



Promoting Gender Equality and Social Inclusion: Examples in Practice

Education Development Center (EDC) considers the impact of gender, inclusion, and social norms throughout the project life cycle, while respecting local culture. EDC endeavors to promote gender equality and inclusion among our staff and in the communities where we work, through the implementation of gender and inclusion assessments and strategies.

Additionally, we strive to design and implement programs and policies that:

- Treat men and women equally and promote gender equality (gender neutral)
- Redress existing gender inequalities (gender sensitive)
- Re-define women's and men's gender roles and relations when these pose constraints to achieving equitable outcomes (gender positive and gender transformative)

Following are examples of EDC's gender-sensitive, gender-transformative, and inclusive interventions in basic education, literacy, health, and youth and workforce development projects.

USAID Djibouti Workforce Development Program (WFD)

In early 2017, at the onset of the Workforce Development Program (WFD), EDC conducted a Preliminary Gender Assessment to identify sociocultural, economic, and political factors that shape the lives of young women and young men in Djibouti and to strengthen its understanding of how gender inequalities affect development outcomes for Djiboutian youth.

The assessment confirmed that young women continue to face traditional and cultural norms that discourage them from following technical career paths, despite the high demand for these skills in the labor market. Young women are influenced by their community, family, and friends to sign up for training courses that women normally attend, such as office administration and culinary arts. As a result, most technical courses offered by training centers and TVETs are dominated by men. Despite recent efforts by the Ministry of National Education and Vocational Training to raise awareness and encourage young women to enroll in technical high schools, these norms persist.



A key recommendation of the gender assessment was to work with the National Employment Agency for Training and Professional Integration (ANIFEP) to improve their capacity to promote gender equality in employment. Employers and employment placement agencies, many whom work with ANIFEP, must help young graduates navigate work-based opportunities and recognize their accomplishments to help them grow professionally. Improvement of ANEFIP's capacity includes (1) increasing awareness about gender norms and how to overcome them and (2) creating meaningful linkages between youth and employers and entrepreneurship-promoting institutions for both young men and young women.

Toward that end, WFD held the first-ever gender workshop for ANEFIP in February 2018, during which the project:

- Shared the initial gender assessment findings and recommendations
- Led discussions on how best to support female job seekers who approach ANEFIP for employment counseling
- Facilitated an interactive discussion on terminology, laws, and regulations
- Provided direction for effective job counseling of female job seekers, including guidance for those in technical fields on how to respond appropriately to discrimination in recruitment and employment (and being aware of laws and rights)

Participants encouraged WFD to share the same training with regional ANEFIP staff and requested additional periodic training.



Gender Sensitivity Workshop in Djibouti-ville



USAID De Lectores a Líderes

Through a Gender and Social Inclusion Analysis in late 2017, USAID De Lectores a Líderes (also known as the Honduras Reading Activity) identified four key areas to address in its Gender and Social Inclusion Strategy: (1) social-emotional learning, (2) engagement with male caregivers, (3) school-related gender-based violence prevention, and (4) student-centered teaching practices (including tackling boys underachievement).

Research shows that the active role of male caregivers positively correlates with better educational outcomes for children. Additionally, learning with an adult male in authentic reading and writing tasks also proved helpful in improving language skills (Shelton, 2008; Cuttance & Thompson, 2008 as cited in Jyotsna, J. and Pouzevara, S., 2016). The De Lectores a Líderes project engages male caregivers through:

- A social and behavior change communication campaign and an outreach strategy to engage men, using popular pastimes to attract interest in the program
- The sharing of empowering messages about reading and the importance of the male caregiver role in the educational process
- Work with communities to create spaces where men can gather to reflect on their own experiences as children, discuss the topic of masculinities, and explore how masculinities are constructed and reinforced in daily life



Participants of a Tegulcialpa focus group discussion with parents and caregivers about involvement in children's education, including a father who is actively engaged in helping his child with homework



Education Recovery Support Activity (ERSA)

The USAID Education Recovery Support Activity (ERSA) in Mali develops basic literacy and numeracy skills for children and youth while mainstreaming gender-sensitivity approaches into the program. Following the recommendations of an ERSA-led gender and gender-based violence (GBV) study, which examined the sociocultural, economic, and political gender disparities related to education, the project developed a strategy and built the capacity of its implementing partners to integrate gender-sensitive approaches into programming. Per the recommendations of the study, ERSA:

- Developed a gender and conflict-sensitive curriculum in French for children and in two local languages for youth including components on peaceful coexistence, citizenship, children's and girls' rights, child protection, and healing
- Trained Accelerated Learning Program (ALP) facilitators on gender and GBV
- Uses gender-sensitive monitoring and evaluation tools and methodology
- Trained 150 community steering committees (CSC) on an engagement strategy around gender and GBV
- Supported a community safety diagnosis and action plan designed to address insecurity in and around the school and in the community
- Constructed separate bathrooms for boys and girls in ALP centers
- Built the capacity of its stakeholders to understand gender and combat GBV.

The project has also identified challenges, including the need for a community referral system for GBV victims, low female participation in the CSC (around 33%) and in participant roles (such as field agents, facilitators, and volunteers), and the inability to conduct mixed meetings in some communities.



A family participating in ERSA activities



Rwanda Huguka Dukore (HD)

In July 2017, USAID's Huguka Dukore (HD) led a Social Inclusion Assessment which was designed as a stakeholder mapping exercise, to develop a practical, action-oriented Social Inclusion Implementation Strategy and Work Plan. One of HD's implementing partners, identified during the assessment, is the Umbrella of Organizations of People with Disabilities in the Fight against HIV and AIDS in Health Promotion (UPHLS). UPHLS is one of several Huguka Dukore partners that train youth with disabilities. UPHLS worked with HD to translate EDC's *Work Ready Now!* curriculum into Braille, as well as to provide sign language interpreters for deaf participants. Youth are taught in inclusive groups, and youth with disabilities are entitled to all the same HD activities provided to youth without disabilities, from classroom training to technical skills training to work placements. In the project's first year, UPHLS and other implementing partners reached approximately 100 youth with disabilities.

HD Youth Profile

If you ask Janette what she's learned from the *Work Ready Now!* curriculum, she will describe in depth every single module her class has covered over the last few weeks and even those classes she hasn't yet reached. She will also tell you that she spends all of her free time after class pouring over the workbook and notes from class. Janette stands out from her peers in her ability to express herself and articulate what she's been learning and how this information has changed the way she thinks.



Janette Twambaze Mariya (center), is an HD participant at the UPHLS Gacaca site and also has a hearing disability.

Despite being so bright, Janette dropped out of school after P6 and has struggled to provide a good living for herself. She's worked at three different jobs—on a construction site, in a restaurant, and as a housemaid. However in each job, she struggled to succeed because of the disability she silently carries. Janette is partially deaf, but she has learned to read lips. She is so



good at this, in fact, that many people don't believe her when she says that she has hearing problems, particularly because she is able to speak just fine—breaking the perception that her community holds about what it means to be deaf. As a result, she was fired from all three jobs because her bosses thought she was ignoring them. And they did not understand when she explained that she needed to be able to read their lips in order to know what they were saying to her.

Determined to not let her disability hold her back, Janette sold a pig that she was raising and traveled a long distance to a hospital in Kigali where she had heard of an organization that was helping people get hearing aids. Despite having the papers required, she was turned away because they ran out of hearing aids. Janette shares that after returning to her home village, she “decided to stay at home and lost all hope. I felt that I was nothing—that I couldn't do anything.”

When she heard about Huguka Dukore through one of her local leaders, she was excited that the program was open to youth with disabilities and rushed to sign up. After finishing the *Work Ready Now!* training, Janette has selected shoemaking as part of her vocational training. She hopes to work for herself and build a better life.

“I was so happy to arrive to the training and see others who have disabilities learning alongside those who don't. I felt so welcomed and included. It was like for the first time, people actually understood the disability I have. Now I have hope that I can find a way forward in my life and build a better future for myself.”

—Janette Twambaze Mariya, Huguka Dukore Participant

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