JAMAICA

Project Name: EFA Challenge Grant— Earning, Learning, and Skill Development Opportunities for Out-of-School Youth in Jamaica

Dates: 2005–2007

Summary: The EFA Challenge Grant in Jamaica focused on addressing the education and employment challenges of urban boys. The program targeted 78 out-of-school young men and boys ages 15–24 in Kingston.

Website: www.equip123.net/webarticles/anmviewer.asp?a=655&z=123

SOUTH AFRICA

Project Name: EFA Challenge- City Year South African National Youth Service Program

Dates: 2005–2006

Summary: The EFA Challenge Grant in South Africa supported the adaptation of the U.S.-based youth service model City Year to the South Africa context to address employment, civic engagement, and education issues.

Website: www.equip123.net/webarticles/anmviewer.asp?a=655&z=123

AFGHANISTAN

Project Names: Assessment of the Literacy and Community Empowerment Program in Afghanistan (LCEP)

Dates: 2004–2006

Summary: Between 2004 and 2006, LCEP worked in 190 communities in the provinces of Parwan, Bamyan, Herat, Kandahar and Farah, reaching 38,000 rural Afghans.

LCEP:

- Offered integrated community development opportunities through activities in local governance, adult literacy and numeracy, and economic empowerment
- Facilitated the growth of 380 democratically elected Community Development Councils or CDCs (of which 190 were female)

Through learning centers in each community, village teachers offered literacy and numeracy instruction to learners ages 10 and over. Learners who completed the program were granted 3rd grade equivalency certification by the Afghan Ministry of Education.

Website: No website





CHAPTER II. LIVELIHOODS AND WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT

II. LIVELIHOODS AND WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT

Livelihoods and workforce development projects support youth to improve key skills and accumulate capital, both personal and economic. Easily the most complex area of EQUIP3 programs, improving youths' livelihoods and workforce development is the core of many EQUIP3 projects. Though highly context-specific, each EQUIP3 livelihoods development project has one or more components that may be categorized as follows:

- Work readiness training: Includes vocational (technical) skills and skills to prepare youth to find work and to work successfully
- Entrepreneurship training and support: Provides instruction in how to start a business and may provide access to seed funding
- Bridging strategies: Includes complementary services such as mentoring, coaching, work-based learning, linkages to financing, and other resources for business start up, and job placement
- Demand-side engagement: Activities that target the social-economic environment in which youth are earning a livelihood

A. Work Readiness Training

Most livelihoods and workforce development projects have work readiness training at their core, in which *work readiness* is defined as the “soft skills” needed to succeed at work or in a livelihood. Consistent with reports on other youth programs that have found these skills to be essential in livelihoods and employment programming, EQUIP3 work readiness trainings have often been seen by youth trainees, their families, and employers as the most valuable program component.³ In the PAS project in East Timor, youth pointed to gaining confidence and public speaking skills and cited the Life Map, (the professional development plan created by youth at the beginning of the PAS Project’s coaching phase) as the most influential.⁴ Under EQuALLS2 in the Philippines, the project’s business partners rated “positive values and work ethics” as more important than technical skills.⁵ Businesses argued that they can train youth on technical skills, but if youth don’t have positive attitudes, respectful behavior, and a readiness to learn, they have difficulty responding to the norms of the workplace.⁶

Drawing upon both U.S. expertise and the experiences of EQUIP3 projects in East Timor and Rwanda, the basic components of a work readiness framework were developed to inform training and curricula development for future EQUIP3 programs. The framework established learning standards for each area of skills as well as sample lesson topics that can be taught for each skill area. The framework also included certain key skills that should be imparted through the work readiness curricula. EQUIP3 defines these skills as follows:

- Work readiness skills—such as describing skills and interests, setting career goals, writing a resume, searching for a job, and contacting employers—help youth find and obtain employment.
- Performance skills—such as working in a team, being punctual, and accepting supervision respectfully—help youth meet the social and business requirements of the workplace and keep a job.
- Life skills—such as maintaining health and hygiene, solving problems, managing conflicts, and basic financial literacy—help youth manage their lives in a safe and healthy manner and balance work as part of a broader set of demands and opportunities.

The work readiness framework was used as the basis for curriculum development in East Timor, Rwanda and Kenya. The Rwanda curriculum was used as the basis for curriculum adaptation for PAJE-Nieta in Mali, EQuALLS2 in the Philippines, YES in Macedonia, and AISPY in Yemen; it is underway in SKYE in Guyana and AYP in Liberia.

EQUIP3's experiences also showed that it is helpful to offer work readiness trainings through existing institutions, if EQUIP3 provides technical oversight. In the Philippines, the work readiness trainings maintained support from the Technical Education and Skills Development Authority (TESDA), which is the national vocational and technical education and training regulatory agency. The trainings often took place in TESDA centers and TESDA-certified trainers contextualized the training to the local environment. A similar approach was used in Somalia under SYLP. However, when the local partners implemented work readiness training without EQUIP3 oversight, the program quality varied.

“Life has changed a lot. Before Akazi Kanoze, I couldn’t even afford shoes or pants. Now, I know how to set goals. Now, I set aside money for food, allowance, and savings.”

– Emmanuel, Akazi Kanoze, Rwanda

Another challenge experienced under EQUIP3 with work readiness training was the time investment necessary for building up a cadre of local work readiness trainers who have the requisite participatory training styles and attitudes for working with youth. Teacher-centered training styles are the norm in most countries where EQUIP3 has worked, and work readiness training will not be effective if a participatory, learner-centered approach is not used. Instilling this approach among trainers requires follow-up coaching and guidance beyond the training of trainers.

“The idea of starting a beauty parlor of our own never came to our mind. At first we could not even imagine it because we had no confidence in ourselves.” and “The Life Skills Training . . . was an eye opener and turning point of our lives.”

– Rajkumari and Premlata, MEGA-SkY, India

participatory, learner-centered approach is not used. Instilling this approach among trainers requires follow-up coaching and guidance beyond the training of trainers.

EQUIP3’s experience in work readiness training also highlights the challenge of how to meaningfully measure work readiness skills. While EQUIP3 and other life skills training programs use portfolio reviews and pre- and post-tests to measure youths’ knowledge acquisition, tests are self-reported and do not gauge how well youth may

apply their new skills on the job. Employer surveys are helpful for getting feedback on youths’ performance but these were not seen as sufficient for measuring youths’ attitude and behavior change in the workplace. In response, work is now underway to improve international work readiness learning assessments. After reviewing the work readiness framework and content standards, efforts have begun to define performance standards for work readiness that will serve as the basis for individual-level assessment tools. The assessment focuses on key skills in four top priority areas: (1) thinking skills and strategies, (2) collaboration skills, (3) interpersonal communication skills, and (4) work habits and conduct.

Preparing for Work

www.preparing4work.org

EQUIP3 has developed a website called Preparing for Work, which is designed to help country partners and international development practitioners develop better work readiness training programs. The site features peer-reviewed curricula in the areas of work readiness, entrepreneurship, technical skills, and life skills that have been written for an international audience or that are adaptable to an international context.

For each set of curricula featured, users will find:

- A summary of the curriculum
- At a glance details
- Two peer reviews
- Details of any formal program or curriculum evaluation
- Information on how to obtain the materials and an option to download free materials when available
- Space for users to contribute comments about the materials

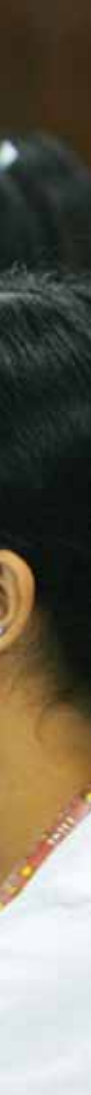
The site features an interactive tool for program managers that is designed to help them make a preliminary selection of curriculum materials that best fit with the needs of potential participants, the overall program goals, and the demands and opportunities of the local economy.

At the request of practitioners, a new section of the site focuses on strategies for linking programs with the private sector. It is divided into two subsections: (1) mechanisms for engaging the private sector (such as advisory councils and alliance models), and (2) Program areas in which to engage the private sector (such as internships and mentoring).



B. Entrepreneurship Training and Financing

As mentioned earlier, EQUIP3 livelihoods programs have evolved to incorporate different components based on youths' needs, and one such component is entrepreneurship training. EQUIP3 has partnered with other institutions, for example Catholic Relief Services (CRS) in Rwanda, and the International Labour Organization in Kenya, to adapt their existing entrepreneurship trainings; in some countries, EQUIP3 programs have developed their own. Beyond the entrepreneurship training, access to financing for youth entrepreneurs is a pervasive challenge in developing countries due to lenders viewing them as greater credit risks. EQUIP3's approach has been to help youth link to microfinance institutions, offer matching grants in which youth have to contribute an equal amount of capital, or help youth acquire adult guarantors and develop business plans.



Under IDEJEN in Haiti, youth received entrepreneurship training and then formed groups of five and developed a business plan. They then received a \$500 grant to start their small business, followed by several months of coaching. This strategy, however, presented some problems:

- While the group-based model reinforces team work, often one youth would emerge as the leader and take over the business.
- The startup grant was often insufficient, depending on the location and the type of business.
- Attempts to link youth participants with microfinance services were challenging because service providers were not willing to work with youth.

Under PAS in East Timor, youth received a foundational package of work readiness, technical training, and literacy/numeracy training, after which, they could choose to pursue nonformal education, find formal sector employment, or start their own business. Of the 1,700 who completed the program, 743 young people chose the entrepreneurship pathway, of which 59% were women, and 41% had only

Youth Livelihoods Development Program Guide

www.equip123.net/docs/e3-LivelihoodsGuide.pdf

This guide responds to the interest on the part of USAID and development practitioners worldwide for a common language to describe approaches for supporting youth to pursue a livelihood or income-generation activity. The document has four sections:

Section A: A Common Language for Youth Livelihood Programs

Section B: Conceptual Framework for Youth Livelihood Programs

Section C: Designing Effective Youth Livelihood Strategies

Section D: Additional Information and Resources

primary or some primary education. Youth received \$100 grants to start their business, with most youth choosing to start a kiosk-based business or a small shop near or at their home. The success of these businesses varied, with many not turning a profit. Among the challenges was insufficient business training for youth to help them understand how to analyze the potential market for a business and develop a business plan.

Learning from this experience, the Youth Entrepreneurship Program (YEP) in Kosovo offers grants to youth entrepreneurs who have viable business plans and who can contribute an equal cash match to the grant through personal savings, investors, or loans. YEP also partners with local lending institutions to encourage more lending activities for youth businesses and has negotiated favorable rates with some lending institutions.

More recently, under a cost-sharing agreement with Hewlett Packard Corporation, EQUIP3 has extended its knowledge development agenda to include a revised M&E system and a rigorous evaluation of the Corporation's HP-LIFE (Learning and Information for Entrepreneurship) program, which delivers technology-based training through more than 40 training centers globally, many in USAID-presence countries. This process should provide useful information about effective practices and useful curricula in private sector-supported training.

C. Complementary Bridging Strategies

EQUIP3 livelihood programs have confirmed that training or access to credit alone is insufficient to ensure youth are positioned for jobs and businesses— they need additional support. EQUIP3 defines these complementary “bridging strategies” as a process in which youth receive targeted support to help them transition from training to the next step in their career path, be it work experiences or further education and training. The process is based on an understanding of youths' interests, the market needs, training opportunities, and the facilitation of a match with potential employers or enterprise opportunities. These complementary strategies happen before, during, and after any training.

EQUIP3 began to offer these complementary services under IDEJEN in Haiti when working with extremely marginalized youth who lacked linkages to resources and information and needed considerable follow-up support. The services were referred to as “accompaniment,” using the French term. Under EQuALLS2, a workforce development study organized by the project highlighted the impor-

tance of non-training support for youth.⁷ The report found that access to capital, linkages to community in-kind resources, and guidance on how to navigate regulations for business startups were of most importance to youth in beneficiary communities of the Philippines.

EQUIP3 then began to integrate these services into the design of new programs in a more deliberate way, starting with PAS in East Timor and Akazi Kanoze in Rwanda. These are now included in the design of all EQUIP3 youth programs. Complementary strategies used by EQUIP3 projects have included integrating work-related vocabulary in literacy and numeracy lessons; mentoring, coaching, apprenticeships, and other practical training; job placement, career counseling, and linkages to job-finding and financial resources. Examples include SYLP in Somalia, which formed business advisory councils and hired a private sector specialist to create a network of friends and champions. This resulted in a 40 percent placement rate in internships. EQuALLS2 helped youth create individual development plans to navigate their way from learning to earning. SYLP also capitalized on youths' embrace of technology to link youth to employers through partner Souktel's SMS-based InfoMatch tool, which matches job seekers and potential employers on a mobile phone-based platform. The project trained 6,288 male youth and 4,372 female youth in its vocational training package, and more than 8,000 additional youth have accessed and utilized the InfoMatch tool.

As these bridging strategies have evolved through EQUIP3 programs, several challenges have arisen. The first has been the lack of an articulated strategy for choosing which support and services to offer so programs could replicate those that worked elsewhere. Another and related challenge is how to measure the outcomes of these strategies to determine the level of support that should accompany the training in a particular situation. Finally, identifying the most sustainable mechanisms to offer these services is a persistent challenge. Although face-to-face support may offer the highest quality, because of cost and capacity issues, it may also be the least sustainable. Providing partners training on effective coaching techniques takes time to ensure quality. Further piloting of online or cell phone-based delivery systems, such as InfoMatch, is a worthy area of investment.

"The mentoring and counseling classes were a lifeline for me, boosting my inner potential. I learned from the program how to write a CV, how to interview, and InfoMatch connected me to an actual job."

– Maimum, SYLP, Somalia

D. Demand-Side Interventions

Demand-side interventions target the environment in which youth are earning a livelihood and include the following:

- Policy measures to improve the macroeconomic environment
- Regulatory measures aimed at improving access to labor markets for youth and the entrepreneurship environment
- Value chain development in sectors with the greatest potential for youth employment
- Development of business services with an emphasis on services geared toward youth-owned enterprises
- Boosting of the demand for and/or supply of youth financial services

“Because I’m working with others, I don’t feel like an orphan anymore.”

– Evariste Ndayisaba,
Akazi-Kanoze, Rwanda

Demand-side interventions may have a broader scope than just youth, but nevertheless, can have positive effects on youth. Programs that neglect the demand side often fail to address the environmental factors shaping youths’ employment and livelihood opportu-

nities. As noted in the Commonwealth Youth Program and UNICEF paper *Promoting Adolescent Livelihoods*, “livelihood interventions in isolation can have limited impacts if broader policy-making at the macro-economic level does not explicitly address issues that affect adolescents.”⁸ Furthermore, the 2007 “World Bank Youth Employment Inventory” observes a misalignment between vocational skills-training program strategies and local and national labor market policies, leading to programs that do not demonstrate close connections with local labor markets.⁹

As best practices in employment programming show, there is a need to respond to employer needs, utilizing labor market assessments to understand the present needs and future trends affecting employers in a given region or labor market. A more demand-driven approach has led to the development of linkages to private sector employment opportunities as well as entrepreneurship skills training and small enterprise supports for youth in labor markets with weaker demand in the formal economy.

While work readiness programming is a part of many economic growth programs, what makes several of the EQUIP3 programs noteworthy is how they tailored their demand-driven approach to working with youth. Businesses are often skeptical of the capacity of out-of-school youth as potential interns or employees. Rapid youth

assessments have identified a sense of distrust and even fear among businesses toward disadvantaged youth. Stigmas about hiring out-of-school youth or extending credit to youth are often more daunting than challenges experienced by adults.

In response to these attitudes, EQUIP3 projects in Haiti, Rwanda, and East Timor have made efforts to generate support from businesses. The Akazi Kanoze project in Rwanda built private sector support early by asking business leaders to review EQUIP3's work readiness curriculum. Based on this local review and subsequent feedback, project staff conducted a pilot of the curriculum and then refined it based on feedback from the pilot. While this process takes more time and resources, it yields better results as the curriculum directly reflects the needs of employers, strengthening what Porter calls the "business cluster" which is defined as geographic concentrations of interconnected companies, suppliers, and institutions that increase productivity of local economies.¹⁰ Akazi Kanoze also identified the skills that were needed in the labor market, evaluated various industry sectors, and picked three sectors as priority partners. As of November 2011, based on the project's approach, Akazi Kanoze boasted a 50 percent placement rate for its youth (which includes youth participating in paid internships or jobs or youth who started their own businesses) in a country where estimates put unemployment of youth without secondary education at 61 percent.¹¹ In Somalia, SYLP has fostered business councils with private sector to place disadvantaged youth in internships and jobs in a context where the private sector and employed are hugely challenged by instability.

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 - 4 Whalen, Michelle. (2010). *Prepara Ami Ba Servisu program evaluation* (draft report). Washington, DC: United States Agency for International Development.
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 - 10 Porter, M. E. (1998, Nov/Dec). Clusters and the new economics of competition. *Harvard Business Review*.
 - 11 Republic of Rwanda Donors Group. (2006, September). *Assessment of the government's education strategy and financial framework, 2006–2015, for the Fast Track Initiative*. Retrieved from www.educationfasttrack.org/media/library/Rwanda_appraisal.pdf



CHAPTER III. LITERACY AND NUMERACY



III. LITERACY AND NUMERACY

While work readiness, as described earlier, has been at the core of most EQUIP3 projects, youth often lacked the necessary basic skills to undertake and learn from a work readiness or technical skills training program.

They could not read, write, or do enough basic math to participate in programs that assumed these skills. The ability to comprehend and use written material, as well as the ability to use numbers for problem-solving, measurement, estimation, and mapping, are practical requisites for gaining employment, starting a business, or seeking other opportunities. In response, EQUIP3 programs have added literacy and numeracy training based on identified needs among youth, and in other programs, literacy and numeracy was the core program component around which others were added. Staff quickly learned to assess upfront the language skills of potential youth participants and to plan accordingly. EQUIP3 programs used internal project expertise to create curricula, or worked with partners to adapt existing curricula. Consequently, literacy and numeracy curricula have been developed for nine projects, including LCEP in Afghanistan, IDEJEN in Haiti, EQuALLS2 in Philippines, and PAS in East Timor, and added to almost all of the new generation of programs—Akazi Kanoze in Rwanda, PAJE-Nièta in Mali, METAS in Honduras, MEGA-SkY in India, and AYP in Liberia.

An issue that arose in some programs was which language to use in teaching literacy. While literacy in English or French is an important skill for many jobs, it is well understood that literacy skills are most easily mastered in one's mother tongue. Research has shown that first language literacy facilitates literacy in a second, or other language, which is an important consideration for instructional policy and practice.

Acquisition of literacy in the national language, even when it is not the first language, is also important, especially for youth who want to pursue secondary or higher education, usually available primarily or only in the national language.¹² Once writing skills have been acquired in the first language, some of these skills (letter recognition and production, recognition of the relationship of symbols and sounds, and others) can be transferred to learning to read and write in the second language, especially if first language literacy is taught with this in mind.

The IDEJEN project began with Haitian Creole literacy because the great majority of participants did not know how to read or write in

Literacy for Out-of-School Youth: A Program Guide

www.equip123.net/docs/e3-Literacy.pdf

This program guide offers a resource for development specialists initiating or strengthening integrated literacy programs for youth ages 15–24 who are not involved in formal education.

The guide is divided into three parts:

Part I: Presents the case for investment in integrated literacy programs for out-of-school youth and explores how literacy skills are developed

Part II: Describes the policy context necessary to ensure the success of literacy programs for out-of-school youth

Part III: Includes a step-by-step process for designing, implementing, and evaluating effective literacy programs

any language. Eventually, the project offered French for students enrolled in its *ecole ateliers* (training centers that offered more advanced vocational training). The PAJE-Nièta project offers literacy in the local language and also an introduction to French. First language literacy was also an important component of the projects in the Philippines and Afghanistan.

Youth often need to read and write in other languages for employability. The Akazi Kanoze project responded to this need with a 20-hour conversational English course, which included greetings and workplace English for youth who had some English proficiency.

Integrating workforce preparedness or community participation concepts into literacy and numeracy activities is effective for helping youth apply their skills. In the PAS project in East Timor, youth in the Oecussi district learned to read and write words in Tetum, the national language, through using the work readiness curriculum. Youth also reinforced their numeracy skills by using a cashbook to record their income and expenses for their income-generation activ-



ities (which the project helped them to launch). With Akazi Kanoze, the project found that a journal could help to integrate a student's learning: learners used journals to reflect on and answer guiding questions that drew upon knowledge from their basic education classes, job skills training classes, and work experience. In the LCEP project in Afghanistan, the curriculum was a good example of a basic literacy curriculum entirely contextualized with community empowerment goals.

"I am very happy that my children are learning tailoring skills and learning to read. This will ensure that my daughters will be self-reliant."

– Mr. Ahmed, MEGA-SkY, India

Closely linked to the importance of equipping youth with basic literacy and numeracy skills is the priority of facilitating young people's return to the formal school system or earning

secondary school equivalency certification to better position them for employment. This is challenging for a great many youth because either there is no government equivalency exam or option to earn a certificate except through the formal system, or the equivalency standards are set so high that few can meet them. In response, some EQUIP3 projects have been designed to grant a certificate of primary or secondary equivalency or a diploma that allowed the learner to enter the formal system at a certain level or to present to potential employers or others evidence of an education equivalent to that offered in school. These nonformal, accelerated learning programs offered the opportunity for youth and adults to "catch up" on formal schooling they missed, often requiring that they spend only half the time in classes.¹³ The Akazi Kanoze project, for example, developed an accelerated learning program for learners at the P4 level to



bring them up to a P6 level and earn a primary education completion certificate. The program offers 300 hours of Kinyarwanda language classes, 200 hours of numeracy, and 100 hours of basic English instruction. The curriculum also includes work readiness and technical skills training in construction, hospitality, and other sectors in which job opportunities have been identified.

In Haiti, the National Institute of Professional Training (INFP) agreed to recognize the IDEJEN curricula to allow youth to earn a credential, which they could present to potential employers. According to USAID:

The level 2 certificate permits INFP and those who support it to resolve an old problem in Haiti: the integration of youth who have completed their secondary studies but haven't passed their baccalaureate. Before, there was no realistic way for these youth to continue in a technical field, because they wouldn't be admitted to a technical school. There was no place where nonformal education and traditional education could meet.¹⁴

12 Research by Cummins has shown, for example, that high levels of proficiency in the first language affect literacy in the second language: Cummins, J. (1979). Linguistic interdependence and the educational development of bilingual children. *Review of Educational Research*, 49(2), 222–251.

13 Deyo, L. (2007). *Afghanistan non-formal education: Country profile prepared for the Education for All global monitoring report 2008, Education for All by 2015: Will we make it?* Retrieved from <http://ddp-ext.worldbank.org/EdStats/AFGgmpro07.pdf>

14 LTL Stratégies. (2011, January). *Evaluation finale externe de l'initiative pour le développement des jeunes en dehors du Milieu Scolaire (IDEJEN)* (p. 12, Draft 1).



A high-angle photograph of a group of people sitting on a red floor, engaged in a team-building exercise. They are holding a yellow string that is being used to connect several clear plastic cups. The participants are dressed in casual attire, including white t-shirts and a red t-shirt. A green semi-transparent banner with a faint circular pattern is overlaid on the upper portion of the image, containing the chapter title. The bottom right corner of the image features a yellow-to-green gradient overlay.

CHAPTER IV. YOUTH LEADERSHIP

IV. YOUTH LEADERSHIP

Several EQUIP3 programs included a youth leadership component designed to engage youth in identifying community priorities and needs and to equip them with the requisite skills to take a leadership role in their communities.

A. Ruwwad Project –West Bank/Gaza

Youth leadership has been the core of the Ruwwad project in the West Bank, in which the “30/30” model was created. The original concept of 30/30 was to recruit 30 Palestinian youth, approximately 10 from each of the three operating areas of the West Bank—Al-Bireh (central), Nablus (northern), and Hebron (southern)—to participate in four-day Leadership and Community Engagement training sessions offered in Ramallah by Ruwwad staff and youth trainers, followed by approximately 26 days of community service project development and implementation.

Ruwwad sessions brought together youth from across the West Bank to share ideas and experiences and to identify critical community issues for three-month, youth-led community service initiatives. Palestinians ages 18–28 years were recruited through Ruwwad’s Youth Development Resource Centers (YRDCs) and its network of Affiliated Clubs (AC), as well as through outreach to local universities. Training included the following:

- Leadership and team-building
- Community organizing and mobilization
- ICT for community development
- Employability skills
- Community service initiative planning
- Budget creation
- Service learning
- Media and communications
- Community service initiative planning

Throughout the training, youth were given time to develop plans for community service initiatives that they felt addressed a key area of need in their community. A panel of judges then chose one initiative for further development and implementation. The selected initiatives were led and managed by Ruwwad youth, with the support of Ruwwad





and YDRC staff. The selected initiative received between \$5,000 and \$10,000 of in-kind support, but Ruwwad youth were expected to raise any additional needed resources themselves.¹⁵

One of the biggest strengths of the Ruwwad's youth leadership training was bringing together youth from different areas of the West Bank, enabling them to learn from each other's different experiences. Youth trainees also expressed how much they appreciated the intensive training on topics such as leadership, teamwork, and conflict resolution skills development. Two community service projects launched by youth were roving health clinics and an interactive website for informal education and sharing among school children between the ages of 6 and 17. One of Ruwwad's challenges, however, was that following the leadership training "youth did not seem empowered to transfer their learning and project ideas into action, if they did not receive the in kind support" from Ruwwad. Instead of creatively generating ways to secure the needed resources from the community, many of the service project ideas were dropped.¹⁶ Another challenge was that the project did not follow up with alumni from its leadership trainings to know what the youth were doing afterwards, so it has been difficult to track what impact the trainings have had.

B. Garissa Youth (G-Youth) Project – Kenya

The G-Youth Project in Kenya offers youth a series of interconnected interventions to build skills, support employment and other income-generating opportunities, and bridge technical and university education opportunities. During G-Youth's first phase, the project's "Youth Action" component instituted youth leadership training, youth-led community projects, a youth summit, and the development of youth action plans. During this first phase, 72 community youth leaders from 36 villages received training in proposal development, problem-solving, community

"It feels satisfying to pay back to your community especially when the service you are doing is a practical one that is visible to all."

– Fatma, G-Youth, Kenya

storytelling, and public speaking. In addition, the project supported youth in the implementation of village-based projects and enabled 500 youth leaders and guests to participate in the project's first Youth Summit.

Building on these successes, G-Youth began a two-year expansion in November 2010, with an emphasis on

a "youth-led, youth-managed" approach to all activities. The cornerstone of this second phase of the project is supporting youth groups to advocate for and address the needs of youth through their own initiatives. To support the activities of the youth groups and to provide opportunities to youth, G-Youth established an \$800,000 Youth Fund. The fund makes resources available to youth for different purposes, such as the following:

- Grants to implement community development or recreational projects
- Funding to help youth start small businesses
- Scholarships
- Capacity-building fund to strengthen the capabilities of emerging youth groups

Building the capacity of youth to play leadership roles has been an ongoing challenge during G-Youth's second phase. While youth may have the will and energy, their professional experience is usually quite limited. G-Youth originally intended to create a youth organization comprised of 144 youth nominated by their peers and community members to represent their communities. The project's goal was for the youth organization to gradually assume management of project activities. However, during the first six months of the project's second phase, it became clear that youth leaders needed intense capacity building and supervision that was too difficult to provide to





a large group of youth charged with multiple complex responsibilities. In addition, youths' expectations regarding autonomy in project decision-making and remuneration for participating in the project led G-Youth to shift its approach. The project has started to support smaller, organically formed groups of youth to develop projects that responded to community needs and to equip them with skills in project management. With this new approach, the project seeks to shift the youths' focus from issues of power and payment to priorities and needs in their communities. The G-Youth example demonstrates an important lesson in designing a youth program that balances incentives with responsibilities.

C. Somali Youth Livelihood Program (SYLP) – Somalia and Education Quality and Access for Learning and Livelihood Skills 2 (EQuALLS2) Project – Philippines

The SYLP and EQuALLS2 projects demonstrate other examples of supporting youth to take leadership roles. SYLP was created to provide Somali youth with greater access to training, internship, work, and self-employment opportunities to productively engage youth. The project worked toward these objectives, in part, by hiring local youth as paid interns, drawing young people directly from the training program. The project adapted a “leadership ladder” approach that aimed to include youth in increasingly higher levels of decision-making and leadership within the project. Youth were actively engaged in supporting the project’s administration. The project benefited from hiring young staff because they could communicate well with other youth, especially marginalized youth, and access information from young people. This assisted the project to focus its activities to the interests, needs, and concerns of youth in the locations where it worked.¹⁷

In the Philippines, young people had opportunities to undertake leadership and management roles. Youth, who received training to assist them in participating meaningfully, participated in the local school management committees along with parents and educators. The project helped youth form associations and clubs so that they could work together on activities for government agencies that were supported by the project.

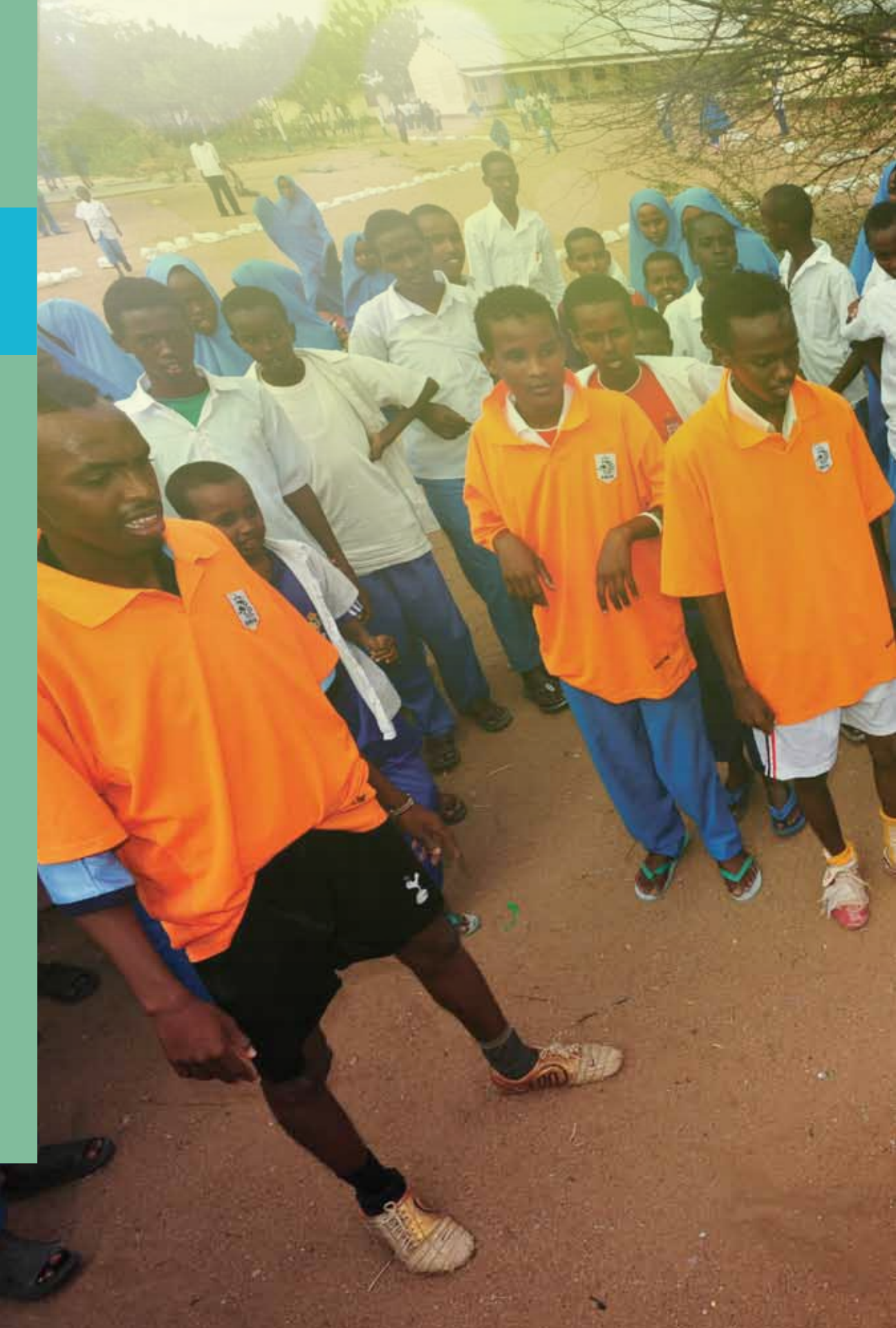
Lessons resulting from EQUIP3’s work related to the closely linked area of youth participation in youth programs are discussed in more detail in Section V.C. Engaging Youth in Planning and Management.

15 Aguirre International. (2011, May). *Evaluation of the Palestinian Youth Empowerment (Ruwwad) program* (submitted to USAID/West Bank & Gaza).

16 Ibid.

17 Sully, P. (SYLP Program Team), personal communication, October 20, 2010.





A photograph of a group of children in a schoolyard. In the foreground, a boy in an orange shirt is kicking a white soccer ball with his right foot. He is wearing dark shorts and black sneakers. A group of other children, mostly boys in white shirts and blue pants, are standing around him, watching. Some girls in blue headscarves are also visible. The background shows a dirt ground, some trees, and a building in the distance.

CHAPTER V. PROGRAM DESIGN AND MANAGEMENT

V. PROGRAM DESIGN AND MANAGEMENT

The body of work under EQUIP3 contributes important lessons about youth program design, management, and monitoring and evaluation.

A. Adapting U.S. Models to EQUIP3 Programs

Given the wealth of experience in youth programs in the United States, EQUIP3 adapted select U.S.-based youth development tools, approaches, and models for the countries in which it has worked. Following are U.S. youth development models, programs, and strategies that have guided EQUIP3 programs.

City Year Youth Service

City Year supports education in the United States by placing high school graduates and university undergraduates in schools throughout the country to provide students with academic support and behavioral encouragement, and to lead community and school improvement activities. This education-centered approach to a year of service attracted both support and attention, and to some extent, formed the model for AmeriCorps, the national program launched by the Clinton Administration in 2003. In 2005, EQUIP3 supported the first international adaptation of City Year's Youth Service model for South Africa, to be used as part of an existing youth training program led by the University of Witwatersrand (U Wits). Today the City Year training continues through the U Wits partnership.

YouthBuild International

Beginning in Harlem in the early 1980s, YouthBuild's unique combination of education for dropouts and hands-on training through service in the building of low-income housing expanded to more than 200 U.S. communities and is currently being adapted to international settings. YouthBuild's expertise in vocational training and service was adapted to the IDEJEN project in Haiti. This adaptation resulted in the development of vocational training learning aids and posters as well as construction projects for out-of-school youth. The projects continue and will be expanded to create YouthBuild programs that are anticipated to be closer to full adoption of the YouthBuild model.

SCANS and Equipped for the Future (EFF)

In the past 25 years, considerable progress has been made in the United States in defining standards for work readiness, and curricular and other tools have evolved to assist local programs and employers in achieving higher outcomes according to those standards. The first large-scale definition of work readiness was presented by the 1991 report of the U.S. Secretary of Labor's Commission on Achieving Necessary Skills (SCANS). The SCANS skills spawned a generation of programs and measures, along with public-private partnerships dedicated to their success. While U.S. and developing country contexts vary widely, the underlying concepts within work readiness standards, such as strong communication skills or setting personal goals, hold value for employers and job-seeking youth in either context. Therefore, EQUIP3 has sought to build on the U.S.-based body of work readiness experience for adaptation to international settings.

One practical example of such an approach was the Equipped for the Future (EFF) family of curricula, certifications, and assessments. EFF was initially supported by the National Institute for Literacy, as well as other outgrowths of the SCANS skills development. The EFF skills standards and work readiness profile have been used to help shape various adaptations of EQUIP3's work readiness curricula, which are now being used in Yemen, Rwanda, Kenya, Mali, Guyana, Macedonia, and the Philippines. Integration of the curricula into government vocational training and secondary schools is planned for Rwanda.

Youth Development Strategies, Inc. (YDSI)

Early U.S. youth development work used narrow sector-specific interventions in an attempt to address negative youth behaviors. In response to these limited approaches, the U.S.-based Youth Development Strategies Inc. (YDSI), developed Community Action Framework for Youth Development. The framework's goal was to integrate basic knowledge about youth development and the community conditions that affect development with hypotheses about what is needed to change communities so youth can reach their fullest potential.¹⁸ EQUIP3 adapted YDSI's Community Action Framework for Youth Development to develop the framework that formed the conceptual basis for the systemic approach to youth development (see section VI.B Engagement with Government).

Adapting U.S. Approaches and Tools

In adapting these U.S.-based approaches to the international contexts of EQUIP3 projects, much has been learned about effective adaptation processes, which characteristics of models help make

Using U.S.-Based Programs in EQUIP3 Programs

Making use of U.S. youth development curricula in EQUIP3 programs may be categorized as follows:

Adoption: The use of an existing element (e.g., a foundational approach, key strategies, or specific tools/techniques) largely as is— perhaps just going through a local language translation process. For example, using an existing survey tool as is.

Adaptation: The use of a key element of the model, but making changes to the way that it is presented or used (i.e., contextualizing it). For example, using only selective sub-scales of a survey tool (based on which ones are determined to be more relevant, reliable, or valid).

Appropriation: Drawing on the underlying logic or design of a existing key element of the model, but developing an entirely new local (regional) version of how it is used in a project. For example, using the scoring scale, user friendly design, conceptual framework, and/or self-reporting format of an existing tool but developing entirely new items and scoring templates for the local version.

the adaptation successful, and what contextual factors may have the greatest influence over the adaptation.

In references to the definitions in the sidebar, EQUIP3 has found that *adaptation* is the most likely strategy to be effective. For example, the work readiness curriculum that has grown out of the domestic movement for more skilled youth in the United States has generated enthusiasm in most countries where EQUIP3 has worked. The curriculum is practical, experiential in its pedagogical approach, and comprehensive in its reach. Yet it cannot be adopted as a whole piece, and adaptation has required devoted expert attention and cooperation with partners to achieve even the partial implementation it now enjoys in several countries. Moreover, it appears necessary that the adaptation process be repeated in each new setting.

Some curricula and other aspects of U.S. program models are more conducive than others to adaptation, as the following describes.

Common ground. Because they are grounded in research and based on fundamental concepts, the work readiness approaches embodied in EFF's work readiness standards, YDSI's the Community Action Framework for Youth Development, and the concepts of youth service and hands-on skill-building embodied in City Year and in YouthBuild have been adaptable to international programs.¹⁹

The EQUIP3 work readiness curriculum is largely based on skills standards and a work readiness profile developed through the U.S.-based EFF initiative. EQUIP3 has adapted these standards and profile to varying contexts, where they have been well received by local governments. For example, the adapted curriculum is planned to be integrated into the formal school system in Rwanda and was being integrated into the Al Saleh vocational training center's curriculum in Yemen prior to the disruption of the project in 2011 because of political unrest.

Government stakeholders are more likely to approve adaptation of a U.S.-based approach when they are familiar with the underlying concepts. In the case of City Year in South Africa, service learning was a familiar concept. In Haiti, the YouthBuild approach to vocational training was attractive for use with out-of-school youth.

Flexibility. Models with components that can be reorganized have proven more agile. For example, the YouthBuild model is not a prescriptive approach with a required curriculum. Rather YouthBuild requires adherence to a set of principles, allowing for local creativity and innovation. Based on this approach, YouthBuild worked with IDEJEN in Haiti to develop construction sector projects that could be used as training and hands-on work opportunities for youth. Another example of a flexible model was City Year's adaptation of its service learning model to South Africa. City Year engaged South African National Youth Service policy experts to help guide the adaptation process. The City Year model's core elements of direct service, quality learning, and personal development were the focus of the adapted model. However, other aspects of City Year's approach were adjusted to the South African context, such as making the service learning process more "consensus-based" and using a lower ratio of the time youth spent in service versus training to meet South African National Service requirements.

B. Learning from (and about) Youth Assessment

Assessing the realities facing youth who are to be served is a common first step in program design—and a vital one. USAID has a long tradition of strategic program assessments, of which the Global Workforce in Transition (GWIT) Program (2002–2007) was the most influential to EQUIP3. EQUIP3 has worked closely with USAID missions to develop methods for performing cross-sectoral youth assessments with the purpose of making programs more effective through more accurate targeting and more context-sensitive program design. EQUIP3 has conducted USAID youth assessments in 16 countries, gathering and integrating qualitative data on youth perceptions with quantitative data on the performance of youth in different sectors to pinpoint the needs and resources of youth. (See EQUIP3 website for published reports on country assessments www.equip123.net/equip3/index_new.html). Based on early experience with youth assessments, EQUIP3 published the *Guide to Cross-Sectoral Youth Assessments*²⁰ in 2009. The guide provides a conceptual framework and tools for designing and implementing the assessments.

Framing the Questions

The substantive focus of these assessments varies according to the needs and interests of the USAID missions funding the projects. Those in Kenya, Morocco, Yemen, and others, for example, sought to understand what factors make youth at risk for extremism or participation in political violence. The mission in the Eastern Caribbean was interested in the impact of policies and programs aimed at preventing youth from participation in gangs and drug trafficking. Missions in Rwanda, Kenya, and Mali placed special emphasis on youth employment and livelihood issues. And *all* were interested in the perceptions of business people, the government, NGO officials, and youth on youth issues. These matters and concerns underline the approach EQUIP3 has taken to its assessments.

Conducting the Assessment

Most EQUIP3 assessments draw information from three sources: (1) published documents and websites; (2) interviews with key stakeholders in the government, the business sector, and youth-serving NGOs, and (3) focus group interviews with youth themselves. At times, when more extensive studies shed light on youths' situation, the assessment teams have conducted labor market studies (Benin, Bangladesh, Haiti) and components of broader counter-terrorism assessments (Kenya/Garissa, Morocco).

Guide to Cross-Sectoral Youth Assessments

www.equip123.net/docs/e3-CSYA.pdf

The *Guide to Conducting Cross-Sectoral Youth Assessments* provides a conceptual framework, instruments, and tools for designing and implementing youth assessments in developing countries. It is intended for use by assessment specialists and USAID Mission staff interested in conducting a comprehensive cross-sectoral assessment of the assets and needs of youth.

Country-Specific Youth Assessment Reports

www.equip123.net/webarticles//anmviewer.asp?a=707&z=123

EQUIP3 has been involved in a wide range of youth assessment activities, from rapid assessments to research driven by youth themselves.

While some data relevant to the assessment questions can be found through statistical analysis, EQUIP3's experience has shown that assessments must use a variety of data collection methods to develop a well-rounded portrait of the target youth group. We designed a set of interactive activities to determine the following from the youth identified:

- If youth are working and where
- What days of the week youth are working and for how long
- Where youth get information
- Where and how youth spend their non-working time
- Who are their adult mentors
- What are their aspirations
- What are their views about their community and country

Out-of-School Youth in Developing Countries: What the data do (and do not) tell us

www.equip123.net/docs/e3-OSY.pdf

This report adopts a cross-sectoral approach to the measurement of out-of-school youth populations and extends this analysis to 25 Sub-Saharan African countries. This research is the first of its kind, offering country statistical profiles of out-of-school youth populations that are consistent across countries.

The report's analysis examines the interrelationships of age, gender, education, employment, and other variables in explaining out-of-school youth status. This framework, which allows for greater comparisons between distinct groups of youth cohorts, is helpful in developing policy and programming strategies for out-of-school youth populations.

These activities include brainstorming roundtables, key informant interviews, and other participatory tools to assist in drawing this information directly from young people—individually and in groups.

The two examples below illustrate the need to visit the communities in which targeted youth beneficiaries live to help keep a project from going in a wrong direction, because people outside those communities can be misinformed. In a fairly typical example, while in Manila planning EQuALLS2, the project design team was told to expect that unemployment was high among the targeted youth in Mindanao and jobs were scarce. Yet when the team met with youth in Mindanao, they found that while indeed many did not have formal jobs—that part was true—many were nonetheless very active in earning livelihoods. The team also was told that the main education challenge in Mindanao was to help youth who were near the minimum standard pass the high school equivalency exam. While that was indeed a problem in some communities in Mindanao, most of the targeted youth beneficiaries had never been to school.



In another example, this time in Morocco, the USAID mission was advised to invest in training for marginalized youth at government youth centers, *dar chababs*. Yet when the assessment team located the target group of marginalized youth, they found that the cost of attending and the distance to *dar chababs* were prohibitive for the target group, who also felt that *dar chababs* served a younger age group than most of the youth. Youth at risk of being pulled into extremism who were not in *dar chababs* were instead in internet cafes searching for information about jobs and vocational institutions and running soccer leagues on the beach. Again, the beginning assumption was incomplete and therefore potentially misleading. While *dar chabab* youth were a good target, exclusive focus on them would have missed opportunities to work with youth outside of the *dar chababs*, meeting them and working with them in their communities. The bottom line was that a good program required credible access to where youth “hang out,” and the government-sponsored and government-run youth centers would not provide that.

It is risky to assume that a small sample of youth voices represents all youth or even particular groups of young people—especially on sensitive matters. For example, in Morocco, the team sought to assess marginalized youth at risk of extremism, a group for which there was no official statistical data. The team had to first identify the areas in which such youth lived, worked, and played, and then identify individuals in these communities who could facilitate interviews and focus groups with their peers. In the West Bank, the youth who were engaged to help in the assessment were young leaders, and although both competent and responsible, they were not entirely

representative of the Palestinian youth whom the project sought to reach—those living in marginalized areas or refugee camps. In Rwanda, the assessment focused on newly urbanized youth who had recently moved from rural areas to the capital, Kigali, and two other municipalities. The team had to locate and speak to these young people to avoid coming to too-quick assumptions about what approaches would be most relevant to their needs.

Common Themes—Examples of Insights from the Youth Assessments

In addition to the information from each country assessment that helped shape specific project designs, common themes emerged that cut across country context and project objectives. For example, informants from all stakeholder groups and sectors across assessments observed that youth, even when educated or trained, lacked market-relevant skills. A few examples illustrate this point:

- In Somalia, universities and vocational training schools alike failed to offer soft skills or linkages needed to find employment. EQUIP3 assessments in Rwanda, Kenya, and Guyana, as well as other USAID-funded assessments in Kosovo and Macedonia, had the same finding.
- In the Eastern Caribbean, where there were thriving construction and tourism industries, training programs often offered only basic, partial training or training in non-relevant trades, such as cake decorating or sewing. The assessment in East Timor, half a globe away, agreed.
- In Kenya, where there is a strong informal economy, youth receiving training from technical and vocational education and training (TVET) institutions lacked the entrepreneurial acumen to apply these skills to their own small businesses. In neighboring Rwanda, where informal economy was officially discouraged, the same finding led to recommendations about economic cooperatives.

Another common theme emerged about the need to recognize and capitalize on youths' assets:

- Programming recommendations for Jamaica focused on utilizing the potential for “unattached” young men, currently marginalized in many communities, to become positive change agents. This theme was echoed in a recent assessment in Guyana and then again in Rwanda, where there were concerns about young men coming to the capital city of Kigali. In all three countries, concern about the risk of violence by young men gives way to conversations about potential for leadership. A similar finding early in EQUIP3's





history in West Bank/Gaza led to a significant emphasis on community service and service learning.

- The Angola assessment identified both the resilience and eagerness of youth to participate in a new culture among post-war youth, as well as their ability to adapt and diversify non-wage, informal economic activity to a volatile market.
- Similarly, the Bangladesh assessment found youth had an overwhelming desire to work in their home communities, which could easily be converted to an entrepreneurial spirit. In a non-EQUIP assessment, Kosovar youth spoke of their desire to build a business and to be their own boss. In Guyana, this theme in the assessment findings led to a program element called “Be Your Own Boss.”

Gender issues appeared frequently as priority concerns for youth:

- Young women in Bangladesh responded with interest to opportunities on non-traditional occupations, which led to a significant response in the design of the project that resulted.



- In the West Bank, gender concerns were multi-generational, with youth expressing the need for a step-by-step engagement and empowerment of both young women and their parents, who frequently impose traditional conservative limitations on young women's mobility.
- The DRC cross-sectoral assessment revealed an opportunity to empower women economically, which is strongly correlated to better decision-making regarding reproductive health and HIV prevention. Similar findings in Rwanda led to a significant investment of PEPfAR funds in the project that ultimately resulted.
- The Eastern Caribbean assessment advised creatively reengaging out-of-school male youth as a high-priority need to break the cycle of poverty and crime.

HIV prevention as well as other health concerns appeared as a theme:

- Both the Kenya-wide and Garissa-specific assessments identified a need for youth-friendly, confidential, one-stop health services to provide information and testing for the prevention of sexually transmitted infections (STIs). This comported with the Rwanda assessment findings.



- In Palestine, a need was expressed for psychological support for youth living in a conflict zone, frequently without employment or social activities, and often prone to depression and anxiety.

A desire to fight corruption was prevalent in many assessments:

- Angolan youth were sensitive to the effects of corruption on education and employment, specifically of “pay-to-pass” in school and perceived bribery of employers to receive employment.
- In Somalia and Kenya, youth spoke not of corruption but a related issue: connections-based employment, believing that hiring practices lacked transparency and relied on family connections, not skills.
- Yemeni youth spoke of corruption that is pervasive among law enforcement and government officials. Youth found tribal justice, revenge, and violence against the government became more viable options in the light of a justice system perceived as inefficient, corrupt, and unjust.

EQUIP3’s extensive experience in conducting youth assessments has generated valuable lessons in how to effectively assess youths’ needs and interests in a given context, as well as common attitudes and experiences among youth around the world. The more recent assessments have benefited from earlier assessments by incorporating their lessons in assessment approaches, key questions to address, and engaging relevant stakeholders. EQUIP3 has documented much of this in the *Guide to Cross-Sectoral Youth Assessments*, so that the broader community of youth development practitioners can benefit from this experience. In addition, the common themes within youths’ needs and assets that emerged from multiple assessments have allowed EQUIP3 to anticipate priority issues and take these into consideration when planning future assessments and designing programs.

C. Engaging Youth in Planning and Management

There is a growing appreciation among donors and practitioners of the importance of engaging youth in the design and delivery of programs and increasing evidence that this engagement contributes to a project’s success. The growing interest in youths’ participation in planning and managing projects for their benefit accompanies a shift within the development community toward viewing youth as assets: collectively and individually as partners and leaders in development.

An increasing number of development projects demonstrate promising practices in this corner of the international youth field. A recent guide on youth participation developed by the Department for International Development's-Civil Society Organisations (DFID-CSO) Youth Working Group synthesizes many of these activities. The DFID-CSO guide recommends four key areas for youth participation:

1. Organizational development, the formation of youth policy at an institutional level
2. Policy and planning, integrating youth at sub-national levels
3. Implementation, applying the principles and lessons learned to modify existing initiatives or start new pilots
4. Monitoring and evaluating, documenting thoroughly, using the quality standards, and turning them into comprehensive process standards.²¹

These ideas are echoed throughout the literature on youth participation. Governments have also been encouraged to, or in some cases have taken the lead in, developing national youth policies that formally recognize the importance of young people's full participation for their countries' social and economic development.²² The challenge to projects is to give youth meaningful roles and train them to play those roles responsibly. This can take time and requires extensive training and supervision. But it is not simply a matter of ideology or fashion—EQUIP3's experience confirms that buy-in and a sense of ownership by young people themselves produce a better project. Attendance is higher; retention in the project is better; and it seems likely that outcomes improve where authentic youth engagement is a practiced value.

One example of a youth-centered participatory process is community youth mapping, which was first developed in New York City by the nonprofit Center for Youth Development and adapted to international use by EQUIP3 partner Academy for Educational Development (now FHI 360). Youth mapping has been applied in the United States and in several projects in other countries, including the EQUIP3 IDEJEN project. Another variant, developed by the NGO iMapAmerica, is being implemented in the new Skills and Knowledge for Youth Employment (SKYE) project in Guyana.

Although to date, few documented projects have engaged young people at all stages of development and policy practice for youth,²³ as programs begin to make youth participation a priority, more models will become available.²⁴

EQUIP3 has demonstrated its commitment to youth participation in assessments, program design, implementation, and evaluation.

Our strategy has focused on (1) engaging youth in assessing young people's needs and assets and the resources available to them; (2) building the capacity of youth-serving organizations to engage young people; (3) informing the international development community on youth participation programming; and (4) creating effective links between donors, governments, and youth.²⁵ As of 2012, 14 EQUIP3 projects have involved youth in youth assessments, and 4 projects—the G-Youth project in Kenya, SYLP in Somalia, the PAS project in East Timor, and the EQuALLS2 project in the Philippines—have gone one step further and involved youth in the management of activities. Project directors and coordinators interviewed across different EQUIP3 projects consistently agreed that including a component for youth participation in the design can foster systematic and purposeful participation by youth throughout a project and strengthen its results.

Building Strong Youth-Adult Partnerships

Engaging youth in traditional hierarchical settings, where they may be viewed by adults as inexperienced or even a threat, has been a challenging process. In such settings, youth are not traditionally seen by adults as participants in decision-making and leadership, and adults must learn to trust them.²⁶ In SYLP in Somalia, adults mentored youth and youth, in turn, mentored adults. By soliciting input from youth in meetings, trainings, and evaluations, project staff helped the adults see what youth had to offer. SYLP also engaged diaspora youth through its local partner the Livelihood Resource Center (LRC). Diaspora youth served as volunteers who modeled professional behavior and effective communication with adults for their Somali peers.²⁷

In Kenya, the G-Youth project sought out elders and religious leaders to help mentor youth. This strategy has had mixed results. A youth volunteer with the project notes that, "the danger is that community elders have a lot of power, especially in Kenya. They may see our project as wanting to turn youth against traditions. If that's the case, they will stand up against the project." In addition to instilling youth with self-confidence to take initiative, G-Youth has also worked to change the perception among elders and other community members that youth have insufficient life experience to make decisions. G-Youth has worked to change these perceptions of youth, thereby proactively addressing potential resistance, by engaging young people in activities designed to benefit their communities, thereby giving them opportunity to demonstrate their leadership abilities and pro-community interests. One of the project's most successful efforts was the youth leadership training on community project design in the project's first phase. The youth were put in charge of



their projects from the beginning. They recruited adult mentors and other youth to join their team. Community members noted G-Youth participants' visible effort, their ability to lead, and their interest to connect with the community. These skills were further displayed at the Youth Summit they helped to organize.

Engaging Youth in Assessments and Training

Engaging youth in assessment and management activities has proven to be an effective way to generate support for continuing program services. In EQUALLS2, youth leaders emerged as strong advocates of education projects in their communities as well as trainers for out-of-school youth. Some youth have formed associations, with the goal of advancing educational development in their communities, and are obtaining financial assistance for their own projects. In Haiti, youth participation in the project's service delivery contributed to the sustainability of activities on two levels. First, it led to greater project credibility in the eyes of the community, and second, it triggered greater demand and appreciation for the project by the communities. One example is IDEJEN youth working in the camps to provide relief services following the January 2010 earthquake, and then again after the cholera outbreak later that year. Youth interacted with community members as contributors to society rather than troublemakers, which generated significant support from communities. Similarly, the community Youth Mapping approach as used in IDEJEN has been another tool for advocating for youth. Having youth sit down with community leaders to identify needs and opportunities increased youths' credibility in the eyes of the community. Likewise, as a result of positive experiences in the



IDEJEN project, youths' opportunities have improved, and according to comments from USAID and EDC staff, they now "clamor" to get into the project.²⁸

In SYLP's Interactive Audio Instruction Program on Financial Literacy in Somalia, youth were a key part of the formative evaluation that helped shape the programs. More than 20 youth participated by listening to each of the 40 episodes over four weeks. They provided feedback on each of the programs on the use of language, applicability of financial concepts, audio quality, character development, realism of scripted actions, educational relevance, and content narrative clarity. Also in Somalia, project staff directly solicited feedback from youth on how well the NGO training organizations were meeting their needs. In some cases the NGOs objected to this, but it demonstrated that listening to youth was important. In an atmosphere where youth often feel lucky to take whatever they get, this was a paradigm shift for many.

PAJE-Nièta in Mali uses volunteer youth leaders and trainers. The project provides structured opportunities for their reflection as a group, close supervision, and monitoring so as not to overload them with responsibilities. In Rwanda, the Akazi Kanoze project has developed an internship program in which youth graduates are hired to help meet project needs. Supervised and coached by Peace Corps Volunteers, youth have become trainers in basic conversational English, and provide technical support and software training to local partner organizations. Youth in Rwanda can also apply and interview to become assistant trainers and trainers for the Work Readiness Curriculum. Similarly, youth have been engaged in several technical

aspects of G-Youth in Kenya. They were involved in a comprehensive revision of the project's work readiness curriculum and served as work readiness peer educators. Youth have also been trained as evaluation assistants to conduct field-level community research.

As touched upon earlier in Section IV. Youth Leadership, youth can become effective team leaders and trainers, but they require extensive training and supervision. A lesson for the future, not yet even fully embraced by successive EQUIP3 programs, is that young people need to be engaged, and if they are to be engaged, education, training, and mentoring will be required, and resources must be provided to support them.

D. Monitoring and Evaluation

This section discusses what EQUIP3 has learned about indicators of progress and impact and the three evaluation instruments that EQUIP3 programs have either adapted, created, or identified the need to develop: the Developmental Assets Profile (DAP), the Livelihood Assessment Report (LAR), and the Work Readiness Assessment Tool.

Indicators

Indicators for success in youth programs vary according to the programs' objectives, requirements of the particular donor, and the implementing organizations' priority issues to measure. In determining impact of livelihoods programs, job placement and increased annual income are the most common indicators. Other baseline indicators that are useful include reduced vulnerability to economic shocks and reduction in regional or national youth unemployment rate; however, the latter is less useful where there is a significant informal economy. Common intermediate indicators of program progress are internship or post-training job placement, return to/continuation of formal schooling, employer satisfaction surveys, and self-reports on growth and improvement through focus groups with youth and their families. However, tracking placement of disadvantaged youth is difficult. Youth may find short-term jobs, which are manageable to track, but tracking youths' job retention for longer than 6 months to a year is difficult due to the mobility of youth and labor policies that may make long-term job contracts less prevalent, especially to disadvantaged youth. For youth programs focused on youth leadership or civic participation, indicators can include the number of youth groups supported or formed, or the number of youth participating in program design, management, or evaluation. Again, challenges arise when trying to measure longer-term outcomes or impact. Youth groups' longevity and capacity



after a year is harder to track within the time frame of a three-year project.

In 2010, the EQUIP3 Leader Award established a set of common indicators and definitions for measuring livelihood, education, youth participation, and capacity-building outputs and outcomes across its projects (see Table 2 for the listing of EQUIP3 common indicators). The diversity of the EQUIP3 portfolio of projects that collect different data made this a challenging exercise, and it was not possible to capture data from early projects that had already ended. Yet the common indicators have helped to compare projects and identify trends or notable differences across projects, such as gender or job placement. For example, the common indicator tracking system showed that most often there are fewer numbers of female youth participating and completing than male youth across most projects. The tracking system also highlighted that female youth were more drawn to entrepreneurship opportunities over formal sector employment. Nonetheless, sex-disaggregated data were not always collected, making gender analysis of program outcomes difficult to do.

EQUIP3 has found that in addition to the challenge of measuring common indicators among the diversity of EQUIP3 projects, the youth demographic falls prey to what Puerto characterizes as the possibility for evaluations to “systematically underestimate the benefits associated with programs targeted at the most disadvantaged sectors of society; as such interventions may have significant benefits that are not adequately captured in employment statistics.”²⁹ For example, changes in youths’ behavior, and how these manifest in young people’s interactions with family and community, are difficult to capture. Another difficulty is in attributing change to project activi-

Table 2: EQUIP3 Common Intermediate Results and Indicators

Intermediate Result (IR)	Indicator
IR. 1: Increased engagement of youth in their communities	1.1 # or % of youth enrolled in civic leadership training
	1.2 # or % of youth completing civic leadership training
	1.3 # of community projects implemented by youth
	1.4 # of hours of community service worked by youth
IR. 2: Increased youth participation in project design, implementation, and evaluation	2.1 # of youth-led “bodies” created
	2.2 # of youth advisors participating in project design implementation or monitoring/evaluation activities
IR. 3: Improved capacity of youth to pursue employment or livelihoods	3.1 # of youth enrolled in work readiness training
	3.2 # of youth completing work readiness training
	3.3 # of youth enrolled in vocational training
	3.4 # of youth completing vocational training
	3.5 # of youth enrolled in entrepreneurship training
	3.6 # youth completing entrepreneurship training
	3.7 # or % of youth gaining internship
	3.8 # of youth reporting initiation of self-employment through start of a small enterprise or livelihood
	3.9 # of youth employed in formal sector or informal sector work
	3.10 # of youth receiving financing for livelihood or small business
IR 4: Improved education opportunities for out-of-school youth	4.1 # of youth enrolled in NFE training
	4.2 # of youth completing NFE training
	4.3 # of youth reporting returning to formal schooling after completing project’s training
IR 5: Improved capacity of youth-serving organizations (YSO) and institutions in youth development	5.1 # of Youth Serving Organizations (YSOs) or government institutions completed training
	5.2 # of Youth Development (YD) partnerships or networks established
	5.3 # of stakeholders participating in youth development (YD) partnerships
	5.4 # of YSOs receiving a grant from external funder for YD activities

ties because of the many external factors that shape youths' ability to apply training and participate economically. There are also practical considerations in monitoring. To measure progress toward intermediate indicators, interviews and focus groups have been used to gather qualitative information about training outcomes. Pre- and post-tests are used to measure changes in youths' knowledge of lesson content. Indicators of education status, employment, or successful enterprise in years following the projects' interventions suggest the need for more longitudinal follow-up.

As a result of USAID's and youth implementing partners' stronger attention to monitoring and evaluation, there is now a stronger foundation of experience in monitoring and evaluating youth programs from which to build. Continued discussion and exchange of tools, results, and challenges among implementing partners in the area of monitoring and evaluation for youth programs has the potential to further strengthen the overall quality and rigor of monitoring and evaluation for youth programs.

Evaluation Tools

In addition to the development of common indicators, EQUIP3 has also supported the development of more rigorous and creative evaluation tools to measure youths' newly acquired soft skills or changes in youths' behavior, a measurement that has not been possible through other existing evaluation tools.

The Development Assets Profile (DAP). The DAP is a 58-item survey instrument that was created by Search Institute to measure the presence—and the change over time—of the eight categories of Developmental Assets found within Search Institute's 40 Developmental Assets framework. The DAP yields scores that can be disaggregated and compared across geography, ethnicity, gender, age, and intervention type—therein capturing an even more nuanced understanding of how different cohorts of youth are developing. The DAP is able to generate sub-scale scores linked to five key developmental contexts: (1) personal, (2) social, (3) school, (4) family, and (5) community.

The DAP was developed as an assessment tool for use with 10–18 year olds in the United States. The DAP has now been used to examine the assets of young people in more than a dozen countries and has been translated into Albanian, Arabic, Armenian, Chinese, French, Japanese, Nepali, Portuguese, Spanish, and Tagalog.

The EQUALLS2 project adapted the DAP to the conflict-affected Muslim Mindanao island region of the Philippines to track the broad, holistic impact of education and livelihood programming on



young people’s “positive engagement” and “connectedness.”³⁰ The approach taken by EQUIP3 was based on the proposition that if youth have sufficient, meaningful opportunities to acquire education and engage in civic and economic activities, they will engage less in nonproductive or destructive activities. EQuALLS2 examined the cross-cultural relevance of the approach by conducting focus groups with parents, leaders, and youth to ask them what they saw as the internal and external impacts of participation in learning for young people enrolled in EQuALLS2 activities. Their responses were closely aligned with categories in the DAP framework and similar to responses given by youth in other countries where the tool had been used.

The DAP was applied with a representative sample of learners participating in a wide range of basic education and workforce development programs offered by the EQuALLS2 project. It was applied once (Time 1 or T1) within the first two weeks of programming and a second time (Time 2 or T2) within the last two weeks of programming. The initial results reflected the use of the DAP across a sample of 703 learners participating in their basic education and workforce development offerings for out-of-school youth. T1 results indicated that participating out-of-school youth in both the mainland and the islands generally had only “fair” levels of developmental assets—with the weakest assets being those at the level of community and social (or peer) supports, which are the assets related to USAID’s Office of Conflict Management and Mitigation (CMM)’s “shielding” institutions.³¹ Low levels of community, social, and personal assets seemed to reflect the lack of connectedness or positive engage-

ment experienced by out-of-school youth in Mindanao. Lower level scores were seen to be a fair representation of the ways in which ongoing conflict and a general lack of access to supportive institutions typically left island youth with fewer developmental assets than their mainland peers. An analysis of change over time from T1 to T2 administration captured an across-the-board increase in assets among EQuALLS2 learners, with statistically significant changes in assets across all five contexts. In general, youth in the islands made the greatest overall gains during their time participating in basic education and workforce development interventions, moving almost all of their asset scores from “fair” to “good.”

Among multiple agencies, plans are underway to adapt the instrument for more than a dozen other countries and languages within the next few years. EQUIP3 is partnering with Search Institute to conduct multi-country research that will document, for the first time, the extent to which the positive youth development indicators in the Developmental Assets framework (and measured in the DAP) correlate with key sectoral outcomes in international development among different populations of youth, ages 12–25, in selected developing countries in different regions of the world. Linking positive youth development with these outcomes is key to making the policy case for a positive approach to addressing critical challenges among the world’s young people.

The Livelihood Assessment Report (LAR). EQuALLS2 developed the Livelihood Assessment Report (LAR), a self-reporting tool to track out-of-school youths’ application of livelihood skills to existing and new household and individual economic activities. Data from the LAR showed that youth were able to apply skills gained from livelihood training activities, and that youth who had completed training reported increased frequency of livelihood activities.³² The LAR was used with 1,013 youth, and its findings reinforced the importance of flexible timing, duration, and location of trainings to accommodate youths’ busy schedules.

Work Readiness Assessment Tools. As discussed in Section II. Livelihoods and Workforce Development, EQUIP3’s experiences have underlined the importance of using a standards-based approach to teaching work readiness skills, including assessment methodologies that can measure outcomes. Youth program implementers are now developing tools that seek to measure the knowledge, skills, and attitudes of youth following their completion of work readiness training. The resulting data will be a valuable contribution to future youth livelihoods and workforce programs.

- 18 Gambone, M., & Connell, J. P. (2004, April). The community action framework for youth development. *The prevention researcher*, 11(2), 17–20. Retrieved from www.tpronline.org/article.cfm/The_Community_Action_Framework_for_Youth_Development
- 19 The Search Institute's Development Assets Profile (DAP) tool is another U.S.-based tool that was adapted successfully under EQUIP3; the DAP is discussed under Section D. Monitoring and Evaluation.
- 20 Education Development Center, Inc. (2009). *Guide to cross-sectoral youth assessments*. Washington, DC: EQUIP3/United States Agency for International Development.
- 21 Department for International Development (DFID)-CSO Youth Working Group. (2010, March). *Youth participation in development: A guide for development agencies and policy makers* (p.11). London, England: Author.
- 22 Innovations in Civic Participation. (2010). *Youth civic participation in action 2010: Meeting community and youth development needs worldwide* (pp. 1–213). Washington, DC: Author.
- 23 DFID, *Youth participation in development*, 2010.
- 24 Family Health International (FHI). (2005). Youth participation guide: Assessment, planning and implementation. YouthNet. Retrieved from www.fhi360.org/en/Youth/YouthNet/rhtrainmat/ypguide.htm; Youth Coalition. (2009). *Learning to speak MDGs: A guide to the Millennium Development Goals*. Retrieved from www.youthcoalition.org/site08/attachs/LearningtoSpeakMDGs_2ed.pdf; Erich, A. (2008). *Get youth on board! A toolkit for stakeholder collaboration and youth promotion*. Eschborn, Germany: Deutsche Gesellschaft für Technische Zusammenarbeit (GTZ); DFID, *Youth participation in development*, 2010; James-Wilson, D., & Torres, V. (2008, May). Volume 1: Coordinators handbook. Getting to what we don't know we don't know: *Using youth-inclusive market research to develop effective, demand driven youth livelihoods programs*. Washington, DC: Save the Children.
- 25 Education Development Center, Inc. [unpublished]. (2004). EQUIP3 leader award strategy: *Learning and earning for out-of-school youth*.
- 26 "Family Health International (FHI). (2003). Youth-adult partnerships show promise. YouthNet. Retrieved from www.fhi.org/NR/rdonlyres/e75udmxlxbnbcglxsod6a5anvb-drqkw7s4niv2tm4spuzep3kcmioucl7ybs6g4m74m2umkn36cqzc/YL4.pdf; See also, Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA). (2007). *Lessons learned on children and young people's participation in development* (p. 6). Retrieved from [www.acdi-cida.gc.ca/INET/IMAGES.NSF/vLUIImages/Childprotection/\\$file/Lesson-Learned.pdf](http://www.acdi-cida.gc.ca/INET/IMAGES.NSF/vLUIImages/Childprotection/$file/Lesson-Learned.pdf)
- 27 Sully, P. (SYLP Project Team), personal communication, October 20, 2010.
- 28 Comments from interviews conducted in November and December 2010 with USAID/Haiti and EDC staff.
- 29 Puerto, O. S., (n.d.) *International experience on youth employment intervention* (p. 12). Retrieved from www.youth-employment-inventory.org/downloads/8.pdf
- 30 The DAP was developed by the Search Institute. For more details, see James-Wilson, D. (2010, March). Tracking the impact of returning to education: *How re-connecting young people with educational opportunities contributes to peace building in Mindanao*. Newton, MA: Education Development Center, Inc.
- 31 USAID Office of Conflict Management and Mitigation (CMM). (2005). *Youth in conflict: A toolkit for intervention*. Washington DC: USAID.
- 32 For more details see: James-Wilson, D. (2010, October). *Ensuring relevance and quality of out-of-school youth livelihood programs: Using the Livelihood Activity Report (LAR) to track the application of youth livelihood skills*. Newton, MA: Education Development Center, Inc.







CHAPTER VI. SUSTAINABILITY



VI. SUSTAINABILITY

EQUIP3 programs have used several strategies to increase the likelihood that their approaches, services, and benefits will be sustained after projects end. They have formed partnerships with and networks of local community-based organizations, private sector, and other stakeholder groups, with the expectation that these organizations will continue to provide services and resources. They have worked closely with government institutions to help them continue programs, and built the capacity of local organizations for this purpose. While many EQUIP3 projects have been too short to invest sufficiently in these alliances and ensure the sustainability of project strategies, several EQUIP3 projects offer valuable lessons and successful strategies.

A. Partnerships and Networks

While the research on sustainability of international youth programs is limited, the U.S.-based literature on sustaining youth workforce programs, such as YouthBuild's Year Up Program, emphasizes the importance of using networks and private sector involvement. Results from the USAID-funded Education and Employment Alliance (EEA) program, implemented in the Middle East and South Asia,³³ show that developing and maintaining alliances between public and private stakeholders broaden the support base for youth employment programs and generate additional cash and in-kind resources. However the alliance approach can also be time consuming, particularly when private sector individuals are not linked to institutions that have both the management infrastructure and resources to manage them.

IDEJEN in Haiti and EQuALLS2 in Philippines are strong examples of working through community partnerships and networks to support program sustainability. Using well-respected local champions to advocate and generate support for the programs was a critical factor in both IDEJEN and EQuALLS2. Both projects had dynamic local leaders with extensive networks, both nationally and regionally, which when combined with good approaches and strong planning, effectively garnered local support for the projects. IDEJEN also identified local business and community leaders to be project champions and advocate for hiring IDEJEN youth.



In some countries, it has been tempting to start fresh by building new organizations. EQUIP3's experience from the beginning has led to the conclusion that existing networks of local partners—with all the risks and associated extra work involved—are a better way to implement programs than to build new systems and new programs from scratch. (However, this is not always feasible in certain crisis- or conflict-affected contexts in which there are few existing institutions with sufficient capacity.) Again, the Haiti and Philippines projects are good illustrations of how working with local partners has been successful.

Under IDEJEN, the approach has provided services through a network of nearly 200 community-based organizations (CBOs) and local chambers of commerce. IDEJEN worked extensively with the National Institute of Professional Training (INFP) to adapt its vocational training curriculum, which was geared towards youth with a complete primary education, to youth with low literacy levels.

EQuALLS2 worked through parent-teacher associations (PTAs) and local government units (LGUs) to sustain and scale out-of-school youth activities at the local level. As a result of skills transfer and capacity building over the past five years, PTAs and school boards were able to identify and prioritize education improvement projects,



mobilize resources, and implement and monitor them. For example, some mayors and LGUs used their own funds to pay for repairs to community learning centers and salaries of trainers.

The Education and Livelihood Skills Alliance (ELSA), a Philippines-based alliance of private and public institutions, has led in-school and out-of-school youth activities. It has helped to leverage each project partner's own network of partners toward the broader common goal of educational development. Partners' networks have increased job placement, cash and in-kind resources, and buy-in from local government. In Haiti, IDEJEN has spurred the creation of regional networks of youth serving organizations, which facilitate the exchange of best practices, collaboration on youth activities, and diffusion of training and support.

Taking lessons from these experiences, Akazi Kanoze in Rwanda has included in its design the development of a Rwanda Youth Opportunity Network (RYON) to foster public-private linkages for addressing youth unemployment. Careful attention has been paid to involving the local NGO partners in the adaptation process and building and supporting their capacity to deliver services directly, first in conjunction with project staff, then on their own with monitoring and technical assistance. In Macedonia, where the municipality-based partners are



VET Schools, employment agencies, and youth-serving organizations, the heart of the strategy is to engage teachers, employment agency staff, and youth workers in first learning, then teaming to deliver, then delivering the direct instruction and hands-on experience of an adapted work readiness curriculum.

Working through consortia and networks increases the complexity of managing the project. The additional management burden on project staff needs to be acknowledged and accommodated, especially if projects scale up rapidly. In the Philippines, the complex alliance structures resulted in multiple layers of management among the partners and sub-partners, and the project had to address inefficiencies and a lack of clear reporting on work accomplishments and challenges. In Haiti, when the rapid scale-up occurred in 2007–2008, the delivery system for the accompaniment phase was redesigned to occur at the regional level to ease the burden on the local organizations that were doing the training. The project also began having more experienced CBOs mentor newer ones, to help with their organizational capacity building and financial management. That said, the additional management burden of working with so many organizations across the country was not fully appreciated during the scale-up planning, and it was a challenge for project staff.

Private sector partnerships generate crucial resources that can extend and expand programs. Deliberate private sector engagement is widely recognized as a contributor to program sustainability, but the economically remote contexts of EQUIP3 programs means there are often few formal businesses or employers to engage. EQuALLS2 developed large-scale partnerships with private companies in the form of Global Development Alliances (GDAs), which USAID used to engage the private sector in its projects. The GDA mechanism served as an incentive for Philippines' businesses to get involved because of the high profile nature of the program. GDA partners played an essential role in providing opportunities for youth trainees as employees or interns.³⁴ The Rwanda project utilizes another strategy to engage the private sector. It uses an employer satisfaction survey to assess youths' performance as interns. When youth complete their internship, the project asks the employer to rate youths' behavior and knowledge in a short list of areas. Employers' feedback is used to monitor and improve the quality of the work readiness and technical training.



B. Engagement with Government

Close partnership with government ministries can lead to long-term incorporation of nonformal education and workforce development programmatic change. Close partnership might consist of, for example, having a project office in the Ministry; having a Ministry Technical Working Group for the project that reviews and recommends policy and curricula; and/or building Ministry capacity at the national, regional and district levels. It acknowledges the Ministry as a curriculum, training, and policy decision-maker, and provides technical assistance and training needed for Ministry and partners' effectiveness.

In the diverse EQUIP3 projects, each case highlighted below had a different purpose for partnerships with the government; nonetheless, each partnership resulted in strengthened sustainability.

In Rwanda, the Akazi Kanoze project worked closely with the Workforce Development Authority (Rwanda's technical and vocational training [TVET] agency) to pilot the project's work readiness curriculum in 14 TVET schools. The Ministry of Labor has also used the curriculum to train university graduates who then have gone on to work with project partner organizations to help them train youth participants in work readiness, creating synergy between partner organizations, the government, and EQUIP3.

In East Timor, a working group was formed to help the National Institute for Manpower Development (INDMO) develop the framework for a 370-hour, foundation-level TVET course for youth with little



education. The project's work readiness curriculum was one of the documents that was reviewed, and parts were adapted and adopted to fit into the new course.

In Haiti, IDEJEN developed the Ministry of Education's National Institute of Professional Training (INFP) capacity to deliver relevant, quality technical training to both out-of-school and more educated youth, and to develop a cadre of experienced trade skills evaluation specialists. In another attempt to effect government policy, however, IDEJEN was not as successful. The project sought to assist Haiti's Ministry of Education to develop a nonformal education policy that could lay the groundwork for offering education and training opportunities to the country's growing population of uneducated, unskilled young job seekers. IDEJEN worked closely with the Ministry to develop a policy that the Ministry endorsed. IDEJEN and the consultant also met with a government literacy commission, and with selected members of Parliament. The draft policy was on track to be presented to Parliament in January 2010 when Haiti's devastating earthquake put it—and many other government activities—on hold.

This experience illustrates that policy change is a slow process and difficult in the time span of short projects. Typically policy development must go through several levels of education ministry and other government decision-making before it is proposed to legislators. Then it may require advocacy either from the ministry or from advocates outside the ministry or, ideally, both. This often lengthy process, if interrupted because of other government priorities or external events, may be lost or may need to be re-introduced in a subsequent legislative session. EQUIP3's experience shows that

sometimes policy issues can be raised by engaging government officials and private sector leaders in project activities—as mentors, tutors, internship supervisors, and the like. The more far-reaching the policy, however, the more time is required to address it.

EQUIP3's experience has demonstrated that relationships and alliances must be built starting at the outset of the project and that they take time to come to fruition. Not until near the end of the five-year EQuALLS2 project in the Philippines, for example, were partner government agencies ready to integrate nonformal education with skills training for out-of-school youth through a work readiness credentialing process. With this challenge in mind, the design of the YES project in Macedonia prioritized working with the government early on. This led to Macedonia's Bureau for Technical and Vocational Education adopting the work readiness curriculum during the project's first year; graduates will receive a government-recognized certificate of work readiness.

C. Systems Approach to Youth Development

In some countries, and some USAID missions, policy issues may be addressed through a systems approach that achieves community level or national level impact. As EQUIP3 defines it, a “systems approach to youth development seeks to create the enabling environment, opportunities, and supports youth require in order to succeed. A systems approach encourages thinking across traditional sectors and from the individual to the country level.”³⁵ Such an approach engages USAID, other donors, government counterparts, and local NGOs to build on existing programs in service of a broader, national-level initiative to serve young people. It has the potential of simultaneously considering governmental policies, donor and other resource coordination, and improvement of services to young people.

While not all countries are ready to undertake this level of policy coordination, EQUIP3's experience with project-level initiatives suggests that this may be a desirable direction where the circumstances are right, and leadership is present. Adopting such an approach to youth development would mean that funding would be cross-sectoral to address holistic needs of youth, and indicators for success would measure not only individual-level changes in behavior or attitudes, such as job placement or businesses created, but also policies enacted, partnerships formed, or funds raised among local stakeholders.

Rather than the traditional sector-specific approach to youth development that conducts gap analyses in certain sectors and then



designs a sector-specific program, the systems approach focuses more on identifying what can be strengthened about what is already working across multiple sectors. There is also a focus on facilitating new partnerships among existing youth stakeholders and identifying existing networks that can carry forward policy development in the long term. Indicators for measuring success focus on policy-level change, scaled-up initiatives, and strengthened community structures.³⁶

EQUIP3 developed a framework that forms the conceptual basis for the systemic approach. This framework lays out a strategic view of youth development that includes the five basic elements of (1) long-term goals for youth; (2) developmental milestones; (3) service needs of young people in order to achieve the milestones and goals; (4) reform of community institutions and policies to better support youth; and (5) strategies to mobilize stakeholders and build capacity of individuals, organizations, and institutions. The framework is currently being used by USAID as part of D.C.-based trainings for new USAID staff and in strategy development support to certain missions.

33 IYF, *Education & Employment Alliance*, 2010.

34 IYF/ELSA Country Director, phone interview, 2010.

35 FHI 360. (2011, April). *Developing a youth development framework*. Washington, DC: EQUIP3/United States Agency for International Development.

36 Ignatowski, C., & Politz, B. (2010, February). *Youth strategic framework and program recommendations for USAID/Jamaica*. Washington, DC: EQUIP3/United States Agency for International Development.



Honda Genuine Part
Suku cadang asli sepeda motor Honda
KUALITAS

CHAPTER VII. YOUTH IN CONFLICT-AFFECTED AND CRISIS SETTINGS



VII. YOUTH IN CONFLICT-AFFECTED AND CRISIS SETTINGS

Most EQUIP3 programs work in countries that can be categorized as crisis or conflict-affected. The majority of EQUIP3 projects are in countries or regions affected by armed conflict (Afghanistan, Democratic Republic of Congo, East Timor, the North Eastern province of Kenya, Kosovo, the Mindanao region of the Philippines, Somalia, Uganda, West Bank, and Yemen).³⁷ EQUIP3 projects are also implemented in countries such as Haiti where youth have been affected by natural disaster. Additionally, in countries such as Haiti, Jamaica, and Honduras, youth are at risk in their communities due to lawlessness, crime, and gang activity.

In these areas, EQUIP3 projects target services to youth who are most at risk of participating in unhealthy or even dangerous activities, and address the root of youth disillusionment. While current research suggests that individual poverty does not necessarily drive extremists,³⁸ experience in Garissa, Kenya, and Somalia suggests that poverty may drive youth to make desperate decisions, especially when a group such as Al Shabaab is offering income, hope, and a sense of belonging. The approach taken by EQUIP3 projects is based on the proposition that if sufficient, meaningful opportunities exist for youth to get an education and engage in civic and economic activities, they will engage less in non-productive or destructive activities.

Funding trends support this work; as EQUIP3 USAID AOTR Clare Ignatowski points out, U.S. development assistance has become aligned more closely with foreign policy and security objectives since September 11, 2001.³⁹ As a result, “at risk youth, in particular, have become an important priority for foreign assistance programming because of the particular ways that youth have become key players in civil conflicts.”⁴⁰ EQUIP3’s experience in these fragile environments is that youth are not destined to become negative forces—to join street gangs, join terrorist organizations, or riot in the streets—nor are they necessarily passive victims, as they are often portrayed.⁴¹ Given opportunities and support, youth can become agents of peace. They can participate in community service projects, start small businesses, and engage in dialogue with their government.⁴²





A. Push and Pull Factors

EQUIP3 has learned through targeting young populations in fragile states that approaches to engaging youth must respond to the local pull and push factors that influence youth behaviors and choices. Successful youth programs strategically address these push factors and pull factors and use them to draw youth into positive activities in place of negative.

Push Factors

Push factors are those grievances and conditions that could serve to propel youth in a radical direction or make risky choices with likely negative consequences. Poverty is a push factor across all projects operating in fragile environments, as is unemployment. Lack of education or low quality of education is a contributing factor, particularly in conflict-affected or post-conflict countries, where youth have missed years of schooling. In countries with marginalized regions and populations, discrimination is a common grievance. Underlying all push factors is an all-consuming lack of hope, coupled with a lack of clear opportunities and few positive structures. While many of these features describe all of the environments in which EQUIP3 works, in fragile environments particularly, this lack of hope

can drive youth to take dangerous risks as they feel that they have nothing left to lose.

“In troubled areas like Mindanao, too many young people have no identity—no jobs and no skills. The biggest benefit can be the identity young people gain by being able to say, “I’m a welder” or “I’m a baker.”

– Tom Crehan, former USAID/Philippines AOTR, EQUALLS2

Push factors can be addressed by training youth for livelihoods or enrolling youth in flexible, accelerated nonformal basic education programs. Across most EQUIP3 projects operating in fragile settings, EQUIP3 programs make training and support for finding employment central to its approach. This is based on the theory that youth who have economic opportunities are less likely to join violent groups for economic gain.⁴³ EQUIP3 projects train youth in entrepreneurship and work readiness skills to help them

secure employment and reduce the risk of youth turning to risky opportunities for survival.

Questions during the assessment phase of a project can pinpoint other ways to address push factors:

- What are the most immediate needs of youth?
- What opportunity costs may prevent them from attending a program?
- Would providing a meal or providing training at a different time for girls reduce the risk of dropout?
- How can small incentives be used to motivate youth?

In environments where opportunities and resources are scarce, even the smallest incentive can entice youth to participate in violence. For example, in Haiti, Kenya, and Somalia, youth are enticed to engage in violent groups with the promise of a monthly payment.

While careful to keep the focus on the activity itself and not the incentives, a number of EQUIP3 projects address this by recovering the expenses that youth incur in participating in project activities. The IDEJEN project in Haiti increased retention by providing youth with a meal on their training days; the G-Youth project in Kenya saw a marked increase in completion when lunch and snacks were offered. Before the food was available, drop-out levels for its work readiness training were as high as 49 percent. Once meals were offered, dropouts decreased significantly to less than 15 percent.⁴⁴ In Somalia, SYLP relied on implementing partners to determine

the particular incentives, which included certificates, food, travel stipends, and/or tools upon completion of courses.

Pull Factors

Pull factors are activities and groups that entice youth to make risky decisions by taking advantage of their desperation, promising to meet their economic needs, and/or providing a sense of community and belonging. Pull factors include gangs (Jamaica, urban Haiti, Honduras); prostitution and risky sexual behavior (DRC, Philippines, Haiti); political groups (West Bank, Haiti); extremist groups, terrorist factions, and piracy (Kenya, Somalia, West Bank); unsafe emigration (Somalia); drugs (Somalia, Kenya, Haiti); and unsafe labor practices (Philippines). EQUIP3 projects do not aim to dismantle dangerous pull factors. Instead, they use strategies to attract youth to constructive activities and groups.

Providing hope to youth in extreme circumstances has proven to be a positive pull factor, and youth are drawn to participate when they see youth like them engaged in and part of something intriguing. As such, assessments should ask the questions:

- What external pulls may draw at-risk youth?
- What interventions would make the project attractive for these youth that would not pose problems for sustainability?
- How can the project make youth feel that they are part of something important?

Youth are drawn to feel a part of something bigger than themselves, and they embrace even the smallest opportunities for connection, for better or worse. In Haiti, one IDEJEN project staff member commented that youth had no opportunity to engage in anything other than violence. USAID's final evaluation of the project stated that "A number of [youth] testified that they had stopped their delinquent behavior after returning to school. The possession of a trade increased youths' confidence in a better future, something which reduces the probability that these youth would return to committing reprehensible acts, acts which are often the result of discouragement, distress, or hopelessness."⁴⁵

In Somalia, youth participating in the project went to villages wearing their SYLP T-shirts to register youth in the project database so they could contact them when trainings began. The young people in the villages recognized the hope and sense of belonging the project offered and were easily engaged. This method contributed to reaching the more than 19,000 youth who participated in the project .



B. Programmatic Challenges in Conflict Areas

Key to engaging youth into positive activities is gaining their confidence. In conflict or post-conflict areas, youth may be slow to trust outsiders, those in positions of power who may have manipulated them, those not from their own ethnic group, or those on the other side of a conflict. To address this reality, EQUIP3 projects are staffed nearly completely by host country nationals, including at the senior management level where possible. In addition, EQUIP3 projects build trust by empowering participants to make a lot of the decisions about how the project is implemented. Even in conflict settings, youth are part of project assessment teams and contribute design ideas. The G-Youth project takes a youth-led approach with all of its activities, in which youth take active roles in project implementation and monitoring, and at its centerpiece is a youth fund to support youth-led community development projects and income-generation activities (see Section IV.B. Garissa Youth (G-Youth) Project – Kenya).

Staffing with host country nationals in countries that are fragile throughout (in contrast to those in which only some regions are in conflict or otherwise fragile) offers particular challenges, including



weak capacity of staff and partners after years of open conflict. In extreme environments such as Somalia, Afghanistan, and East Timor, the most skilled and educated segments of the population have left, and those who have stayed typically have limited education and experience. Low capacity calls for intensive oversight and more groundwork within broader time frames than is typically required for projects in settings with greater local capacity.

For example, when EQUIP3 began its work in East Timor the local NGO partners had very limited experience, and after years of conflict, there was low capacity in administration, finance, management, planning, and training. Similarly, the LCEP project in Afghanistan required 56 days for a literacy training of trainers, which was adapted from a training that had been originally designed to be led in


10 days in other countries. However, in countries where one region was affected, such as the North Eastern Province in Kenya and the Mindanao region of Philippines, well-qualified staff were available from other parts of the country.

“[The militia] was a bleak and hopeless situation. It was while I was still with them that I heard about the SYLP skills training program. Five months ago, I didn’t have a clue what a cooling system was and now I can trouble-shoot refrigerators, compressors, or freezers, and comfortably repair them all.”

– Galkayo, SYLP, Somalia

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- 37 The Ruwwad Project in the West Bank has operated in a constantly changing security and political environment since its outset.
- 38 Carter, L. (2008). *USAID/Kenya CT strategy: Inclusion and counter extremism assessment* (draft). Submitted to USAID/Kenya. Nairobi, Kenya: Management Systems International (MSI).
- 39 Ignatowski, C. (2007). Framing youth within the politics of foreign assistance. *Research in Comparative and International Education*, 2(3), 222–229.
- 40 Ibid.
- 41 Bigombe, B. (2010, May). Forward. In S. Schwartz, *Youth in post-conflict reconstruction: Agents of change* (p. xiii). Washington, DC: United States Institute of Peace Press.
- 42 Schwartz, S. (2010, May). *Youth in post-conflict reconstruction: Agents of change* (p. 16). Washington, DC: United States Institute of Peace Press.
- 43 Mercy Corps. (2010, April). *Youth and conflict toolkit* (pp. 7–14). Portland, OR: Author.
- 44 Education Development Center, Inc. (2010, October). *Garissa Youth Project annual report*. Washington, DC: Author.
- 45 LTL Stratégies, *Evaluation Finale Externe d’IDEJEN*, 2011.



A young woman with dark hair, wearing a white hijab, is smiling warmly at the camera. A hand is gently resting on her right shoulder. The background features a window with a dark wooden frame and a grid of small panes, through which some outdoor greenery is visible. A green plastic chair is partially visible in the lower right background.

CHAPTER VIII. LOOKING FORWARD—EQUIP3'S LEGACY

VIII. LOOKING FORWARD— EQUIP3'S LEGACY

More than 1.5 billion 12–24 year olds worldwide are both an important national development asset and a pressing challenge for the international community. Many of these are out of school, with poorly developed cognitive skills, and little experience with work or access to livelihoods or jobs. Yet youth bring unique, fresh perspectives that transform communications, entrepreneurship, and civic engagement. The experience of EQUIP3 confirms that it is essential to provide youth with access to work and livelihood opportunities, education and training, and health services, and to offer them opportunities for civic participation and leadership. Failure to do so will negate the opportunity to use their energy and vitality productively and contributes to the risks of crime, unrest, lifelong poverty, and disease. Moreover, EQUIP3's experience over nine years demonstrates that certain approaches to positively engaging and supporting youth work better than others.

The preceding pages provide examples in support of these conclusions, and illustrations of promising approaches and key lessons. Of course, even these select examples leave much unsaid. The following programmatic and strategic conclusions and recommendations attempt to summarize the most salient lessons from EQUIP3 for future youth development programming.

A. Programmatic Conclusions

Reduced to simple terms, what do young people need to be active and productive members of society? The 25 EQUIP3 projects in 26 countries provide a body of experience that reveals the following:

- Young people need practical, marketable skills, ranging from literacy and numeracy (the ability to process and use information) to hands-on vocational skills suited to very local circumstances and to labor demand.
- Young adults need money—to live, to save, and to invest in themselves and their families—and connections to ways to earn it.



- All need actionable information—about training and education, work opportunities, better health, full participation in citizenship, and how to be busy and productive.
- More than almost any group, young people crave affiliation, as well as useful connections that enable them to belong and have access to all of the above.

This experience suggests elements for future program choices, building upon earlier experience:

1. Out-of-school youth projects in developing countries should employ an integrated package of work readiness training, work experience, bridging services (including coaching and linkages to financing), and literacy and numeracy education.

Perhaps the most important finding from the extensive focus on livelihoods and employment under EQUIP3 is that there is no single element of service, but rather it is an integrated continuum of education (most often starting with literacy and numeracy for early school leavers), supports, and experiences that shows the greatest results. While this point is widely known, it is not always consistently applied in youth program designs.



2. A more systematic and structured approach to bridging strategies for youth is needed.

Traditionally programs graduate young people and track them, but they do not continue to serve and support their future progress. A relatively modest innovation can produce a better, longer-lasting impact. The importance of offering a package of bridging strategies for youth in livelihoods and workforce development programs is now widely recognized, but the contents of this package (i.e., how much, how often, and what combination of services) has not been clearly articulated in project experiences. Further analysis of bridging strategies is needed to understand which are necessary and which are optional in order to guide future program design and resource allocation.

3. Youth livelihood and employment programs need to add programmatic elements that support economic growth among enterprises with job and livelihood creation potential.

EQUIP3's experience with work readiness and placement suggests that a balanced supply-demand approach is essential, one that builds in private sector perspectives, ownership, and support from the outset, and which is tailored to youth. Moreover, small- and medium-sized enterprises—the most likely to hire young people in most economies—themselves need supports and assistance to grow and create jobs. This could be addressed through closer collaboration and coordination between youth workforce programs and USAID-funded economic growth programs and other donors supporting business-enabling environments.



4. Youth participation is an effective strategy for building program quality and sustainability and for generating positive perceptions of youth among adults in communities.

EQUIP3's experience suggests that investments of time and resources to include youth in assessment/design, management of project activities, and evaluation are well spent because of the positive results realized. But making this happen demands that projects be flexible, build relationships with youth, demonstrate patience and realistic expectations, and build capacity of implementers and stakeholders.

5. True youth engagement requires authentic adult engagement. Experience suggests that investment in both youth and adult engagement is an important element toward achieving youth participation and leadership.

Adult-youth partnerships are important for fostering community support for youth leadership and participation, contributing to the exchange of skills and experience, and ensuring the long-term success of youth-led initiatives. It is sometimes challenging to balance support to "youth-owned" with effective adult-youth partnerships. Projects should incorporate meaningful ways for adults to support the next generation of leaders without limiting youth participation.



6. In conflict-affected and crisis countries, programs need to represent a positive alternative—they require a positive pull on youth that meet each young person’s self-perceived needs and wants.

The pulls in the political and social environment that draw youth need to be offset by attractive alternatives. How can an initiative or project make youth feel that they are part of—and belong to—something important? What are incentives for young people to participate? Research on the impact of using specific types of pulls in youth programs would strengthen the understanding of effective strategies for working with vulnerable youth in fragile settings.

7. “Youth” is not a gender-neutral demographic category.

EQUIP3’s experience confirms that male and female youth have unique needs and priorities, and their needs and priorities must be taken into account when seeking to achieve positive skill-building and livelihoods outcomes. Gender must be both a consistent and a stronger consideration than it has been in many countries in the design of future youth programs, and it will require particular care to adapt gender issues to varied country cultures and economies.



8. Technology has become an ever-increasing consideration for livelihood and employment strategies and a tool for program and content delivery.

The advances in technology, even during EQUIP3's brief existence, are remarkable and have only recently been incorporated into program development. Low-cost, high-quality, technology-based delivery systems (e.g., mobile phones for job placement or financial literacy instruction) can provide access to skills and job information for hard-to-reach, informally organized populations and can enable more cost-effective monitoring and evaluation.

9. There are important U.S.-based youth development approaches that can be adapted to international contexts.

However, adapting U.S.-based approaches to international contexts requires that they be flexible. The most successful of these approaches focus on adherence to a set of principles, rather than fixed models and a prescribed curriculum. The blend of principles and standards with sensitive technical assistance and capacity building can allow for local creativity and innovation.

10. Networks and alliances can be a strong sustainability tool, but agreements, capacity development, and management structures need to be well-defined to maximize network benefits.

Working through local employers, NGOs, and youth organizations can establish groundwork for long-term sustainability of an effective program. However, it requires that clear definitions, specific roles, and investments in capacity building be part of a project from the beginning, not just as the project nears completion.

B. Strategic Conclusions

USAID missions must sort through competing priorities and work to achieve ambitious aims in each sector with scarce resources. However, even within a context of tightening resources, there are several encouraging trends worth noting:

- USAID missions and implementers alike are coming to understand that youth do not neatly fit into one system or programming “stove pipe.” While this is certainly a positive development, the cross-sectoral nature of youth programming makes it more challenging to identify a “home,” and therefore an advocate and resource base, for youth programming within the U.S. government or host country governments.

- Budget pressures in some missions have resulted in more cross-sectoral funding for youth programs, even as single-sector resources diminish. Mission staff have managed to redefine their sectoral work to combine funding and outcome priorities and to pursue innovative agendas to serve young people. As a result, a certain momentum has been generated within USAID at both the mission and bureau levels. This can be seen, not only in the increased rate of new Associate Awards under EQUIP3 in the last several years, but also in International Youth Foundation's Youth: Work program and other USAID-funded youth programs. Going forward, growing consensus about the need for youth development programs may result in re-allocating USAID resources among multiple sectors in order to support future large-scale, cross-sectoral youth initiatives.
- In the beginning, most funding for EQUIP3 youth programs came from the education budgets of USAID missions. However, there has been a recent increase in support from other sectors—notably democracy and governance, economic growth, and health. As that has developed, the objectives for EQUIP3 programs have evolved to suit the sources of funding.

C. Looking Ahead

With USAID's new education strategy and youth policy in mind, EQUIP3's experience may be useful in thinking about how to implement them:

1. Youth are by definition a "cross-cutting" target, requiring a response from nearly every USAID sector. As missions look to implement the new USAID education strategy, youth constitute a particular challenge, yet they are not conclusively targeted. There is a risk of overlooking the assets and needs represented by out-of-school youth.
2. The new USAID youth policy encourages an expanded role for more bureaus, such as health, democracy and governance, and economic growth. Therefore, tools from multiple sectors are needed to build the capacity of bureaus to design programs that provide young people with complementary and reinforcing skills, connections, information, and resources. EQUIP3 products, such as the Guide to Cross-Sectoral Youth Assessments, Developing a Youth Development Framework, and others referenced in this report are resources upon which USAID can draw in this work.



3. EQUIP3's experience indicates that some missions and host countries are re-examining their approach to youth development and are interested in adopting a systems approach. EQUIP3's recent work suggests that a careful targeting of capacity building, tied to cross-ministry (and even cross-donor) activities, might result in large-scale, sustainable support for young people.
4. There is continued skepticism among budget planners and policymakers that any intervention with youth really works. While nine years of EQUIP3 programs have contributed to a stronger evidence base for what works in youth programming, there is still a need for more rigorous evaluation of outcomes and impacts from youth livelihood and youth leadership programs. There is also a need for increased sharing among implementers of the tools developed and evaluation results obtained, in order to inform the broader community of youth practitioners. The recent USAID evaluation policy marks a new and promising direction for monitoring and evaluation. Capacity building among youth practitioners in monitoring and evaluation specifically for youth programs ought to be a priority as part of operationalizing this policy.

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ABOUT EQUIP3

The USAID-funded Educational Quality Improvement Program 3 (EQUIP3) is designed to improve earning, learning, and skill development opportunities for out-of-school youth in developing countries. We work to help countries meet the needs and draw on the assets of young women and men by improving policies and programs that affect them across a variety of sectors. We also provide technical assistance to USAID and other organizations in order to build the capacity of youth and youth-serving organizations.

EQUIP3 is a consortium of 13 organizations with diverse areas of expertise. Together, these organizations work with out-of-school youth in more than 100 countries.

To learn more about EQUIP3 please see the website at www.equip123.net/equip3/index_new.html.

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This is to certify that:

Abdulwahid L. Madidis

completed the Community-Based Skills Training in

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SYNERGIA in partnership with the Technical Education and Skills Development Authority (TESDA) under the USAID-EQUALISE Project
held at Kalinundan Hall, Dava Pagas, Maguindanao on February 14 to March 04, 2009
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