Educational Quality Improvement Program
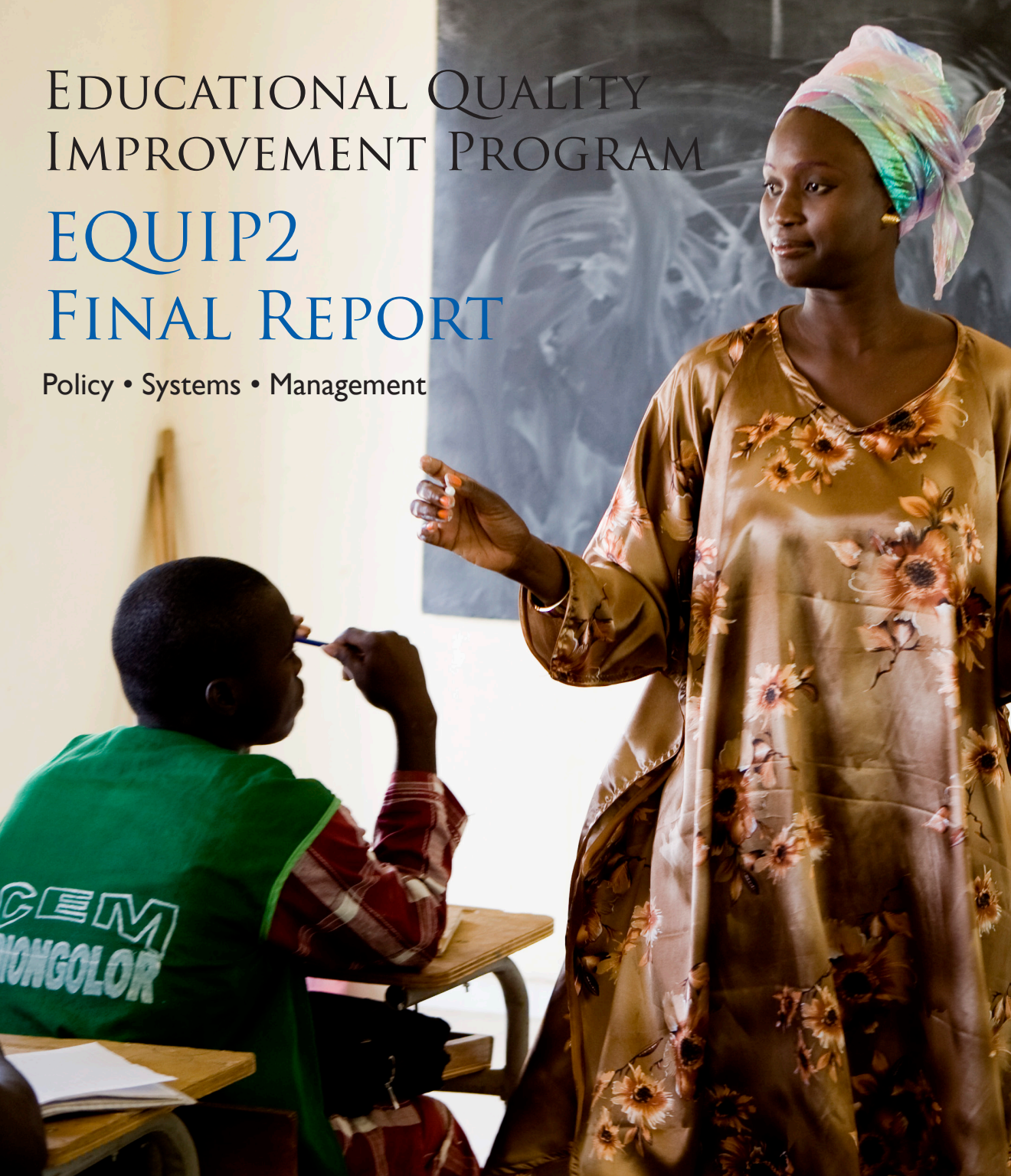
EQUIP2 Final Report

Policy • Systems • Management

By Anne Smiley, Ed.D.

USAID FROM THE AMERICAN PEOPLE

EQUIP2
Educational Quality Improvement Program
Policy • Systems • Management

EQUIP2 Leader Award

Final Report

Nine years of experience in education policy, systems, and management.

Anne Smiley, Ed.D.

2012

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INTRODUCTION

At the EQUIP end-of-project event on November 8, 2011, former EQUIP2 Director John Gillies made a simple but profound argument to a large audience of development practitioners: the effectiveness of international development activities is determined by the "how," not the "what." Development is about people and relationships, building trust and credibility, and helping countries lead their own development processes. By investing in structures, processes, and leadership, and understanding the political and institutional complexities of long-term educational reform, USAID has helped governments manage change. These insights are supported by the aid effectiveness research conducted by the Education Quality Improvement Program (EQUIP2), a major vehicle for USAID to assist developing countries to improve the quality of basic education through policy, systems, and management (Gillies, 2010).

As one of three Education Quality Improvement Program (EQUIP) awards, EQUIP2 is a Leader with Associates (LWA) Cooperative Agreement managed by the Office of Education in the USAID Bureau for Economic Growth, Agriculture, and Trade (EGAT). The EQUIP mechanism combines technical leadership activities with "buy-in" awards from USAID missions and bureaus. EQUIP2's focus on policy, systems, and management complements and supports activities in the other two EQUIP programs: improvements at the school and classroom levels (EQUIP1) and youth training and employment (EQUIP3). EQUIP2 addresses the systemic aspects of educational development essential to the sustainability, impact, and spread of reforms on the national scale. To help build organizational capacity, EQUIP2's recognized experts provided state-of-the-art knowledge and the most current research on a range of issues related to educational policy, systems, and management.

Within the context of global conversations about donor effectiveness, EQUIP2 emphasized the improvement of donor strategy and management, including advancing state-of-the-art knowledge of policy options. Based on a partnership model, the Leader award aimed to foster genuine participation from host countries and from a variety of collaborating organizations. Information, data resources, and systems were established to provide an empirical foundation for policy analysis and technical assistance, as well

as to offer guidance for donor program and host country policy decisions. The Leader award sought to build capacity through professional exchanges and collaborative work, including strengthening host country leadership for effective policy planning and implementation. The Leader award also sought to accomplish its goals through the guidance of a group of education policy experts from both academic institutions and implementing organizations. EQUIP2 aimed to build consensus on critical issues by using communities of practice and developing strategies of engagement.

After nine years of implementation, EQUIP2's breadth and depth have been far greater than the designers had anticipated. With 32 associate awards in 20 countries, extensive research conducted in numerous topical areas, and 81 publications totaling 2,204 pages, the project has become a key tool for the expansion of USAID's education portfolio and expertise in the policy arena.

This final report seeks to understand the impact of EQUIP2's work on the global education landscape, with a particular focus on the research contributions from the Leader award. Eleven members of the education policy expert team were interviewed about their participation in research activities, the management of the award, and the strengths and weaknesses of the EQUIP mechanism. Participants were also asked to reflect on the perceived impact of EQUIP2 research within USAID, paying particular attention to the 2011 USAID education strategy in the broader context of global education. Many documents were also reviewed, including all quarterly reports. Interviews and project documents were coded and analyzed, resulting in a final report organized according to emergent themes.

The report begins with a discussion of EQUIP2's unique features, including the mechanism itself, the education policy expert team, and the connection with EQUIP2 associate awards. The report also explores EQUIP2's many research areas, focusing on the perceived impact of the work of the Leader award and offering possible new directions for further research. In conclusion, the report summarizes lessons learned and ends with a brief discussion of EQUIP2's contribution to the current USAID education strategy. The annex summarizes each of EQUIP2's associate awards.

The Unique Features of EQUIP2

EQUIP's unique features made it a dominant presence in USAID's education portfolio from 2003-2012. First, the mechanism itself was unusual because its pre-competed Leader with Associates award was characterized by cost-share and partnerships. Second, its associate awards did not have a ceiling on the dollar value. Third, a team of education policy experts from USAID and a consortium of partner organizations put together a broad-based and rigorous research agenda. Finally, the engagement between the Leader and associate awards created a new kind of exchange between knowledge generation and program design. The unique features of EQUIP2 made it possible for an extraordinary amount of research, collaboration, and project implementation to take place over the course of nine years.

THE MECHANISM

EQUIP awards are Leader with Associate cooperative agreements (LWAs) that consist of partnerships with experienced organizations chosen competitively for their ability to assist USAID with addressing educational needs. The "Leader" is the core research grant awarded to the partnership. Under this core grant and pre-competed mechanism, missions and bureaus grant cooperative agreements, "associates" awards, to EQUIP. These associate awards align with the thematic focus of the Leader award (i.e., classroom/school, policy/systems, or youth).

The EQUIP2 Leader award allocated central funds to the lead organization (AED; later, FHI 360) and a consortium of partners to provide state-of-the-art knowledge and the most current research on a range of issues related to education policy, systems, and management. This agreement included a cost-share requirement of 15 percent, a goal that FHI 360 substantially exceeded, generating nearly $2 million through a variety of partnerships. The goal of cost share is to establish more local ownership and to identify sustainable partnerships to support a country's education initiatives.

The associate award option was attractive to USAID missions and bureaus for several reasons. First, the pre-competed Leader award made the process of initiating projects quicker and more efficient than stand-alone, competed

government contracts. Second, the USAID mission was directly responsible for the design, implementation, and monitoring of the award, from program development with input from the Leader award when appropriate, to management of all aspects of the award through mission staff, including the Agreement Officer's Technical Representative (AOTR) and the Agreement Officer (AO). Third, the mechanism required minimal administrative effort and simplified documentation. Finally, there was no ceiling on the total dollar value of associate awards, allowing for longer-term, comprehensive projects.

The EQUIP mechanism was implemented at a time when USAID was under pressure to rapidly scale up its education portfolio around the world. The speed and ease with which missions and bureaus could employ the mechanism made it possible for USAID to accomplish this: between 2003 and 2009, the three EQUIP LWA Awards received 69 associate awards in 41 countries, with a total value of $783,997,740 in funding from various USAID missions and bureaus. The total USAID basic education budget during this time period totaled over $3.6 billion. As one respondent noted, "The EQUIP mechanism was the right tool at the right time."

EDUCATION POLICY EXPERT TEAM
EQUIP2 is based on a partnership model with a consortium of experts from a variety of organizations to provide a variety of services to the Leader award. These services included setting the research agenda, conducting the research, providing quality assurance for completed work, and implementing associate awards. The education policy expert team had two

Defining Terms

Cooperative Agreements give the government limited participation in the recipient's assistance program. This participation is limited to approval of the implementation plan and key personnel, participation in or collaboration with advisory committees on technical or programmatic issues, concurrence on substantive provisions of sub-awards, approval of monitoring and evaluation plans, and oversight to specify program direction or redirection as a result of interrelationships with other projects.

Leader With Associated Cooperative Agreements (LWAs) are single agreements between USAID and a prime awardee, or "Leader" that are vested with central funds. USAID Missions and Regional Bureaus can negotiate and fund multiple "associate awards" associated with the program description under the Leader award.

Associate Awards are grants that USAID Missions award under a LWA agreement between the "Leader" and USAID. Since LWAs are pre-competed, associate awards are issued without going through an additional competitive or sole-source justification process; thus, they allow USAID Missions and Bureaus to quickly and easily access technical support in response to development challenges. The local USAID Mission initiate all associate awards, and Leader partners are strongly discouraged from approaching the Mission with unsolicited work ideas.

Source: *How to Partner with USAID*. http://www.usaid.gov/our_work/ global_health/aids/Partnerships/ grants_advice.pdf

types of members to offer expertise on a variety of relevant topics: 1) core partners, including representatives from USAID, the Academy for Educational Development (later, FHI 360), RTI International, American Institutes for Research, the Center for Collaboration and the Future of Schooling, Education Development Center, and CARE; and 2) resource partners, including representatives from universities, foundations, and non-profits.

Once the research agenda was divided into core areas, members of both core and resource institutions formed topic-specific steering committees. Whenever a new associate award was announced, all partners in the consortium were given an opportunity to express interest in participating. Partners for the associate awards were selected based upon who could provide the most relevant, technical assistance and the best value to implement the program. USAID education officers, including but not limited to the AOTR, supported the process in an advisory capacity to ensure that the work was relevant to the needs of the sponsoring agency and to provide feedback on all technical work.

Core Partners
USAID
Academy for Educational Development/ FHI 360
RTI International
American Institutes for Research
Center for Collaboration and the Future of Schooling
Education Development Center
CARE

Resource Partners
Aga Khan Foundation
East-West Center
University of Pittsburgh
International Rescue Committee
Joseph P. Kennedy, Jr. Foundation
Michigan State University
Mississippi Consortium for International Development
ICF International
University of Minnesota
Women's Commission for Refugee Women and Children

ENGAGEMENT WITH ASSOCIATE AWARDS

The Leader Award was responsible for engaging with associate awards in two ways. First, the Leader worked with missions to refine project descriptions and prepare proposals for the mission to review. Second, the Leader Award research was expected to inform, and be informed by, the work conducted under the associate awards.

Pre-Project Preparation

When a new associate award was announced, the Leader award was responsible for responding to the program description, writing the proposal, and engaging with the mission and Ministry on the technical approach. In some cases, EQUIP2 sent design teams to the field to work with USAID and the relevant ministries to develop detailed implementation plans. This process not only facilitated the process of approval, but it also ensured that the

Ministry of Education, USAID, and EQUIP2 could reach a common vision and understanding about the project, critical issues, and key concerns of each partner involved. Funding for the design teams was negotiated on a case-by-case basis. Between 2003 and 2009, 68 percent of all EQUIP associate awards received design funds in the form of a pre-award authorization, a phased implementation process, or as a separate associate award. In such cases, the USAID mission or bureau awarded the prime contractor funding for a design team to visit the country where the program was to be implemented and to prepare the Application for Assistance. In two particular cases, the design teams were also supported with Leader award funding. Contractors directly financed twenty-two percent of the design teams as a development cost.

The pre-project design funding approach was very successful because it allowed the implementing organization to work in partnership with USAID and the government during both the design and implementation phases. As a result, the Leader award was able to leverage more responsible design and implementation planning. For example, if EQUIP2 recognized during this process that the budget was unrealistic for a particular aspect of a project, it had the flexibility to work with the ministry and the mission to amend the plan in a timely and responsible way. As one implementer commented, this approach was "good for development" because it allowed the implementer to "work out the kinks" during the program design process in a way that is not possible with standard, competitive bids.

Engagement through Research
The Leader award was initially expected to conduct research based on the policy, systems, and management issues that were relevant to the associate awards, and in turn, the associate awards were expected to base their design and implementation on the Leader's research findings. However, the range of policy and systems issues relevant to an associate award was more extensive than expected, and the Leader award was required to immediately establish a multi-year research agenda prior to beginning work on the associate awards, creating an unavoidable time lag. Moreover, each associate award was a separate cooperative agreement that operated independently of the Leader award. As a result, the EQUIP mechanism lacked an effective way to connect the research activities of the Leader award with the technical activities of the associate awards.

Thus, the engagement between the Leader and associates was not as robust as it was intended to be: a mechanism primarily driven by research questions. Nonetheless, the EQUIP2 team sought to maximize the research by focusing on topics of broad applicability and relevance, such as education decentralization and the use and visualization of education data. For example,

the research on education system reform influenced associate awards to increasingly utilize a "systems" lens approach when writing their new program descriptions. Additionally, an intensive "Lessons Learned" retrospective activity during the last two years of the Leader award encouraged consortium members to reflect upon what had been learned from EQUIP2 associate awards on a range of important topics, offering an opportunity to make connections between the Leader's work with the associate awards. Nonetheless, members of the education policy expert team identified the lack of a systematic way to connect the Leader with the associate awards, a structural feature of the LWA design, as a missed opportunity. This issue is discussed further in the section on Lessons Learned.

The Research: Evidence, Application, and Impact

In collaboration with the AOTR, the EQUIP2 consortium developed EQUIP2's research strategy. The consortium took several considerations into account when selecting the topics: 1) analysis of the critical issues in education policy affecting USAID projects; 2) gaps in knowledge; and 3) existing expertise of the education policy expert team. The stated research-related goals were to advance state-of-the-art knowledge of policy options, improve donor strategy and management, and establish information and data systems to provide an empirical foundation for policy analysis and technical assistance at the donor and government levels.

Three primary topics were identified in 2003 within this framework:

1. Achieving Education for All (EFA) goals through the use of cost-effective approaches and alternative models to reach underserved populations;
2. Improving educational outcomes and management efficiency in decentralization contexts; and
3. Improving access and use of data for effective management of education strategies.

These research areas reflected some of the most important policy-related issues at the time as well as the areas of expertise of the core partners. The research areas evolved as the Leader award's priorities shifted over the next nine years.

However, EQUIP2's research on achieving EFA goals by targeting underserved populations remained on the agenda for the full nine years and included three specific areas of inquiry:

1. Research on alternative education models (re-named "complementary education") with an emphasis on the cost-effectiveness of 10 model programs;
2. Development of the Opportunity to Learn (OTL) framework for measuring school effectiveness (based on complementary education research), including case studies in five developing countries; and

3. Expansion of complementary education research into the secondary sub-sector, including a new focus on the secondary education teacher shortage.

The second topic, decentralization, was a primary research area for the first five years of EQUIP2, from 2003 to 2008. Work in this area featured numerous publications and collaboration with the World Bank Institute to engage donors and officials through a distance-learning and videoconference series on education decentralization in Cameroon, Ethiopia, the Gambia, Ghana, Kenya, Liberia, Malawi, Uganda, and Zambia.

Work in the third area, improving access and use of data for education strategic planning, remained on the Leader agenda for the first year until 2004 when EQUIP2 received an associate award for the creation of the Education Policy and Data Center. The new center took over responsibility for that line of research and worked together with the Leader award to create tools for data aggregation, analysis, and presentation.

Donor effectiveness replaced data use on the Leader's research agenda in 2005. The first project was an influential meta-evaluation of fifteen years of USAID education projects. The publication revealed that although USAID had recorded significant accomplishments in terms of improving education access and quality, there was little documentation of impact.

In 2006, EQUIP2 continued with the donor effectiveness research with a revision of a USAID document on the provision of reform support to governments. This revision led to more in-depth work in the area of education systems reform. Numerous case studies on how to approach long-term reform from a systems perspective culminated in a 2010 capstone publication, The Power of Persistence. Additionally, EQUIP2 did a great deal of work in monitoring and evaluation over the years, including the development of an institutional rubric to measure sustainable change. The rubric was introduced and used in several EQUIP2 associate awards.

EQUIP2 also had the opportunity to respond to several of USAID's Economic Growth and Trade (EGAT) Office of Education's specific research needs. One of these was a pattern analysis of EQUIP projects by type, emphasis, and operational strategies, providing USAID with important data about the breadth of their education portfolio. The analysis was conducted once in 2006 and again in 2009. In 2005, USAID requested EQUIP2's assistance in gathering and analyzing data on the role of school fees and school fee abolition vis-à-vis improving education access and quality, which involved extensive research and the creation of a knowledge map. In 2010,

USAID requested a major retrospective Lessons Learned activity to analyze the work of the EQUIP2 associate awards and providing state-of-the-art knowledge on a number of topics related to education policy, systems, and management.

While the Leader award was pursuing research on the topics described above, the EQUIP2 associate awards were also generating knowledge on their own, often informed by the work of the Leader award. For example, Egypt's Education Reform Project (ERP) conducted a historical review of education reform in the country, revealing attempts to decentralize the education sector since 1883. The study identified three reasons why previous efforts had not succeeded: 1) a lack of willingness among participants to cooperate; 2) a lack of familiarity with the concepts underlying a decentralization system; and 2) inadequate pedagogic purpose, with an over-emphasis on political expediency or economic necessity. These findings helped illuminate a way forward for the project, including raising public awareness and establishing a documentation system. In Ghana, an evaluation of the Basic Education Comprehensive Assessment System (BECAS) project revealed that although the assessment system designed by the project was both robust and cost-effective, it was being undermined because of limited access to full instruction. Many teachers were covering less than half of the prescribed curriculum during the school year. Research findings demonstrated that greater attention paid to improving students' opportunities to learn would allow teachers to complete the curriculum, which in turn could substantially improve student performance on national assessments.

Overall, EQUIP2's research agenda was characterized by continuity and depth. Though the research areas evolved over time in response to the changing global agenda and the needs of USAID, the education policy expert team successfully honed in on several specific research areas, demonstrating true expertise in each one. Each of the EQUIP2 Leader award's research areas is described in the following sections in greater detail, including its primary initiatives, main findings, and the perceived contribution of the work to the larger field of education. An annotated bibliography of all of EQUIP2's publications, published as a separate document, provides a more detailed summary of nine years of research.

REACHING UNDERSERVED POPULATIONS TO ACHIEVE EDUCATION FOR ALL

When EQUIP2 was created in 2003, the global education landscape was focused on achieving Education for All. Getting children into primary schools, especially the chronically underserved, was the top priority. Over time, however, major donors and development agencies increasingly

recognized that the rapid increase in access was having a devastating impact on school quality, shifting attention to the issues of retention, completion, and learning. The global shift from access to quality provides the backdrop for EQUIP2's research in this area. From the beginning, EQUIP2 researchers sought to answer the question: How do alternative education models meet the education needs of underserved populations in developing countries?

Complementary Education

When EQUIP2 began in 2003, much of the discourse in educational development focused on the achievement of Education for All. Patterns in the international data revealed readily identifiable groups that were out of school, including girls, children in rural areas, AIDS orphans, and others. Meanwhile, the literature was replete with examples of large-scale, non-governmental educational programs that were successfully reaching these populations in some of the world's poorest countries. It was this reality, along with a dearth of studies to examine why "alternative" programs were so much more effective than government schools, that led the EQUIP2 consortium to investigate the cost-effectiveness of reaching the underserved through non-governmental education programs. By examining how such programs were successfully reaching underserved groups, EQUIP2 would be in a position to advise governments and donors on cost-effective strategies for the achievement of Education for All.

However, the label "alternative education" did not appropriately represent the types of programs the team was reviewing. Indeed, the term "alternative education," commonly used in developed-country contexts, primarily referred to charter schools, alternative schools, independent schools, and home-based learning programs – all true alternatives to public schools. In EQUIP2's research, however, the children from underserved communities were not choosing among several school options because they only had one. Other common labels for non-governmental education programs included "community schools" and "non-formal learning," but these were also inadequate monikers to describe broad-based, NGO-run education programs in areas that had no government schools at all. The Bangladesh Rural Advancement Committee (BRAC), identified by EQUIP2 researchers, was a high-profile example: in 2004, there

> *"One outcome of the panel session on complementary education at the 2006 Comparative and International Education Society (CIES) in Hawaii was that EQUIP2's analysis and data was highly appreciated, particularly in application to access, completion, and learning issues. Participants noted the importance of linking EQUIP2's work to sector planning, collection of sub-national data, and teacher recruitment, training, and support. Both Education for All (EFA) and UNESCO's Institute for Statistics (UIS) plan to release data and information on serving the underserved."*
>
> EQUIP2 Quarterly Meeting Notes, June 8, 2005

were 35,500 BRAC schools with an enrollment of just over a million students. Programs like BRAC were not in competition with government schools, but intended for students to re-join the government system when possible. Given the realities in the field, the EQUIP2 team decided to change the language from "alternative education" to "complementary education," more accurately reflecting the fact that such programs could potentially support governments to meet their EFA goals.

EQUIP2's extensive network of partners proved to be an advantage in identifying case studies for in-depth research. Through leveraging contacts at a variety of organizations, the education policy expert team selected nine successful "complementary education" programs, ranging from home-based schools in Afghanistan to community schools in Zambia. Over a period of two years, the team was able to put together nine detailed case studies of complementary education programs. The data focused on cost effectiveness, including completion and, where possible, learning outcomes. A final analysis examined the programs in contrast to government schools in terms of access, completion, and learning, as well as annual per-pupil costs, costs per completer, and costs per learning outcome.

The results were startlingly clear: the complementary education programs were significantly more cost-effective than government schools. Almost without exception, the data revealed that locally-recruited, under-qualified, and minimally compensated teachers in complementary education programs achieved learning outcomes that met or exceeded those of government schools. In some cases, the costs were higher per student than that at government schools, but the complementary system was more efficient, with students learning at an accelerated rate and fewer students dropping out.

How was this possible? The research suggests that in the majority of complementary education programs, schools are community-managed and therefore able to offer students more consistent learning opportunities. The curriculum was simplified, local languages were used, and regular support and training was provided for teachers and school management committees. The school environment was geared towards learning, and the approach was effective in getting children into schools, keeping them there, and making sure that they were learning.

The research findings were well received at conferences and by the educational development community at large. The cost-effectiveness component significantly contributed to the validity of the work. Cost-effective economic analysis was still relatively novel in the educational development community. The analysis demonstrated two things: 1) the cost-

effectiveness of complementary education programs and 2) the high expense when government programs fail. EQUIP2's dissemination of the findings prompted many development practitioners to consider the importance of school quality and in particular, school effectiveness. As evidence of the research's broad and deep impact, the term "complementary education" is now regularly used in both academic and development literature. In fact, a recent search in the Education Resources Information Center (ERIC) identified the term in 16 different academic publications.

There were also challenges and critiques to the research. Critics argued that because complementary education programs are dependent on volunteer teachers and donations, they are inherently unsustainable and therefore, offer few applicable lessons to governments. In most cases where governments had taken ownership of complementary education programs, the schools lost the characteristics that had made them cost-effective in the first place. In addition, the research provoked sensitivities because of the inherent insinuation that governments are failing to effectively provide educational services, especially to the most vulnerable populations.

Despite these critiques, however, members of the education policy expert team felt that, overall, the research caused development practitioners to be more thoughtful about the role of complementary education programs in efforts to achieve EFA. As one member commented, "The complementary education research hasn't resulted in a huge sea change, but there has been a shift. If you look at the work of the World Bank and other donors, the organizations are much more receptive to complementary education programs now, as a result of EQUIP2's research."

School Effectiveness and the Opportunity to Learn
The findings from EQUIP2's complementary education research concluded that non-governmental schools were more effective than government schools, largely because the schools were accountable to the local community and created an environment that emphasized learning. In response to these findings, EQUIP2 researchers began to examine some of the basic components that needed to be in place to ensure students could learn. Through a literature review, the team identified the key indicators of a basic Opportunity to Learn (OTL): the number of days the school is open, teacher attendance, student attendance, teacher-student ratio, instructional materials per student, time spent on task, and reading skills. This framework was derived from a relatively simple premise: learning is to some degree a function of time and effort. Without adequate time spent on task, no learning is possible.

In 2007, a congruence of three factors led EQUIP2 researchers to create an OTL index and research methodology. First, stemming from its complementary education research and its partnership with Save the Children, EQUIP2 conducted a study of the effectiveness of community schools in Haiti. The study demonstrated that it was possible to collect data on OTL indicators, primarily through attendance books, classroom observation, and reading assessments. Second, Helen Abadze at the World Bank was promoting the use of the Stallings observation tool for capturing a "snapshot" of time use in the classroom, and she encouraged EQUIP2's researchers to test it. Third, USAID's EdData II program had recently developed the Early Grade Reading Assessment as a simple literacy measurement tool that the team had already successfully piloted in Haiti as a way to correlate OTL indicators with reading performance.

"We leveraged our partnerships for the OTL case studies. We worked with Save the Children in Guatemala, Ethiopia and Nepal, using their SUPER internships. We worked with CARE in Honduras, and Aga Khan in Mozambique. The dream of a project like EQUIP2 is to generate these synergies, and it really worked with OTL. We were able to leverage the kinds of contributions that are mutually reinforcing. Each case study was a real collaborative effort, and the result was greater than the sum of the parts."

By drawing upon the work being done by other donors and organizations, EQUIP2 developed an OTL index of 12 factors, created a research methodology, and engaged three of its partners (Save the Children, CARE, and the Aga Khan Foundation) to conduct OTL case studies in government schools in Guatemala, Nepal, Ethiopia, Honduras, and Mozambique. Results from these four case studies were revealing: the combination of time loss due to school closings, teacher and student absence, and time-off-task resulted in schools using, on average, less than 50 percent of the equivalent available days for instruction. In these instances, students were also observed reading in class less than 12 percent of the time in Ethiopia, Guatemala, and Nepal. Grade three reading fluency was low in all countries. In general, the results suggested that government schools were not providing basic opportunities for the majority of children in the target countries to learn.

The OTL findings were presented and well received at numerous conferences. The data on time loss, in particular, prompted many in-depth discussions. For example, policymakers at the 2011 Southern African Comparative and Historical Education Society (SACHES) meeting were dismayed by the stark findings. One South African participant also expressed relief, however. She had been engaged with many teacher professional development interventions, but met with very little success, and was beginning to feel that such investments were ineffective. For her, the OTL study gave her

work new perspective, giving her hope that an effort to improve the amount and quality of instructional time in schools would translate into more effective pedagogical approaches. At the 2011 UK Forum for International Education and Training (UKFIET) conference, representatives from the UK's Department for International Development (DFID) were also impressed by the OTL framework's ability to provide a snapshot of classrooms in developing countries with measurable indicators. In particular, they were impressed by EQUIP2's ability to look at the time loss in terms of resource wastage. As a follow up from the conference, EQUIP2 team members met with DFID staff in London to further elaborate potential indicators and discuss future opportunities for collaboration.

There were criticisms of the research as well. Some argued that increasing learning time without improving pedagogy or supporting teachers in other ways is meaningless. In response, EQUIP2 researchers responded that undermining quality interventions such as teacher training was not the intent of the study; rather, EQUIP2 aimed to demonstrate and diagnose resource waste in government education systems to provide the impetus to improve efficiency. Greater learning time and quality improvement are both necessary for students to learn. If governments are aware of the very basic issue of school time loss, researchers argued, they have the opportunity to identify simple solutions that can potentially have a major impact on learning.

Overall, members of the education policy expert team felt that the OTL research was a timely, important, and well-received contribution to the field of international educational development. As one member commented,

> *The major success of the OTL work was that no one had done it before. We were asking such basic questions, but no one had answers. It made people think about the fact that you can do a lot of higher-level work, such as train teachers, but what is the point if the school is never open? What if students aren't showing up? What is the point of revamping the curriculum if there are no books? We wanted to document what was happening on the ground. What does a snapshot of a typical day look like? Why are we surprised that kids can't read if this is the reality?*

In particular, the OTL work was a useful complement to the tools produced by the Ed Data II program. By collecting and pairing comprehensive data on time use with the Early Grade Reading Assessment (EGRA), EQUIP2 showed how the two measures were more effective together than they were alone in measuring student learning. Today, USAID and other global policy makers are increasingly returning to very basic inputs, and members of the

education policy expert team feel that the shift in global attention to these issues is due, at least in part, to EQUIP2's influential OTL research.

SECONDARY EDUCATION

Given the tremendous attention placed on universal primary education in 2005 and 2006, several African countries began to seek the removal of school fees at the lower secondary level in an effort to make secondary education more accessible for all. At the time, it appeared that universal secondary education would be the "next big thing," as governments struggled to meet increasing demand for post-primary schooling. In 2006, EQUIP2 presented its complementary education research to development practitioners at USAID, and much of the feedback focused on extending the research to the secondary level. In response, EQUIP2 conducted a literature review of secondary education in developing countries, with a particular focus on complementary education models. The findings did not reveal much because there were simply not many non-governmental programs for the provision of secondary schooling to underserved populations. However, there were a number of pressing concerns regarding the financing and provision of secondary education in developing countries, especially in Africa, and the education policy expert team decided to make secondary education the focus of its 2007 research agenda. The goal was to understand how inefficiencies and supply mechanisms might impact the expansion of secondary education, particularly in Africa.

Using data from 14 developing countries, researchers quantified the future demand for teachers and examined the capacity of education systems to produce teachers. The data clearly demonstrated that countries in many regions of the world would face major shortages of qualified teachers, and new approaches to the recruitment, training, and utilization of teachers would be needed for those countries, particularly those in sub-Saharan Africa, to effectively expand the accessibility and availability of secondary education. The research received attention at several conferences in 2008, including the Association for the Development of Education in Africa and the New Zealand Comparative International Education Society.

The feedback to the research was positive. Some members of the education policy expert team felt that EQUIP2 successfully convinced its audience of the challenges of implementing universal secondary education, which never turned into a major movement. As evidence, the focus of USAID's education portfolio has increasingly focused on the quality of primary education and literacy. EQUIP2 implementers believe that the secondary education research will be more useful once newly literate youth begin to move into higher levels of education.

IMPROVING EDUCATION IN THE CONTEXT OF DECENTRALIZATION

Decentralization is a dominant policy direction in many countries and has been strongly encouraged by donors for years. However, there is little hard evidence to support the argument that educational decentralization leads to improved quality of learning, and there are few clear guidelines for making decentralized systems more effective in improving the quality of education. EQUIP2's decentralization research aimed to fill this gap by developing an analytical framework, research, and tools to connect administrative decentralization, community participation, and local school management with improved school outcomes, learning, and accountability.

EQUIP2's first several publications in this area examined issues of accountability. In a decentralized system, there is no one policy-maker who is responsible for decisions; instead, there is a complex web of decision-makers. Strengthening accountability depends on strengthening the voices of stakeholders, improving management, providing better information to clients, clarifying roles and responsibilities, and increasing incentives and consequences. EQUIP2 researchers identified school report cards as one way to provide a useful and easily understood management tool, stimulate parental involvement and citizen demand for school performance, and motivate education reform at all levels. A case study of a school self-assessment (SSA) system in Namibia provided an example of a low-cost and highly participatory way to track performance and improvement in schools using report cards. EQUIP2's decentralization researchers also examined issues related to information needs, school grants, and public expenditure tracking.

However, the researchers found it difficult to make a connection between education decentralization and school quality. While research showed that decentralization may improve education, the extent of the improvement was minimal in most cases, and any improvements were almost always found in places where responsibilities were decentralized to schools rather than to sub-national governments. The researchers concluded that extensive, systematic studies are necessary to better understand how decentralization should be designed and implemented to improve educational quality. Rather than making a major financial investment in this direction, the decentralization team turned towards a more short-term, practical application.

In September 2006, EQUIP2 partnered with the World Bank Institute and the British Council to support a four-month distance learning and videoconference series on education decentralization in Kenya, Uganda, Ghana, Ethiopia, and Zambia. The purpose of the series was to explore the

impact on, influence of, and relationship between decentralization policies and school quality and accountability in Africa. The sponsoring organizations provided access to multimedia conferencing facilities, background materials, and general guidance, and the individual participants of the represented countries shared experiences to build content for the series.

The four monthly videoconferences addressed the specific themes of quality education, decentralization of teacher management and selection, systems of accountability in a decentralized context, and methods of restructuring ministries in order to support decentralization reforms, respectively. The participants from each country, including ministry representatives, USAID mission officers, NGO staff, national and regional policymakers, and education strategists, presented each other with examples of both positive outcomes of decentralization and challenging questions for further consideration. Between each set of videoconferences, country representatives asked and responded to questions from other country groups. Select participants from the country teams met face-to-face at the end of the series.

Impacts of Decentralization Distance Learning Course:
- In Cameroon, participants obtained funding for a decentralization research project and used knowledge gained from the course in an international conference.
- In Ethiopia, participants helped re-write the decentralization check-list and used instruments from the course to problem solve within their region.
- Participants from Ghana were promoted to positions of higher authority (Director General of Ghana Education Services and Spokesperson for the National Education Reform Board) and influenced education policies and practice through the Education Decentralization Committee.

The course opened a dialogue about education development and policy reform that transcended existing observations of the prospects and effects of decentralized education systems, leading to new perspectives on education finance, governance, learning outcomes, and knowledge exchange. The goal of the series was to inspire a new order of thinking about policy reform that involved greater regional collaboration and collective commitment to solutions. For example, a head teacher from Uganda commented on the importance of learning from other professionals, both internationally and within the country, to positively affect education. The videoconference experience allowed her to more closely examine her own school and analyze it from new perspective.

Members of the education policy expert team felt that the videoconference series was a very valuable exercise, providing a useful and innovative model

for sparking important conversations about the experience of decentralization across borders.

Despite the success of the videoconferencing series in creating new perspectives on the issue, however, members of EQUIP2's education policy expert team felt some level of disappointment that the decentralization research was unable to more effectively elucidate the connection with school quality. One member commented,

> *Not enough research was done to really help with the challenge of designing and implementing programs. The decentralization training tools were good, but the publications all argued that, "it depends, and every country is different." It would have been helpful if the researchers had been more specific about what types of interventions work best to improve school quality, and how they are developed and implemented successfully.*

DONOR EFFECTIVENESS

In 2005, in the wake of the Paris Declaration on Aid Effectiveness, EQUIP2 decided to add a new research area examining the role of donor organizations in promoting education development. The first step was a literature review to explore the factors that contribute to aid effectiveness, including capacity, sustainability, ownership, and donor coordination. Effectiveness was defined in terms of:

1. Aid effectiveness: the international rhetoric and policy recommendations that frame the issue and lead to initiatives such as the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) and Education for All Fast Track Initiative (EFA/FTI);

2. Donor effectiveness: an organization's internal operating and reporting structures that may either inhibit or promote effectiveness; and

3. Program or project effectiveness as it plays out in individual countries.

Other themes that permeated the discourse on effectiveness included: funding mechanisms, donor harmonization, capacity, and ownership. In the early stages of the research, a case study highlighting how some of these factors unfolded in the policy dialogue process in Guatemala was drafted and presented at a USAID/EGAT conference.

Meta-Evaluation of USAID Basic Education Projects

The idea for a meta-evaluation of USAID investments in basic education came from Dr. David Chapman at the University of Minnesota who had done a similar study for UNICEF. Between 1990 and 2005, USAID committed over $2 billion to encourage and support basic education systems in the developing world. The key question researchers wanted to understand was: what has been learned from this investment in education systems that can guide continued educational development efforts of the U.S. and other donors? Methodologically, the biggest challenge to answering this question was getting access to project documents. The researchers initially planned to use the Development Experience Clearinghouse (DEC), an online resource for USAID-funded technical and program documentation, as the primary data source. However, it soon became clear to the researchers that projects were not consistently using DEC, and that there were other limitations related to high-level changes at USAID during the period under review (1990-2005). However, the researchers could not find a better resource to obtain project documents and as a result, the sample size was limited. The researchers were only able to review 33 basic education projects across 23 countries.

The study resulted in some controversial, but significant, findings. It suggested that USAID contributed overall to raising education quality, extending access, improving persistence, and strengthening public and private institutions, even though a large number of projects failed to document education system outcomes altogether. Fewer than half of the projects had complete documentation that included initial, interim, and final reports, and final evaluations were available for only a third of the projects. While USAID project designs were primarily formulated in terms of education system outcomes (i.e., student achievement, access, persistence, and learning), the majority of project documents focused on project output delivery (i.e., number of textbooks printed and number of teachers trained). Data indicating that projects had an impact on student learning were available in nine of 33 projects, and documentation of project impact on access, retention, and graduation was available in five. In other words, the evaluation of USAID's education programs was inconsistent.

The study was presented to a standing-room crowd at the USAID Education Sector Council. According to a USAID representative, the findings were like "a bucket of cold water poured over our heads." While the study was considered to be rigorous despite the limited sample, there was a general sense among USAID representatives that the findings did not truly represent what had taken place over the previous fifteen years, and that the research

methodology did not capture what was, in fact, a very complex reality. The contentious report received a great deal of attention at conferences, and its mixed reception delayed its publication by a year. Members of the education policy expert team agreed that the evaluation, though controversial, was influential at USAID. As one implementer commented, "The report had the intended result of getting people's attention, and it drove a better awareness of USAID's strengths and weaknesses. The agency moved towards better design, with a focus on quality, and better monitoring and evaluation overall."

Education System Reform
In the 1990s, a member of the donor effectiveness research team, Luis Crouch, had been the lead author on a series of reports under USAID's Advancing Basic Education and Literacy (ABEL) Project entitled, Education Reform Support. The work was beneficial to USAID education officers, particularly in terms of thinking about the bigger, longer-term picture of education reform in an environment typically dominated by five-year projects. As one USAID representative commented,

> *The idea was that you pull yourself out of your project specifics. Especially as we were getting more into an environment of basket funding, and country-owned plans, it was a useful construct to help people think, what are you doing as a USAID education officer? We tend to get locked in the weeds – the little picture is too engrossing.*

In 2006, the EQUIP2 team decided to provide an update to the report series, including a new literature review and an extensive survey of professionals who had implemented some of the recommendations from the original reports into their own projects. The result, Education Reform Support Today, included several examples of field projects that were meant to be practical and instructive. According to members of the education policy expert team, this work helped development practitioners, particularly at USAID, to integrate long-term and contextualized approaches into their education projects.

The success of the publication resulted in an invitation for members of the Education Policy Expert Team to go to Egypt in March 2007, where the USAID mission and the Egyptian government were interested in applying the system reform framework to the EQUIP2 Education Reform Project (ERP). The meeting led to a continuing series of consultancies, ultimately influencing the trajectory of Egypt's decentralization efforts. Soon afterwards, the same framework was used in El Salvador, influencing the policy dialogue during an election year. As the momentum around education system reform

continued to build, the team decided to do case studies of the political, institutional, and technical aspects of long-term education reform in five countries: Egypt, El Salvador, Namibia, Nicaragua, and Zambia. The goal was to better understand the education reform that bilateral and other international organizations were trying to support, guide, and encourage as a phenomenon. The five case studies were loosely aligned along methodological lines, although the unique characteristics of each country gave the researchers flexibility in applying appropriate approaches to each context.

Each case examined the dynamics of education system reform from two perspectives: the political and institutional factors that influence technical reform, and the role of donors in support of sustainable improvements. During the period from 1990 to 2009, the five countries under review were undergoing significant political and social change. Two of the countries were emerging from civil war (El Salvador and Nicaragua), one had just become an independent country (Namibia), one faced significant challenges from Islamic militants as a secular system (Egypt), and one was confronted by financial crisis as it attempted to implement universal primary education (Zambia). These contextual and historical situations deeply affected the direction and pace of reforms in all sectors, and particularly in education. The single most important lesson from the five case studies was that all specific interventions, policy reforms, and project activities, including decentralization, service delivery, dialogue, information and analysis, teacher training, workshops, textbooks, and testing, must be understood and strategized within a context of longer-term goals and trends for effective and sustainable reform.

According to the education policy expert team, the work on education system reform had an influence on the international educational development community, although some members of the consortium had reservations about the extent of its impact. The majority of EQUIP2 implementers felt that there was a considerable increase in the use of systems language in USAID documents and Requests for Proposals, including an improved understanding of the complexity of educational policy reform and USAID's role in it. Some members of the education policy expert team anecdotally noted that missions, governments, contractors, and other education policy players are using the education reform support document.

Nonetheless, some members of the education policy expert team remained unclear about the value-added of the long-term system reform case studies for USAID. As one researcher commented, "We learned that politics influences what happens. That is hardly a contribution, although the details of the case studies are fascinating." Another member noted:

The implications of the work are simple, but hard to put into practice. The lessons are: you need to take a long-term view of reform efforts; you can't be assured that government partners will be consistent; if you pay attention to opportunities, there are ways to build on work that has stalled. But other than the obvious conclusion that USAID should avoid short-term projects, and should be promoting more flexible, open-ended, longer-term kinds of initiatives, it's hard to say how it should be used. That would be a radical change for USAID, and difficult to negotiate. Even the most compelling publication might be muted because it's difficult to put into practice.

Additionally, others felt that education systems reform work did not go as far as it could have, particularly in terms of its potential to influence project design. Nevertheless, the research was considered to be successful in terms of engaging the international development community on the complex and difficult topic of long-term education reform. By highlighting the reality of social and institutional change over time and focusing on the challenges of scaling up, institutionalization, sustainability, and impact, the research sought to directly challenge the perennial quest for a "silver bullet."

Monitoring and Evaluation
From the beginning, EQUIP2 was involved with monitoring and evaluation work in regards to its own associate awards. For example, in 2004, the Leader award produced a handbook detailing education indicators commonly used by international organizations to characterize education systems and to monitor progress towards increased educational attainment at the primary school level. The goal of the handbook was to assist USAID missions to better understand which indicators were most useful for monitoring their programs and help understand reasonable rates and patterns of change. The handbook became a practical and often-used tool for USAID practitioners.

Over the years, EQUIP2's monitoring and evaluation component evolved along with the work on education system reform. In November 2006, EQUIP2 presented a paper at the American Evaluation Association's Annual Conference entitled, Education Reform and Evaluation: Can program evaluations contribute to changes in policy and programs? The paper identified the insights gained from conducting evaluations specific to policy reform, and discussed how these insights could inform the design of future education projects and their subsequent evaluations. This work led to the development of an institutional evaluation tool that was applied to the EQUIP2 associate award in Jordan and Liberia. The approach used a baseline and regular monitoring to measure systemic movement towards the goals and objectives of the project, paying particular attention to changes in

the conditions that allowed education reform to be sustainable (i.e., changes in laws, regulations, capacity, and incentives). Data was collected every six months in an effort to continually monitor and understand any institutional shifts that occurred, and to provide the project with longitudinal data on change. A resource guide summarizing EQUIP2's approach to monitoring and evaluation was published in 2012.

Members of the education policy expert team felt that EQUIP2's monitoring and evaluation work, particularly in terms of evaluating institutional change, was a significant contribution to the educational development field. At a time when many education reforms were focusing on building capacity and sustainability, the evaluation of institutional reform had an important effect on the way development practitioners thought about overall project impact.

USAID-REQUESTED RESEARCH

In addition to the defined research areas described above, EQUIP2 was asked to conduct several research activities at the specific request of USAID. These activities included a patterns analysis of associate awards across the three EQUIPs, a major effort to understand the impact of the abolition of school fees on developing countries, and a retrospective activity focusing on lessons learned from nine years of EQUIP2 associate awards.

EQUIP Patterns Analysis

At the request of USAID, the consortium conducted a patterns analysis of EQUIP associate awards with the purpose of informing USAID on programmatic trends. The study had two iterations, the first in 2006 and the second in 2010. The analysis was conducted based on a patterns database that identified clusters of projects focusing on particular themes, approaches, groups, curriculum areas, levels in the education system, and country environments.

The 2006 study showed that approximately $313 million had been invested by USAID in EQUIP projects from 2003 to 2005, with more than half of all funding dedicated to projects in North Africa and the Middle East. The projects were divided into three main educational development strategic areas: access and equity, education quality, and education systems, policy, and capacity building. Within these strategic areas, activities and approaches clustered around nine key themes: curriculum and materials development, education policy, education systems, infrastructure and supply of learning materials, learning outcomes measurement, public demand and support for education, underserved population outreach, school management and leadership, and teacher quality. Fifty-seven percent of the funding, or $179 million, was concentrated in reaching underserved populations, increasing

teacher quality, fostering demand and support for education reforms, decentralizing systems, and improving data quality.

The second report in 2010 showed that between 2003 and 2009, the three EQUIP LWA awards received 69 associate awards in 41 countries with a total value of $783,997,740 in funding from various USAID missions and bureaus. The awards were geographically diverse, with the greatest number in Sub-Saharan Africa, followed by the Latin American and the Caribbean region, the Middle East, Asia, and Europe and Eurasia. The three most prominent themes across EQUIP projects were: policy (90 percent of projects); developing and strengthening systems (83 percent); and public demand and support (79 percent). Thirty seven percent of USAID funding to the EQUIPs was allocated to two thematic areas: instructional quality (19 percent) and systems development and strengthening (18 percent). Forty-six percent of the funding was dedicated to four thematic areas: policy (12 percent), school or institutional management and leadership (12 percent), public demand and support (11 percent) and curriculum and materials development (11 percent).

According to the education policy expert team, the patterns report had the most impact internally among the EQUIP Leader awards and USAID. For the Leader awards, the study made it possible to identify technical trends that could in turn inform the research agenda. In addition, some members of the education policy expert team felt that the study had considerable influence on the direction of USAID's strategic priorities. Demonstrating the breadth of USAID's education work across the many thematic areas may have helped influence the current, more focused education strategy.

School Fees Abolition
In 2005, a new movement swept the international education development field: the School Fee Abolition Initiative. An active policy issue in the U.S. and the broader donor community, the removal of school fees was widely seen as a silver bullet to achieve Education for All goals. There was also pressure within the U.S. Congress to channel significant USAID education funds into the movement. However, at the time, little was known about the medium- and long-term impact of school fees elimination on school quality, or the dynamic within communities and schools regarding education finance. Preliminary evidence indicated that the elimination of school fees led to quickly rising enrollment, yet school quality deteriorated just as rapidly. Furthermore, school fees were only one of many barriers to schooling. Therefore, USAID was compelled to examine more comprehensive strategies in order to get the most vulnerable children into schools, keep them there, and ensure that they learn.

Thus, at USAID's request, EQUIP2 research on the issue of school fees was designed to develop a knowledge base about the implications of eliminating school fees on education systems, and to identify best practices in eliminating financial barriers to school attendance while maintaining school quality. The goal was to provide USAID with evidence that could shed light on the complexity of the issue and reduce some of the pressure to view school fee abolition as a silver bullet to achieve EFA. The research was expected to continue until the end of the EQUIP2, with Dr. David Plank from Michigan State University leading the effort.

The Online Discussion: "Removing Barriers to Accessing Quality Basic Education"
Out of the fifteen themes identified in the discussion the top three most frequently discussed themes were: the quality of education (43% of the participants), public/donor financing for education (32% of the participants), and monetary barriers to schooling (30% of the participants). Participants recognized monetary costs, including direct and indirect costs, as a major barrier to accessing basic education. However, more participants discussed the quality of education as a barrier, or it becoming a barrier if school fees abolition or another similar policy is implemented in an effort to reduce the financial burden on families. Participants also raised concerns about how education systems will be financed without monetary contributions from households.

The research had two important outcomes. The first was a comprehensive knowledge map detailing the complexity of the issue through brief summaries of empirical research: a strategic, comprehensive, and easily-accessible literature review. The map revealed that the abolition of school fees is a tremendously complex issue, especially as it relates to school quality, because there is little data available on the impact of school fees on learning. The second outcome was a global discussion conducted through the USAID-funded Global Learning Portal to engage the larger international community, including development agencies, researchers, and other partners. Entitled "Removing Barriers to Accessing Quality Basic Education," the discussion was held from January 18 to February 2, 2007 with more than 160 participants from 35 countries participating. The discussion was logistically complicated, but it was successful in sparking interest. Participants concluded that fee removal policies introduce many challenges, particularly to school quality, and required a great deal of planning to manage the process. Topics for further research were identified, including the kind of management and governance interventions that should accompany school fee abolition.

After about two years of intensive work, the school fees abolition movement lost its momentum. Members of the education policy expert team believe that the EQUIP2 researchers accomplished their goal by demonstrating

the complexity of the topic. By paying particular emphasis on the negative impact on school quality, the researchers were able to effectively present the many factors, including potentially negative unintended consequences, involved in the decision-making process on school fee abolition. While the momentum of the research may have been short-lived, the impact was potentially important. In addition, the knowledge map has been well used and is seen as a model for how to build and present an evidence base on a specific topic.

EQUIP2 Retrospective

In 2009, at the request of USAID, the three EQUIPs designed two retrospective studies analyzing lessons learned on thematic topics arising from their associate awards. There were two types of studies: Associate Award Reviews, which synthesized lessons learned on various technical areas across a range of associate awards, and a series called "State of the Art Knowledge," which summarized best practices within specific thematic areas. To write the Associate Award Reviews, the team first completed case studies for each of the associate awards being examined, using qualitative methods and document review. The goal was to learn from the vast technical and programmatic experiences of the associate awards to inform future USAID education programming and to identify best practices in each topic area. Within EQUIP2, the topics included: Decentralization, Policy Dialogue, School Report Cards, Secondary Education, Education Management and Information Systems (EMIS), Student Assessment Systems, and Teacher Professional Development.

EXPLORING THE GAPS: NEW DIRECTIONS FOR RESEARCH

EQUIP2's research was not immune to the global trends occurring within the field of international education, and its vulnerability to these shifts exposed important gaps in needed research areas. The decentralization work lost momentum as USAID moved away from its macro lens towards a narrower emphasis on learning, and the connection between decentralized education systems and school quality was never established. The education system reform work was similarly sidelined. Although there might have been an opportunity to link the research more directly with program design, there wasn't an urgent need to do so given the declining number of USAID programs that promoted education policy reform. Additionally, more work on secondary education needs to be done to better understand how governments can scale up their post-primary education programs. Although the issues of secondary education may still become a global priority, it is currently not in vogue. All of these topics represent important research gaps exposed by EQUIP2 that will likely resurface in coming years.

Nonetheless, EQUIP2's work on Opportunity to Learn (OTL) has exposed an extremely important challenge that is closely linked to USAID's current focus on learning for developing country governments. What tools do we need to get an accurate snapshot of what happens in a school, and in a classroom? What are simple, cost-effective ways to increase the amount of time that a child has the opportunity to learn? What do we need to do to ensure that children come to school ready to learn and ready to make the most of that opportunity? All of these questions are critical to solving the primary challenge with which USAID's education officers are currently grappling, namely, how to improve learning outcomes for all children.

CONCLUSIONS

As EQUIP2 draws to a close, it is important to both reflect on the past and look forward to the future. According to members of the EQUIP2 education policy expert team, important lessons were learned from the EQUIP2 experience that can provide USAID with insights into the mechanism, management, and research conducted by the Leader award. Looking ahead, consortium members reflect on how EQUIP2's work relates to a changing education landscape represented by USAID's 2011 education strategy.

LOOKING BACKWARD: LESSONS LEARNED

As this report was being prepared, members of EQUIP2's education policy expert team were asked to reflect on the successes and challenges of their work. The lessons relate to the mechanism itself, the management of the Leader award, and the research that was conducted.

The lessons, described in depth below, include the following key insights:

- It is important to include safeguards for implementers in funding mechanisms similar to EQUIP2.
- The pre-competed nature of the EQUIP awards led to more realistic project design.
- When designing mechanisms that have a Leader and associate award component, it is useful to have a formal link between them to ensure effective knowledge translation from research to projects.
- Collaborative partnerships among competitive organizations are difficult to maintain.
- Consistent, collaborative leadership from both USAID and the implementing partner allowed the Leader award's research agenda to have both breadth and depth.

These lessons can be useful in USAID's future planning and programming.

It is important to include safeguards for implementers when designing funding mechanisms similar to EQUIP2.

Because the associate awards were cooperative agreements rather than contracts, there were fewer safeguards for implementers. As described below, one of the challenges faced by associate award implementers was inherent to the nature of cooperative agreements. In some cases, missions chose to use

the EQUIP mechanism as a useful and quick tool to implement a program, but they were not really interested in the "cooperative" part of it. As a USAID representative explained,

> *In some cases, associate awards were abused by the missions. Sometimes what was called a program description was still treated just like a contract. Both parties were at risk because there were fewer controls, but it was easier to make changes. In that case, contractors are at risk because there's no contract to go back and point to. If there are abuses, there is not much to fall back on.*

A member of the education policy expert team agreed with the following assessment: "The mechanism was really just used as a way to get contracts quickly – a request for an AA [Associate Award] would come in, and it would be just marginally different than an RFP."

The pre-competed nature of the EQUIP awards led to more realistic project design.
A criticism of the LWA mechanism used by the EQUIPs is that it reduced competition and undermined the competitive field by awarding a large number of associate awards to three organizations without open competition beyond the initial award. When the LWA was set up, the total dollar value of associate awards across the three EQUIPs was predicted to be $75 million, a number that stood in stark contrast to the actual value of more than $800 million by the end of the award. The designers did not anticipate the extent to which the pre-competed EQUIP mechanism would be in demand by missions.

At the same time, members of the education policy expert team felt that the lack of competition came with certain benefits. First, the mechanism made it possible for the lead organization to engage in productive dialogue with the mission and host government prior to the award in order to negotiate realistic terms based on the available budget. This approach was considered to be one of the great strengths of the mechanism, as explained by a member of the education policy expert team:

> *The cooperative agreement allowed the mission to contact us [the EQUIP2 Leader award], and we could work with the mission and the Ministry to write the proposal and flesh out the details of the project. For example, in Ghana, the Mission wanted to give us $1 million to create a comprehensive testing system for grades 1-8. Under an open competition, they could have done that, and the winner would have been stuck implementing it. But under EQUIP, we were able to say, "We can't*

*do this for $1 million, but here's what we can do," and that allowed us
to negotiate a more responsible project. The design team would create the
proposal on the ground in cooperation with the government, the mission,
and other stakeholders. In the competitive process, there's only so much
information you can garner. With EQUIP, we could involve the main
players.*

Allowing for interactive, participatory, and detailed planning among
the ministry, the implementer, and USAID reduces uncertainty and
misunderstandings. It is a key strategy for ensuring that the people involved
have direct ownership of the project.

Additionally, as previously mentioned, EQUIP occurred during a period
when education programming was growing quickly in USAID missions
around the world, and the ease of the EQUIP mechanism made it possible
for such programming to expand quite rapidly over a period of nine
years. The same expansion might not have been possible if full and open
competition was used for each mission. Another benefit to the mechanism
was the link between the research of the Leader award and the technical
aspects of the associate awards, even though this link was not as strong as
it might have been. In summary, the pre-competed aspect of the award
provided tangible benefits to USAID missions and bureaus as a flexible,
responsive, participatory, and rapid mechanism.

When designing mechanisms that have a Leader and associate award component, it is useful to have a formal link between them to ensure effective knowledge translation from research to projects.

When it was first designed, the EQUIP mechanism incorporated a specific
lesson learned from previous indefinite quantity contracts (IQCs): missions,
not the Leader award, should have direct control over projects in order to
ensure ownership and to reflect mission and country priorities. However,
the EQUIPs were criticized for the lack of a formal connection between the
Leader and associate awards, particularly in terms of research. There were
several reasons for this lack of connection.

First, no one anticipated the tremendous demand for associate awards, or the
range of interventions these demands would represent. When the research
agenda was originally set, the education policy expert team had to make
informed judgments about the key issues facing education development
without the associates awards as they were not yet available. For example, in
2003, two of the anticipated research areas were emergency education and
HIV/AIDS, both of which were urgent topics at the time. However, neither
theme was determined to be important in the associate awards. Second,

in most cases, missions did not structure the associate awards to include a research component. Third, the Leader award team became overwhelmed with associate awards to be able to effectively communicate with the field teams. As one member of the consortium commented:

> *One of my biggest pet peeves was the lack of connection between the Leader and associate awards. There was no contractual mandate between them, and we lost a big opportunity in terms of collecting data. It was partly our fault. In the beginning, we were holding meetings with all the project directors, but when we got to about 10-15 projects, the meetings were less productive, so we dropped it. We didn't look for another way.*

The mechanism would have been stronger if it had included an explicit, formal link between the Leader award and the associates in terms of research. For example, there could have been a funded requirement for a coordinated, leader-managed evaluation set within the broader research agenda. Such an evaluation would have led to stronger knowledge translation, or in other words, the practical application of the knowledge generated by the research to the design and implementation of effective projects. On the other hand, the limited connection between Leader and associate awards in the EQUIPs was largely a reaction to feedback on previous indefinite quantity contracts (IQCs), during which Missions complained of too many mandates and controls from Washington.

Collaborative partnerships among competitive organizations are difficult to maintain.

Collaborative partnerships are difficult to implement and maintain, especially when "partners" are competing for the same funding. In fact, the first several years of EQUIP2 was characterized by a strong level of collaboration among the core partner organizations, even to the extent that the technical lead was sometimes given to an organization other than the prime grantee. There were regular monthly meetings among core partners, and quarterly meetings for the full consortium. Communication was frequent and transparent among members of the EQUIP2 education policy expert team as well as among the three EQUIPs.

However, there were also challenges, particularly in terms of sharing the technical lead, an issue that created costly and complex operational structures. Over time, the meetings among partners became less frequent. The education policy expert team began to change as some retired and others moved to new organizations. The research agenda narrowed, and a growing sense of competitiveness undermined the original collaborative function of the consortium. One implementer described the challenge:

For partnerships to really work, it has to be in everyone's interest, and there has to be an incentive to collaborate. The inevitable rule of the universe is for the primes to retrench. Maybe there needs to be more direction from higher above, but it's a constant challenge to make sure that agreements are revisited and revised to stick with the spirit of meaningful engagement by more than a handful of organizations. People are always changing, both organizations and roles.

EQUIP2's experience is not unique, and it highlights the challenge of developing strong partnerships among organizations that are competing for the same funding. Perhaps then, the lesson is to limit the length of time that partners are expected to work together before redefining the boundaries with a new and different agreement.

Consistent, collaborative leadership from USAID and AED/FHI 360 allowed the Leader award's research agenda to have both breadth and depth.

EQUIP2 was fortunate to have consistent leadership from both USAID and AED/FHI 360 for the entire nine-year duration of the Leader award. Nearly all members of the education policy expert team cited this unusual situation as critical to the development of a research body characterized by both breadth and depth. Changes in leadership, which is more typical during an award's life cycle, can be extremely disruptive to productivity as new leaders seek to make changes, forcing staff into periods of uncertainty. It is clear from the description of EQUIP2's nine years of research that not only was there a great deal of consistency in leadership, but also that the leadership was responsive to changing priorities and new ideas. Additionally, USAID and AED/FHI 360 shared responsibility for determining the research agenda, responding not only to the needs of USAID but also to the larger field of international education. This shared responsibility allowed EQUIP2 to produce policy, systems, and management research that was useful within and outside of USAID.

EQUIP2's research on achieving EFA goals provides a great example of the kind of breadth and depth that is possible with consistent, collaborative leadership. Though the research began primarily within the context of access-driven goals, it evolved according to the changing needs and priorities of the global community, first shifting towards school quality and then towards student learning. When secondary education appeared to be the "next big thing," researchers responded with research, publications, and conference presentations. When USAID began to move towards learning, specifically in regards to reading outcomes, the Opportunity to Learn (OTL) research also examined these areas, developing tools to correlate time loss with reading

outcomes. Without consistent, supportive, collaborative, and responsive leadership, it is unlikely that these important research areas would have been investigated with such depth across such a broad range of related topics.

LOOKING FORWARD: EQUIP2 AND THE 2011 USAID EDUCATION STRATEGY

USAID's 2011 Education Strategy focuses on three main areas: early grade reading, tertiary and workforce development programs, and increased access to education in crisis and conflict contexts. EQUIP2's work has influenced the direction of the new strategy, and those charged with implementing the new strategy can benefit from EQUIP2's research.

Two of EQUIP2's publications were focused on USAID education projects, both of which are considered to have had an influence on the development of the 2011 strategy. The meta-evaluation and EQUIP patterns analysis helped USAID to see how thinly the agency was spreading its resources over a vast breadth of topics, with little quality monitoring and evaluation to measure results. According to a USAID representative, the meta-evaluation of USAID education programs demonstrated a distressingly low level of impact evaluation across projects:

> *The meta-evaluation, even though it was a rocky experience, was very influential. The World Bank evaluation said the same kind of things, and rammed home the fact that there was not rigorous monitoring and evaluation at all, even though within USAID we felt we were ahead of the game in terms of the issue of quality.*

The 2011 strategy cites three EQUIP2 documents: Opportunity to Learn (OTL), complementary education, and education reform support. In fact, members of the education policy expert team believe that these three areas, in addition to the work on secondary education, will be most helpful to USAID as it moves forward with the new strategy.

First, the Opportunity to Learn (OTL) research is closely aligned with the early grade reading component of the education strategy. As USAID measures learning outcomes and finds broad patterns of low achievement across low-income countries, it will uncover challenges related to school management. The OTL research helps quantify these challenges by allowing development practitioners to look at school- and classroom-level interventions around time use. If governments know how time in schools and classrooms is being used, they can then design interventions to make qualitative improvements, and donors can potentially get a much higher return on their investments.

Second, EQUIP2's complementary education findings can inform the early grade reading strategy, which showed that many non-governmental education programs were successful because they supported teachers, engaged parents, and communities in efforts to improve reading. USAID can learn from the experiences of such programs by supporting local school management, ensuring that teachers receive the support that they need and making sure that parents know what to do with reading data.

Third, the work on education systems reform will be critical if USAID is serious about achieving scale and sustainability on all three components of its strategy. At its core, EQUIP2's systems approach demonstrates that USAID should engage in policy dialogue to foster more sustainable projects and reform. Four key issues raised by EQUIP2's systems approach lie at the core of the 2011 strategy's new approaches and modalities: ownership, impact, sustainability, and scaling up.

Finally, the secondary education research will be important to the new strategy in several ways. First, the second component of the USAID strategy focuses on tertiary and workforce development programs, which are closely linked with secondary education access, relevance, and outcomes. Second, early grade readers will be moving through the system, and it will soon become apparent with these students that there are challenges related to access and learning at the secondary level that governments will be compelled to address.

Overall, the EQUIP2 Leader award produced a great deal of rigorous research that influenced a whole generation of USAID education officers. By using a systems framework, EQUIP2's research demonstrated that what happens at the classroom level is connected to the larger political and institutional environment of the country. By examining the successes of complementary education programs, EQUIP2 shed light on the importance of community participation in schools. By going "back to basics," the Opportunity to Learn (OTL) research revealed the huge inefficiencies of government schools and created an opening for improving school effectiveness and learning outcomes. As a USAID representative commented, "All of EQUIP2's research contributed to advancing thoughts and best practices in those areas; EQUIP2 was a hugely significant wellspring of innovative thought and application."

DJIBOUTI: PROJET AIDE PHASE II

Cooperative Agreement No.: 623-A-00-07-00015-00

Award Amount: $2,500,000

Dates: March 2007 – September 2008

Projet AIDE Phase II aimed to improve the quality of in-service teacher education through decentralized teacher education in schools, clusters, and teacher resource centers. The education management information system was revamped, and the central Ministry assigned education managers to all levels of the system in the districts and the schools in order to better use data for management and decision making. Projet AIDE continued to support the role played by parents and communities in improving the quality of education and getting more girls to stay in school. Building on work in West Africa (Guinea and Benin), the project made use of EMIS data to use state-of-the-art school-level planning techniques, such as a school report card and school improvement planning approach. Projet AIDE also focused on strengthening systems and the capacity of the Ministry of Education to manage these reforms. Finally, innovative public and private partnerships connected non-formal training programs to private sector firms, providing internships and on-the-job training for out-of-school youth, and in particular, for girls.

DJIBOUTI: PROJET AIDE PHASE III

Cooperative Agreement No.: 623-A—00-09-00006-00

Award Amount: $1,950,000

Dates: October 2008 – November 2009

Projet AIDE Phase III continued the work of Phase II, resulting in a series of significant accomplishments in implementing systems and policies that strengthened the Djibouti education system at the primary level. From

installing a new EMIS system and dramatically increasing the accuracy of Djibouti's education data, to improving the planning and implementation of in-service teacher education, to getting the legal framework for Parent Teacher Associations (PTAs) officially signed by the President of Djibouti, Projet AIDE helped its partners at the central ministry to achieve some remarkable improvements in the planning and management of primary education. These innovative achievements have the potential to lead to measurable impact on the access to and quality of primary education.

DJIBOUTI: PROJET AIDE PHASE IV

Cooperative Agreement No.: 623-LA-10-00001

Award Amount: $9,500,000

Dates: December 2009 – September 2013

In Phase IV, Projet AIDE aims to improve education systems and policies by working with and through MENESUP (the Ministry of Education) and its related structures, including CFPEN (the national teacher training college), to improve the quality of primary education in Djibouti. It includes a crosscutting gender initiative that integrates gender strategies into all components of the project.

The project is implemented through the following approaches:

- Improving decentralized in-service teacher education in primary education, with a focus on improving the teaching of French reading and writing.
- Increasing decentralized planning systems and supporting MENESUP to improve decentralized planning and budgeting at the school and regional levels.
- Promoting community participation and parental involvement in schools through PTAs.
- Improving Education Management Information Systems (EMIS) and the use of data for decentralized planning.
- Providing vocational and basic literacy training for out-of-school youth to prepare them for the workplace.

Decentralized Teacher Training: Projet AIDE is supporting MENESUP and CFPEN to deliver effective decentralized teacher training to approximately 1,200 teachers through the development of national policy and training plans, effective use of five teacher resource centers equipped with computer labs, improved school capacity to provide ongoing workshops, and school-

based support focused on improving the teaching of French reading and writing.

Decentralized Planning Systems: Projet AIDE is training 10 inspectors, 60 pedagogical advisors, and over 110 school directors and PTAs to utilize improved EMIS data to plan, budget, and monitor school performance using the FQEL (Fundamental Quality and Equity Level) school planning tool and School Report Cards (performance monitoring tool). The approach builds upon previous work conducted in West Africa (Guinea and Benin). The Projet AIDE team is focusing its efforts on strengthening systems and the capacity of the Ministry of Education to manage these reforms.

Community Participation: Projet AIDE is building the capacity of over 110 PTAs to become involved in school improvement planning and assisting in the management of small grants (in-kind grants are focused on supporting improvements in reading and promoting girls' retention in primary schools).

Improving EMIS: Projet AIDE is supporting the MENESUP planning unit to install a new sustainable EMIS system, (ED*ASSIST), produce the Annual Education Data Report, and develop capacity to analyze data for planning and management.

Training for Out-of-School Youth: Projet AIDE is building the capacity of MENESUP to deliver market-driven vocational education training, including functional literacy, and to utilize local training centers with support from government organizations, NGOs, private providers, and private-sector employers who have agreed to provide internships as part of the training. The program provides training to 110 out-of-school youths each year.

EGYPT: EDUCATION REFORM PROGRAM
Cooperative Agreement No.: 263-A-00-04-00006-00

Award Amount: $51,261,416

Dates: March 2, 2004 – April 30, 2009

In Egypt, EQUIP2 used a systems approach to build a foundation for policy change and institutional capacity for replicable reform through the Education Reform Program (ERP). The aim was twofold: to promote financially viable and sustainable practices, and to support USAID Strategic Objective #22: Sustained Improved Student Learning Outcomes. Target governorates included: Alexandria, Cairo, Fayoum, Beni Sweif, Minia, Qena, and Aswan.

ERP worked with the governorate and central Ministry of Education offices to demonstrate the feasibility of program interventions, document the mechanisms necessary for systemic change, scale up to the national level, and build the confidence essential for long-term sustainability.

ERP addressed some of the most problematic elements of the Egyptian education system: financial transfers, teacher qualifications deployment, assessment, decentralization, inter-ministerial relations, student assessment, and standards, among others. Many of these core reforms have far-reaching impact on incentives for teachers, principals, supervisors, and governorate officials. Without these structural changes, school-level improvement is not possible. While these reforms were not completed by project end, and in some cases were only getting started, an enduring impact may be the process, capacities, and attitudes that were fostered among the partners at all levels.

Major accomplishments included ERP's support for a national and governorate-level strategic planning process across the country, resulting in plans that were being implemented in all 29 governorates. The Ministry of Education (MOE) became the first to seriously grapple with the process required to decentralize operations. The MOE now serves as a national pilot and lead ministry in reorganizing its operations, experimenting with devolving authority, moving funds through an equitable formula, and giving some responsibility to the local levels to spend additional funds. ERP succeeded in bringing a number of ministries and agencies to work together, a significant change in a government that was used to a 'silo' approach to planning and implementation. A number of laws and decrees strengthened the capacity of civil society to engage in the educational process, and major policy changes in many areas, built on years of groundwork, laid the foundation for knowledge and acceptance of change. Work in standards development in teaching, supervision, pre-service, and school effectiveness laid the foundation for policy changes in teacher professionalism and school improvement and quality assurance. Capacity building with the National Center for Education Evaluation and Examinations (NCEEE) and with various directorates within the Ministry in the areas of indicator development, measurement and evaluation, testing, and the use of information systems in these activities built the capacity to implement national standardized testing. ERP was successful in helping to create an MOE infrastructure in which analysis based on data, policy dialogue, and strategic communications were more likely to be utilized and adopted. This shift was accomplished by building institutional and individual capacities, and in particular helping them network and collaborate with each other at the local and national levels.

EL SALVADOR: STRENGTHENING BASIC EDUCATION PROJECT

Cooperative Agreement No.:   519-A-00-06-00009-00

Award Amount: $11,365,148

Dates: December 2005 – September 2012

The El Salvador Strengthening Basic Education project consists of an integrated group of activities that assisted El Salvador's Ministry of Education's (MINED) efforts to achieve the goals of the 2021 National Education Plan. The project had two main goals. The first was to support educational policies aimed at increasing the quality and quantity of social investment and improving transparency of the educational sector. The second was to increase and improve basic education opportunities. While all project activities sought to have impact on the national level, the direct intervention was carried out at 500 schools in five departments, whose beneficiaries included 500 principals, 3,000 teachers, and 100,000 students.

The project focused on five major activities that support the two goals mentioned above. They are the following:

1. Curriculum and materials development. The project developed national Spanish language curricular materials for the first through sixth grades, including student textbooks and workbooks, teachers' guides, and four introductory teacher training modules on competencies and continuous assessment. Additionally, the project supported the MINED's strategy for one-classroom schools by developing multi-grade materials for grades 4, 5, and 6.

2. School management improvement program. EQUIP2 strengthened the capacity of school management to support student learning by developing a user-friendly strategy that improved the Institutional Education project (PEI) and Annual School Plan (PEA) tools the project implemented in 500 schools. EQUIP2 has been supporting the MINED expansion strategy, which involves training administrators at every school in the public system on the use of effective school management and administration documents. As a result, nearly 5,000 principals have already participated in the training. The Ministry escalated the implementation of the PEI and PEA tools by printing and distributing them to every school nationwide.

3. Establishment of public and private partnerships. The EQUIP2 project, through the partnership component, assisted the MINED

in strengthening ties with the private sector. EQUIP2 has developed more than 11 partnerships with local and international organizations to support project activities.

4. Policy dialogue and support to stakeholders. The project is influencing educational policy through research and analysis to facilitate informed dialogue on the sustainability of the national education goals included in the Plan 2021. This activity was undertaken in an effort to strengthen the capacity of stakeholders to utilize key information and to raise awareness during political transitions in 2008 and the beginning of 2009.

5. Development of technical tools to improve accountability, transparency, and credibility of public institutions. The project developed a National Education Accounts (NEA) system to track investments in education and to integrate them into the MINED's information system. EQUIP2 El Salvador supported the Ministry by improving ways to track the amount, source, use, and distribution of funds for education. The resulting information helped draw clear connections among financial information, public policy, and current and prospective educational reform initiatives. The project developed state-of-the-art data tools to strengthen the MINED information system. The availability and utility of critical research, data, and information illuminates the issues, options, challenges, and dynamics of policy change.

ETHIOPIA: BUILDING THE CAPACITY OF PRIMARY EDUCATION MANAGERS AND EDUCATORS PROGRAM

Cooperative Agreement No.: 663-A-00-08-00404-00

Award Amount: $ 6,554,159

Dates: January 1, 2008 – August 31, 2009

The Building the Capacity of Primary Education Managers and Educators Program was a bridging program between the Basic Education Strategic Objective (BESO II) and the Basic Education Program (BEP), and a way to improve the Quality of Primary Education Program (IQPEP). All outputs and activities were organized under three components: 1) Planning and Management; 2) Teacher Education; and 3) Monitoring, Evaluation, Research, and Analysis.

The first component focused on capacity building for municipal board (known as woreda) officers, Neighborhood (known as kebele) Education

and Training Board (KETB) members, and primary school principals, introducing the effective use of technology at all levels through a Management Information System, including a computerized method of maintaining orderly personnel records through a Personnel Management Information System (PMIS). Woreda officers were trained to fulfill a variety of management and leadership roles with an emphasis on developing solid annual plans with a well-structured follow-up. KETB members' training built the capacity of KETBs to fulfill their responsibilities for school management with an emphasis on encouraging community involvement and support in primary schools. The school principals' training built their management and leadership capacities to administer their schools in an efficient and transparent manner, with an emphasis on the basics of systematic financial, materials, and personnel management. The purpose of the MIS program was to introduce the effective use of technology at all levels, from the MOE to the RSEBs and TEIs, and the purpose of PMIS training was to introduce a computerized method of keeping orderly personnel records at the MOE, RSEBs and in particular, the woredas that are now responsible for all teacher hiring and management.

The second component focused on enhancing the capacity of the primary education curriculum developers, introducing an innovative approach for implementing continuous assessment in pre-service teacher education, and the development and piloting of in-service teacher training focusing on mathematics. Trained and guided by an international consultant, the revision of the physics syllabus for grades 7-12 was completed as a way to enhance the capacity of curriculum developers. The pre-service teacher education component introduced innovative approaches to the implementation of formative continuous assessment (FCA) in the first cycle primary grades and at the Teacher Education Institutions (TEIs). The use of education technology was also strengthened at the TEIs as part of the pre-service component. The major activity of the in-service component was the development and piloting of the Mathematics Teachers' Handbook, which serves as a resource book for second cycle teachers to build subject knowledge.

The third component focused on monitoring, evaluation, research and analysis (MERA). MERA developed and measured performance indicators for the outputs, finalized two national studies – the Ethiopian Third National Learning Assessment and the Ethiopia Education and Training Policy Review, and conducted six studies of program impact in the last extension period.

GEORGIA: GENERAL EDUCATION DECENTRALIZATION AND ACCREDITATION

Cooperative Agreement No.: 114-A-00-05-00088-00

Award Amount: $6,800,000

Dates: July 20, 2005 – July 19, 2008

The General Education Decentralization and Accreditation (GEDA) project was developed to assist the Ministry of Education and Science (MES) with the implementation and institutionalization of its reform agenda. The MES's ambitious reforms stemmed from the political transition following the Rose Revolution in 2004, and were supported by new legislation for both general and higher education.

Within a brief window of only two and a half years, GEDA greatly influenced the form and character of the Ministry's accreditation and decentralization activities, and worked to build the capacity of MES personnel and departments. During this period, accreditation systems progressed from being an appointed individual to a staffed National Education Accreditation Center (NEA) that had legalized authority, normative operations and annual plans, processes and procedures for quality assurance personnel and site visitors, and initial standards and criteria for both higher and general education. A new organizational model of education support was introduced through the establishment of regional Educational Resource Centers (ERCs), the decentralized administrative and management units of the Ministry that would connect schools and Boards of Trustees (BoT) with the MES. GEDA worked with the Ministry to help define the rationale, structure, and linkages of the ERCs, elaborate their roles and responsibilities, and establish horizontal networks to promote communication, strengthen institutionalization, and fortify operations.

Building capacity within the MES was another critical achievement of GEDA. Some examples of this supportive capacity-building include: collaborating with the Deputy Minister of Programs to design a coherent system of educational support; meeting with the Department of Finance to identify and prioritize school budgeting information, and to standardize its reporting formats for ERCs and schools; working with the central Administration Department to develop meaningful linkages across MES departments and entities, and to initiate project management guidance; training the Public Relations Department on designing and implementing a meaningful communications strategy; assisting the Department of Analytics

and Research with EMIS, research studies, and internal process and program evaluation; and cooperating with and providing support to other relevant centers, such as testing, curriculum development, teacher certification, and NEA.

GHANA: BASIC EDUCATION COMPREHENSIVE ASSESSMENT SYSTEM

Cooperative Agreement No.: 641-A-00-04-00073-00

Award Amount: $1,284,168

Dates: February 10, 2004 – January 31, 2007

The Basic Education Comprehensive Assessment System (BECAS) was a very successful test development project in Ghana. Three types of tests constitute BECAS: the National Education Assessment test (NEA), School Education Assessment (SEA), and Continuous Assessment (CA) materials for use at the classroom level to provide detailed information relevant to remediation. The NEA replaced the former Criterion Referenced Test (CRT), and the SEA replaced the Performance Monitoring Tests (PMT). Both assessments are more technically sound and better aligned with the current curriculum than the examinations they replaced.

The tests provide various reports that are useful at all levels of the education system. The NEA assessments provide the country and its regions an overall summary report card in mathematics and English. The SEA assessments provide school officials, district office personnel, and teachers—all of whom can assist schools in need—with school-level results, reflecting student performance on individual items that test specific objectives in the syllabus. Parents also receive information through the School Performance Appraisal Meetings. The results of the SEA are meant to help teachers and school leaders improve the focus and content delivery in the classroom. The results are distinctly different from the NEA, which presents performance data that is comparable across districts and regions. Finally, the CA provides timely individual student information for instructional adjustment and remediation or enrichment, as well as guidance for teachers on the expectations on core competencies.

BECAS also completed an "Opportunity to Learn" (OTL) study to examine the extent to which students could demonstrate their learning in a test that sampled the entire curriculum. This study revealed major deficits in the delivery of instruction and highlighted the difficulties students had trying to

take a test or set of tests that challenged even those who had covered all of the grade-level material. The BECAS tests were designed to reveal OTL problems and to lower the "floor" of scores so that improvements could be more readily identified.

The planning and organization of the project utilized the existing expertise in Ghana, both at universities and in curriculum groups from different levels of the education system, to test development and training. Additionally, an Assessment Service Unit (ASU) was created as a small organizational unit in the Ghana Education Service (GES) to work on assessment on a part-time basis. The universities were expected to work on the technical aspects and needs of the testing program. The ASU was considered an administrative unit, which served to understand enough about testing to assist at item development workshops and to logistically and administratively support the national administration of the tests. The project's full set of accomplishments are sustainable if the national universities are interested and invested in the outcomes, and if the ASU remains an administrative group that is ready and able to support the operations and logistics of test application and data collection.

GLOBAL: EDUCATION POLICY AND DATA CENTER
Cooperative Agreement No.: EHC-A-00-04-0002-00

Amount: $7,407,862 (Obligated)

Dates: October 1, 2003 – September 30, 2011

The Education Policy and Data Center (EPDC) is a public-private initiative that serves as a data and analysis resource for the education development community. From 2003 to 2011, EPDC firmly established its place among large-scale data resources by maintaining an online database of education and development information from nearly 300 sources, including administrative and survey data at the national and sub-national levels. In addition to the database, the EPDC website presents data in graphs, maps, and education profiles, presenting the current status, historical information, and future trends of the education systems in most developing countries. EPDC has also developed a number of projection models that forecast education indicators, such as school enrollment and completion based on observed historical trends, all of which are available on its website along with accompanying tutorials and methodologies. Finally, EPDC has contributed to important

debates in the education development community through its publications that analyze trends and relationships in education data.

EPDC has been recognized for its ability to distill relevant information from vast quantities of data to identify trends and present information in ways that make it relevant for donors and policy makers. EPDC has established strong partnerships with international development agencies, serving as a data analysis arm for a variety of multi-country studies and background reports. In addition, EPDC has supported policy makers in developing countries directly by providing technical assistance in the area of data management and information-based policy planning.

GUATEMALA: EDUCATION FINANCE POLICY DIALOGUE

Cooperative Agreement No.   520-A-00-04-00074-00

Award Amount: $650,000

Dates: March 2004 – June 2005

The purpose of this award was to make increased and improved social sector investment a priority for the new Guatemalan government. The objectives were twofold: 1) to create a consensus among government, private sector, non-profit civil society groups, and donors on the most promising approaches to address increased, improved and more effective social sector investment and transparency, and 2) to design and initiate an "Invest in People" media campaign to promote increased social investment in education and health.

At the beginning of the project, the role of the implementing partner was to create consensus, raise awareness, and increase investment to education. The principle deliverables were to be a series of consensus-building workshops that were supposed to culminate in February 2005 with a joint health and education conference that highlighted social sector investment. The project team outlined a process for building a shared vision of education that would extend beyond the life of a discrete project or specific administration and could be sustained over the coming two decades. The team began by identifying a broad range of key actors who could contribute by creating a new vision and goals for education and mobilize new and greater resources to make that vision and goals a reality. These actors included diverse stakeholders, such as political party leaders, members of Congress, Finance and other Ministries, civil society groups such as the National Council for Mayan Education (CNEM), NGOs, campesino organizations, women's groups, representatives from the different churches, partners from the private

sector, and members from the international community. It was thought that the project team would implement these workshops with the participation of the Minister of Education.

However, the Minister took the position that the Ministry should play a leadership role in dialogues and discussions around the future of the education system of Guatemala because it felt that such discussions were too important to be led by other members of the international community or individual members of the education community. Indeed what had been missing historically in such efforts for dialogue was the MOE leadership and follow-up. With characteristic flexibility, EQUIP2 supported the Ministry through the process. Consequently, the Minister formed a Grupo Promotor of seven people who had earned respect across a broad spectrum of society (a Congressman, a religious leader, a Mayan leader, an NGO leader, a teacher, a leader from the private sector, and the Minister herself). The Minister of Education had participated five years earlier in a process of scenario planning (Vision Guatemala) around the time of the Peace Accords, which had brought together members from different social sectors and a variety of historically adverse political figures. Impressed with the methodology, the dialogues that were generated, and the relationships created across a diverse group of people, the Ministry saw the value in promoting a similar process that would be focused on education and education reform.

The Grupo Promotor in turn identified 60 people from different sectors of civil society, organizations, and government to form the Grupo Constructor, and together, they began a series of learning workshops and dialogues that were to last six months. By November 2005, the expected outcomes were the creation of three scenarios on education (an ideal scenario, a worst-case scenario, and the "business as usual" scenario) and the development of goals for the year 2025. The structure of the Vision Education process was similar to what this project had originally proposed, and many of the participants of the Grupo Promotor and Grupo Constructor were those the project had identified as potential participants.

GUATEMALA: SOCIAL SECTOR INVESTMENT POLICY DIALOGUE

Cooperative Agreement No.: 520-A-00-05-00109-00

Award Amount: $2,549,360

Dates: June 2005 – July 2007

The Guatemala Social Sector Investment Policy Dialogue supported the achievement of the Ministry of Education's (MINEDUC) 2004-2007 goals, Guatemala's Vision Education Goals, and the Millennium Challenge Goals (MDG) for improving accountability and transparency in education and increasing the quality, equity, and efficiency of public education programs. The Dialogue helped the government and civil society groups identify resources, understand existing education options, and address critical constraints to improve the amount and effectiveness of social sector investment. A focus was placed \ on inequities affecting rural and indigenous members of society. The project had two primary components: increased and improved social sector investment, and improved Ministry of Education administrative and financial management for transparent, accountable, and effective decision-making processes.

The project sought to achieve three objectives. The first objective was to promote policy dialogue concerning proposals for funding and improving investment in education. In 2005, the project started a roundtable discussion series in order to create a space for dialogue and discussion among different actors on the topic of education. The roundtable regularly brought together representatives from the Ministry of Finance, Offices of the Budget and Public Credit, Office of State Accountability, Office of Finance and Planning, Ministry of Education, and nongovernmental actors. This effort signified the first systematization of meetings among actors that normally work alongside one another but do not otherwise have the opportunity to discuss or analyze vital information about education together.

The second objective was to support the development of legislation that promotes goals potentially achieved through improved investment. On March 29, 2006, the project organized a conference, led by Dr. E. Schiefelbein, on the efficiency of education policies. One hundred and fifty people attended the event . Following the conference, Dr. Schiefelbein made several television and radio appearances, generating further dialogue on the subject.

The third objective was to increase transparency and citizen participation in institutional oversight in education, especially in the critical areas of planning, budgeting, and monitoring. With the help of the project, the MINEDUC was able to record, for the first time in history, results for initial attendance in the same year that the numbers were generated. Through modifications of the data collection and processing procedures, and with technical assistance by the project, the MINEDUC quickly carried out the process in two and half months in 2005, analyzing information from 27,739

schools from all over the country. The results were presented in a report and distributed as a project publication.

Between July and September 2006, the project worked with specialists in finance, planning, and public budgeting to reconcile the diverse databases of the MINEDUC. The project was able to combine various databases and organize data in a fast and organized form. The data includes information on infrastructure, teacher and student attendance, human resources, and student and teacher performance. The tool helps the MINEDUC make more precise decisions as well as disseminates more accurate information to the public.

HONDURAS: IMPROVING STUDENT ACHIEVEMENT IN HONDURAS

Cooperative Agreement No.: GDG-A-00-03-00006-00

Award Amount: $21,219,200

Dates: 2004 – May 2011

The Improving Student Achievement in Honduras project (MIDEH) was an initiative supporting the Government of Honduras Secretariat for Education in achieving Education for All-Fast Track Initiative and Poverty Reduction Strategy goals and indicators. Support was focused on the strengthening of teacher knowledge on the use of DCNB (Diseńo Curricular Nacional Básico) materials, the generation of educational standards, programs, manuals, formative and diagnostic testing, the implementation of methodologies to remediate students with low performance, education reform, civil society involvement, and educational performance improvement.

MIDEH provided support to decentralized technical assistance and teacher training through partner NGOs. This partnership model was adopted to guarantee effective delivery of services promoted by the project in 12 departments. In order to support and improve students' educational performances, the project provided support to: a) the definition of educational standards at all levels of the national education system and in the main curricular areas, beginning with mathematics and Spanish; and b) the promotion of the use of DCNB complementary materials, such as programs, formative tests, and teachers' manuals in the use of diagnostic and formative evaluations. Twenty-seven documents pertaining to DCNB were designed, published, reproduced, and disseminated.

The MIDEH project established alliances with the private sector, local NGOs, projects, and programs that were focused on the improvement of national education. It strengthened technical pedagogical units in Department-level Directorates of Education (DDEs) and District-level Directorates of Education (DDIs), supporting strategic planning and administrative management. Additionally, the collection, dissemination, and use of educational data and statistics were significant contributions to the project. During its first years the project served as data administrator, and in the last years, it served as a facilitator in the use of educational data for decision-making at the school, municipal, local, departmental, and national levels.

Educational indicators that were the subject of scrutiny have improved in Honduras. Such improvements are partly a result of the project's involvement. Changes observed between 2004 and 2010 included:

- Preschool education coverage increased from 36% to 64%;
- Overall sixth grade graduation increased from 76.7% in 2005 to 90.9% in 2010;
- Sixth grade graduation for students 12 years or younger went from 26% to 36.2%;
- Dropout rate from the 1st to 6th grades decreased from 2.2% to 0.91%;
- Repetition rates in the first grade dropped from 17.5% to 2.16%; and
- Repetition rates in the sixth grade decreased from 1.63% in 2004 to 0.08% in 2010.

Although not all EFA goals were met, it is important to point out that there was improvement on all indicators.

JORDAN: EDUCATION REFORM FOR THE KNOWLEDGE ECONOMY SUPPORT PROJECT

Cooperative Agreement No.: 278-A-00-00226-00

Award Amount: $32,357,695

Dates: July 1, 2004 – November 30, 2008

The Education Reform for the Knowledge Economy (ERfKE) Support Project (ESP) was intended to support the Jordanian Ministry of Education (MOE) reform efforts in early childhood education and upper secondary education, as well as in previously disadvantaged regions, such as South Jordan. Each of these reforms was shaped around the theme of preparation

for the knowledge economy. In early childhood education, the emphasis was on giving children a head start with schooling so that they would enter first grade ready to learn. At the upper secondary level, the emphasis was on an innovative conversion of the low prestige and relatively unpopular commercial program into a program focused on preparation for entry into the new technological, market economy. Along with these reforms, attention was given to the transitions from school-to-career (STC). In the poorly developed region of South Jordan, the emphasis was on bringing technology, new school curricula and programming, and access to kindergarten to raise living standards. The components of ESP's work throughout the three focus areas were: 1) construction, refurbishment, and renovation of facilities and equipment; 2) job-embedded and school-based professional development; 3) curriculum reform; and 4) institutional capacity building to carry out the reforms.

In the Jordanian public school system, there were few kindergartens and most preschool education took place in the private sector. With recognition of the importance of early childhood education, Jordan embarked on a kindergarten expansion program. Even though the demand is considerable, the development of kindergarten programs is dependent upon available and appropriate space and teachers. Supported by ESP, the MOE created a kindergarten system focusing on: renovating classrooms to match the learning ecology of the modern curriculum; creating manuals and training materials; training teachers and administrators; and involving parents and communities to provide needed support for the young children and their activities. Standards were set and maintained through the various levels of support to nearly 600 kindergartens, with 170 given access to refurbished facilities. The results were dramatic and justified the costs incurred. In addition to the formal education sector, Hikayat Simsim (Sesame Street) was created to enhance understanding of health and the environment in young children. Early childhood education has been a very successful endeavor of the MOE's reform.

Pilot programs for enhanced technology training, school-to-career experiences and materials, and the provision of IT equipment and expertise to support modern instruction in the schools all enhanced the educational environment at the secondary level. Traditionally, much of the scholastic preparation of secondary school focused on formal academic work aimed at postsecondary education. Since many students do not advance to higher education, vocational and business programs were important aspects of the reform. In order to improve the status and appeal of potentially useful vocational aspirations for the modern economy, the Management Information Stream was created. Along with a modern and progressive

curriculum and instructional regime, extensive school-based professional development, administrator training, and online enhancements in instruction and resources were advanced. All the pilot activities demonstrated remarkable student progress and generated enthusiasm that was well received by teachers, administrators, and students alike. Students created viable model businesses, performed online transactions, handled marketing and finance, and in many cases, sold products. These real-life experiences resulted in greater academic success and increased opportunities for students moving to higher education or the work force. At the same time, new professional development opportunities for teachers led to increased teacher professionalism and a national conference on the expansion of school-based models of professional development and school problem solving.

In South Jordan, much of the project's work focused on the development of school environments that would support the new programming in kindergartens and secondary schools. The project contributed the equipment, refurbishment, and connectivity needed by many schools, particularly by those in rural communities. Private enterprises contributed to school development, sporting fields were improved, schools developed supplemental skills-based activities, and new laboratories were built to accommodate the new curriculum stream and other vocational activities.

ESP began as a part of the international EQUIP2 project, funded by USAID, and through the initial stages of the evolving reform of Jordan, ESP became a key supporter of the technical development of the ERfKE agenda. External reviews and internal assessments confirmed the positive contributions of ESP over and over again. The project operated entirely within the province of the MOE and plans were developed cooperatively with MOE personnel. In addition to school development, ESP supported many other aspects of the reform, most notably the development of a central data system, the contribution of considerable equipment to the reform effort, and the creation of infrastructure and organizational capacity to make progress on a comprehensive learning management system. ESP provided a significant foundation for continued development in early childhood education, school-to-career secondary education, rural development enhancements, and information improvements. The project was a true partner between the MOE and USAID/Jordan in the reform of Jordan's education system.

KOSOVO: BASIC EDUCATION PROGRAM
Cooperative Agreement No.: 167-A-0010-00101-00

Award Amount: $9,700,000.00

Dates: August 30, 2010 – September 30, 2015

Basic Education Program (BEP) is a five-year initiative designed to benefit all public primary and lower secondary schools that serves grades 1 to 9 in Kosovo. BEP's motto is "developing students' 21st Century skills with schools and communities." To this end, BEP seeks to improve the capacity of Kosovo's schools to provide relevant skills for its students. Its overarching goal is to improve the Kosovo government's institutional capacity in the education sector and improve the quality of primary education.

BEP includes the following three components:

1. Enhance School Management Capacities in the Decentralized Environment

BEP's work in this component aims to: a) develop the capacity of Minsitry staff, directors, and school boards to manage schools effectively; and b) develop sustainable school management and professional development systems at the school and municipality levels.

2. Strengthen the Assessment of Learning Outcomes

BEP aims to address the assessment of learning outcomes by: a) developing educators' awareness of the importance of school-based assessment (SBA) in improving student learning outcomes and the ability to implement it; and b) collaborating with the Ministry and other donors to improve the capacities for external student assessment at the national level.

3. Improve In-Service Teacher Training

The government works with a local partner, the Kosovo Education Center (KEC), who has prime responsibility in-service teacher training. The government supports the KEC with specialized, international technical assistance and the counsel of its Training Expert. This component will help improve the quality and effectiveness of instruction in schools by bringing quality teacher development programs and sustainable follow-up activities closer to schools and teachers.

LIBERIA: TEACHER TRAINING PROGRAM I

Cooperative Agreement No.: 669-A-00-06-00055-00

Award Amount: $15,500,000

Dates: November 2006 – May 2010

The Liberia Teacher Training Program (LTTP) supported the Ministry of Education (MoE), Liberian universities, and other education stakeholders in the redevelopment of a cohesive and effective training system to serve Liberian educators. Over the course of the program, LTTP supported broad-based, consultative, and collaborative processes that actively engaged the MoE, University of Liberia (UoL), Rural Teacher Training Institutes (RTTIs), schools, and communities in six counties (Lofa, Nimba, Monserrado, Grand Gedeh, River Gee, and Maryland), and local and international organizations working to improve the quality of teaching and learning in Liberia.

The program began with an intensive Phase I assessment that was initiated in November 2006. The purpose of the Phase I report was to assess the current situation regarding teacher education in Liberia and to identify the critical needs of the teacher-training sector. The report examined the broader issues related to policy setting and capacity within the MoE as well as the specific issues related to the education of teachers. The findings and recommendations of the study ensured that the LTTP plan of support for the revision and revitalization of the teacher education system arose from the realities and needs of the Liberian situation.

In late February 2007, program activities began. Initial program actions included a series of presentations of the LTTP plan to the Minister of Education, senior MoE officials, and key donor partners. These vital dialogue sessions came at a time when the MoE was also engaged in the Education for All (EFA) Fast-Track Initiative planning, and the sessions helped the Ministry to better articulate his own longer-term planning efforts. The sessions afforded the MoE significant input into and modification of the larger conceptual framework for LTTP and the identification of still-existing system gaps with other donor partners.

The result was a work plan that included MoE participation to achieve a significant agreement within the Ministry that major actions, such as donor initiatives in the area of teacher education, would be channeled through LTTP. Activities were structured around seven key outcomes:

Outcome 1: A competency-based framework for teachers that was inclusive of the knowledge, skills, and dispositions required by the Ministry of Education was used to create a harmonized system of teacher training at all levels and for all types of educational institutions.

Outcome 2: Professional development programs were made available for current and future teachers, including programs to increase the number of female teachers, upgrade their qualifications and acquire the knowledge, skills, and dispositions needed to meet the challenges of the new curriculum, and develop the capacity to address the needs, including psychosocial needs, of their students.

Outcome 3: University of Liberia, RTTIs and other service providers have increased institutional and staff capacity to provide quality pre- and in-service teacher development programs.

Outcome 4: Principals and other administrators have the tools to develop and implement continuous quality improvements at the school level.

Outcome 5: Community structures, including PTA, school management committees, local leaders, and the private sector, were actively involved in improving teacher performance.

Outcome 6: Public-private sector commitment to educators' professional development system improvement was enhanced through increased advocacy and awareness.

Outcome 7: A monitoring and evaluation system served internal and external information needs, including the USAID Mission's Performance Monitoring Plan and the Ministry of Education's Education Management Information System.

A five-month extension, begun November 2009, extended program efforts in the following areas: technology enhancements for teacher training, support, and observation; teacher performance and school data collection; investigations in national Internet connectivity enhancements; and a national educator payroll verification and enumeration exercise.

LIBERIA: TEACHER TRAINING PROGRAM 2

Cooperative Agreement No.: 669-A-00-10-00116-00

Award Amount: $59,992,870

Dates: June 2010 – June 2015

The USAID-funded Liberian Teacher Training Program (LTTP) is designed to utilize an integrated set of policy, support, and capacity building activities to address the critical shortages of qualified teachers and institutional capacity to produce new teachers. Ultimately, the goal of the project is to train teachers to be teacher trainers and prepare teachers to teach. A parallel goal is to improve early grade reading and mathematics in Liberia. LTTP will work to establish a functional teacher professional development system and strengthen the capacity of the Ministry of Education (MoE) to manage such a system.

The interventions proposed in LTTP II target reforms in three areas:

• Policies, systems, and capacity development of the central MoE;
• Pre- and in-service policies and teacher professional development; and
• Curriculum standards, materials, and testing for language and literacy and mathematics skills in grades 1 to 3.

Ultimately, the project interventions should result in the:

• Production of a teaching workforce with sufficient skills and knowledge to be effective at each grade level (including early grade reading and math skills);
• Development of practical teaching and learning aids that are available to teachers and students in the classrooms;
• Creation of an in-service support system for upgrading and updating trained teachers, including technical supervision to insure learning is taking place in the classroom;
• Support of a pre-service education that prepares a sufficient number of new and capable teachers to meet growing demands;
• Development of a coherent and practical curriculum and policy framework that can be applied at the school level;
• Development of an effective management system of teachers and principals to ensure stability, career growth, professionalism, motivation and incentives;
• Maximization of the existing teaching force effectiveness by improving the use of instructional time;

- Development of a plan to attract and retain more females in the teaching profession;
- Development of a framework for the RTTIs to become increasingly self-sufficient by generating income through the production of local food and community-based information technology hubs; and
- Introduction of appropriate technology to make policy and programming decisions and support instructional processes.

In order to be successful, the LTTP will establish partnerships and collaborate with international non-governmental organizations (INGOs) and local non-governmental organizations (LNGOs) to strengthen the MoE.

MALAWI: EDUCATION SECTOR POLICY, PLANNING, EMIS SUPPORT ACTIVITIES, AND HIGHER EDUCATION STRATEGIC PLAN

Cooperative Agreement No.: 690-A-00-03-00188-00

Award Amount: $2,573,629.90

Dates: November 2003 – June 2008

Launched in November 2003, the Malawi Education Sector Policy, Planning, EMIS Support Activities, and Higher Education Strategic Plan had three primary components:

Component 1: Improved Strategic Planning and Management for Policy and Investment Framework (PIF) Implementation.

Component 2: Strengthened Education Management Information Systems (EMIS).

Component 3: Development of Strategic Business Plans for the University of Malawi and Mzuzu University.

Under the management of a subcontractor, Education Development Center, Inc. (EDC), Component 1 prematurely ended on April 18, 2005 due to a significant reduction of USAID funding to the EQUIP2 program in Malawi. Before it ended, however, a participatory approach resulted in a consensus on supportive policies for the implementation of the Education Sector Plan. In April 2005, EQUIP2 made a formal presentation of the 2004 Education Sector Indicators at the Joint Sector Review, and in June 2005, the final draft

of the Education Sector Plan was completed and presented at a Joint Donor and Ministry of Education special session.

AED, as the principal contractor, continued to support the Ministry of Education (MOE) on Component 2, strengthening EMIS. As of 2005, the EMIS activity, located under the Planning Department of the MOE, was the only official and authorized data source for education throughout Malawi. Four cycles of annual school census were successfully completed, and statistics for each year were produced by the November of the same year, earning the following slogan for EMIS: "This year's data, this year."

Component 3 was fully completed in May 2004, with both the University of Malawi (UNIMA) and Mzuzu University having successfully prepared draft strategic plans for their respective institutions. While a plan had been written at Mzuzu some years earlier, the EQUIP2 intervention represented the first strategic planning effort in the 42-year history of UNIMA. These plans were the result of the successful implementation of several workshops for Mzuzu and UNIMA, including: First Steps in Strategic Planning; Successful Strategic and Budget Planning; Leadership of Change; Preparing a Financial Plan for the University; and Making the Case for Higher Education.

MALAWI: EDUCATION DECENTRALIZATION SUPPORT ACTIVITY
Cooperative Agreement No.: 674-A-00-09-00010-00

Award Amount: $12,196,930

Dates: February 2009 – February 2012

The Malawi Education Decentralization Support Activity (EDSA) is supporting the Ministry of Education, Science, and Technology's (MoEST) implementation of the National Education Sector Plan (NESP). The NESP emphasizes decentralization at the central, district, and school levels. Launched by the MoEST in 2008 to support Malawi's human resource development within its education sector, the NESP's goals are to expand equitable access to education, improve education quality and relevance to reduce drop-out and repetition rates and promote effective learning, and improve education system governance and management to more effectively deliver services.

In order to achieve these goals, EDSA is working closely with the MoEST. Current activities in Malawi include:

- Providing technical assistance to the MoEST to strengthen the decentralization process at the district and school levels with clear policies and procedures;
- Supporting management and planning processes in six districts;
- Supporting school planning and quality management processes in selected schools; and
- Disbursing bursary packages to OVCs in primary and secondary schools to promote access to education programs for these disadvantaged students.

EDSA has already made some progress towards attaining the NESP goals. Some of the project outcomes achieved include the following:

- Strengthened MoEST policy and strategy articulation, interpretation, and implementation;
- Improved decentralization implementation, planning, and data utilization for informed decision-making;
- Enhanced the role and participation of communities in monitoring education service delivery.

The project will collaborate with the MoEST to establish the core expertise at the central and district offices to develop, assess, and improve an effective decentralized system at the school level that is supported by clear policies and procedures.

MALI: REGIONAL ACTION PLAN/DECISION-MAKING PROGRAM
Cooperative Agreement No.: 688-A-00-04-00066-00

Award Amount: $4,455,000

Dates: August 20, 2004– June 30, 2009

In Mali, the Regional Action Plan/Decision-Making Program (RAP-DM) was designed to accompany the Ministry of Education, Literacy and National Languages (MEALN) in its transition from a centrally managed education system to one that is decentralized. Almost everyone involved in education in Mali was affected by this system change, from teachers to members of the central Ministry. RAP-DM's focus was to target the Regional Education offices (AEs) and the sub-regional Education Offices (CAPs) so that they might fully perform their functions in a decentralized and demand-driven environment. The initial objectives of the RAP-DM project, as stated in the original technical proposal, were to: 1) strengthen AE and CAP capacity

to fulfill their designated missions, and 2) support AEs and CAPs in their efforts to provide technical assistance to local governments as they play a progressively greater role in education system management. Five components were designed to implement the program, including: a situational analysis, a capacity-building activity for the AE/CAP, activities to develop AE/CAP capacity to provide support to decentralized structures, permanent monitoring of capacity-strengthening activities, and the development of a Regional Education Development Fund (REDF). In 2006, the RAP-DM scope was revised, and the REDF was removed due to reduced levels of funding.

The program was completed on June 30, 2009 after providing over 8,000 person-days of training to CAP, AE, and Central Ministry staff. Training topics included budgeting, action plan preparation, program monitoring, use of statistical data for decision-making, sector monitoring, the decentralization process, inventory management, use of ICT, internet & computer security, Geographic Information Systems, School Mapping, and tools for enhancing equity in education access. Members of the RAP-DM extended followed up on the training to targeted regions and CAPs in the field. The program made use of several innovative planning tools to help education planners and decision-makers understand whether current strategies for expanding access and improving equity were actually delivering results in a way that would lead to Education for All (EFA). The constant focus on EFA and existing education disparities was a complementary strategy to establish decentralization as a tool to achieve universal access to quality schooling. Rural education models endorsed by the Ministry were introduced to promote equitable delivery of education to address rural disparities. The planning tools helped show how centralized management often works at cross-purposes with providing schooling for marginalized populations. Rapid studies were conducted to analyze and provide information in a number of critical areas (i.e., community teacher subsidy, bottlenecks in accessing funding for action plan activities, and implementation of key sector reporting and planning activities), demonstrating that commonly held perceptions were in need of statistical validation to ensure informed decision making. Communication systems within the MEALN improved through increased use of technology (i.e., email, Skype, and a limited access cell phone network), and with clients of the Ministry (i.e., website for the annual exam results). The project captured the multidisciplinary nature of education planning and management in its design by setting up a network of technical correspondents in three key MEALN directorates (CPS, DAF, and the CADDE) which came together on all RAP-DM training and programming.

RAP-DM largely met or exceeded expectations in terms of invigorating the regional planning process, and providing tools and technical assistance for resource transference and management. Notably, RAP-DM helped the MEALN accelerate the completion of its national action plan process that integrates AE, CAP, and commune plans into one national plan for providing inputs to improve schools (including, but not limited to, infrastructure improvements, textbooks and didactic materials, new teachers, and teacher training). Regional and sub-regional Action Plan implementation increased, and in 2007, budget execution reached 60%, up from 43% the previous year. The increase in funding was a major improvement from previous years when very few funds were dispersed because the action plan was completed too late in the year to access national budget funds. Another major success was the piloting of the use of GIS to map schools and population in 12 CAPs. During the period between 2008 and 2009, using SBS funding, an additional group of eight CAPs was geo-referenced, following the stringent RAP-DM methodology. The GIS mapping results underscored the wide disparities in equity and access to schooling in remote rural villages, and led to the MEALN decision to adopt an innovative policy on expanding access to rural schools by using the single- teacher-school model. This application will also highlight other successes of RAP-DM, such as the "Just-in-Time" technical assistance approach and helping the MEALN at all levels to use data for decision-making.

MALI: EDUCATION DECENTRALIZATION PROGRAM
Cooperative Agreement No.: 688-A-00-09-00044-02

Award Amount: $22,500,000

Dates: September 2009 – September 2014

The Mali Education Decentralization Program (EDP) helps the Government of Mali realize its vision of a decentralized system that provides quality education for all children. Working within Mali's education sector program, EDP finances system-level investments to define new roles and responsibilities; formulates, tests, and adopts new processes and procedures; and creates and uses management and information tools to support planning on multiple levels. These goals are implemented through training, practice, and technical assistance to build institutional and individual capacity in national Ministries, strengthen key services at the national level; decentralized services; their administrative and/or government counterparts; and at the heart of it all, schools. Ultimately, increased knowledge and confidence will

ensure the adoption of new ways of doing business so that the reforms (and reformers) supported by USAID's programs are accepted and sustained.

The program has two objectives. The first is to improve the capacity of the Ministry of Education (MEALN) to implement decentralization. At the national level, EDP works with the MEALN to improve inter-ministerial coordination among the national-level institutions critical to the education system. Much of this coordination revolves around the national budget process and resource allocation and monitoring. EDP also improves the effectiveness of an increasingly decentralized MEALN by improving intra-ministerial coordination and improving performance of central MEALN services and decentralized services.

The second objective is to improve coordination among the Centres d'Animation Pédagogique (CAPs), communes, and schools. Activities to achieve this objective focus on improved intra-ministerial management among education departments and sub-national institutions by strengthening their connections with the Communes and schools. Planning for primary education at the Commune level will be better integrated with national-level processes, and better informed by and responsive to the needs of schools and communities. To be successful, plans, information, and decisions must flow up from the school to the national level, and resources and management support must flow down from the national level to schools. This is appropriately described as a top-down, bottom-up approach.

NAMIBIA: BASIC EDUCATION SYSTEMS III
Cooperative Agreement No.: 690-A-00-04-00306-00

Award Amount: $14,116,537

Dates: September 1, 2004 – August 31, 2009

Basic Education Systems III (BES 3) was an integrated set of capacity building activities supporting the Ministry of Basic Education, Sport, and Culture (MBESC). BES 3 worked closely with Namibian authorities and with every level of civil society to develop sustainable and replicable systems for improving education quality across several core cross-cutting thematic objectives: HIV/AIDS, gender equity, civil society development, decentralization, information technology, and sustainability.

During the preceding phase of the project, BES 2 helped the MBESC develop innovative and effective school management systems, professional

development programs to support of Ministry objectives, and innovative information and assessment systems in six remote northern regions: Oshakati, Oshana, Ohangwena, Oshikoto, Okavango (Rundu), and Katima Mulilo (Caprivi Strip). Building upon this solid foundation, BES 3 extended innovative work in three new directions to improve the quality of primary school education: increase the resilience of the basic education system to cope with the HIV/AIDS epidemic, improve the effectiveness of decentralized education management, and improve the quality of language, math, and science education in primary schools.

The project saw numerous successful results. First, a strategy and methodology was implemented for measuring primary school learner performance as a way of informing ongoing improvements in instruction. Second, mechanisms to locally support orphans and vulnerable children to succeed in primary school were developed. Third, BES 3 created a structure for monitoring school quality that can feed back into the school to inform it of local improvement efforts. Fourth, a refined, flexible, and responsive system was developed for providing accurate, timely, and usable data and information to guide and inform decision making at local and central levels. Finally, a needs-based, empirically-informed system of ongoing professional development for teachers was created.

Based on the project's involvement with the Ministry's efforts to improve the pre-service teacher education program, BES 3 advised USAID to consider continued support to that component of Namibia's Education and Training Sector Improvement Program. Improving the work of the pre-service teacher education program would consolidate the gains made during the past twenty years to ensure quality schooling in Namibia.

NAMIBIA: SYSTEM STRENGTHENING, PREVENTION, AND BEHAVIOR CHANGE FOR LEARNERS, HIV/AIDS WORKPLACE PROGRAM, AND OVC CARE

Cooperative Agreement No.: 674-A-00-08-00020-00

Award Amount: $ 3,409,818

Dates: January 1, 2008 – October 31, 2009

In collaboration with the Namibian Ministry of Education, and in partnership with various local governments and civil society organizations, EQUIP2 implemented an HIV/AIDS Workplace program and OVC care project in Namibia. The EQUIP2/Namibia project had a number

of major accomplishments. Coordinators were established in each of the country's 13 regions, and large procurements to initiate the OVC program were coordinated. The project conducted data collection for a knowledge, attitudes, practices, and beliefs assessment regarding HIV/AIDS prevention, policy, and programming. Advanced peer education programs were held. EQUIP2 designed a workplace program to couple with the Ministry of Education's Workplace Policy. Finally, program coordinators, Ministry officials, and teacher union representatives were sent on a study tour to Zambia to look for best practices on the Teacher Health Days that EQUIP2 replicated.

PAKISTAN: PRE-STEP

Cooperative Agreement No.: 391-A-00-08-01115-00

Award Amount: $ 75,000,000

Dates: September 30, 2008– September 29, 2013

The Pakistan Pre-Service Teacher Education Program (Pre-STEP) had three main objectives: 1) to improve systems and policies that support teachers, teacher educators, and education managers; 2) to support the Higher Education Commission (HEC) and teacher institutes under the Ministry of Education (MoE) to improve selected components of the pre-service teacher education degrees; and 3) to develop a plan to implement the revised curriculum for new and existing teachers. Close collaboration with the HEC and MoE at the federal and provincial levels was central to Pre-STEP's strategy for achieving the above objectives. Government partners led the way, and the Pre-STEP program provided the impetus for improving the quality of pre-service teacher education, as envisaged in the National Education Policy 2009.

Pre-STEP improved systems and policies supporting teachers and education managers by: 1) mapping teacher needs and preparing plans for meeting teacher demands in the future; 2) completing the revision of teaching standards and developing standards for education managers; 3) building capacity of education managers; 4) developing proposals for licensing and accreditation of teachers and education managers; 5) defining the minimum requirements for professional development, and 6) developing proposals for new pay and grade scales for teachers.

Additionally, Pre-STEP supported pre-service teacher education programs of the HEC and MoE to improve their degree programs. This was be

accomplished by: 1) providing material support to selected faculties of education of universities and government colleges for teacher training; 2) providing graduate training to selected partner universities and government colleges; 3) piloting and evaluating the new Bachelor's of Education (B. Ed.) honors curriculum, and providing technical assistance to the selected universities to improve delivery of the new degree programs; 4) developing an interim degree program leading to the B.Ed. (honors),; and 5) assisting in the establishment of knowledge and skills standards for new teachers.

Finally, Pre-STEP prepared a plan to implement the new curriculum to include: 1) scholarships for new teachers; 2) scholarships for in-service teachers to upgrade their qualifications; and 3) capacity-building for government colleges to deliver the new programs.

PAKISTAN: HIGHER EDUCATION COMMISSION – FINANCIAL AID DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM

Cooperative Agreement No.: 391-A-00-08-01119-00

Award Amount: $4,000,000

Dates: September 2008 – April 2011

The Pakistan Higher Education Commission-Financial Aid Development (HEC-FAD) Program provided technical assistance in both student financial assistance and university advancement, and worked with the Higher Education Commission (HEC) and participating Pakistani universities to develop frameworks in these two areas. There was a critical need to increase the ability of universities to raise funds outside of their normal funding source, the HEC. Without additional funding, higher education would not be able to provide the skills needed to foster the development Pakistan badly needs if it is to move out of its current economic crisis and begin to improve the lives and wellbeing of its citizens.

HEC-FAD built on existing scholarship and fundraising structures at the HEC and partner universities. It helped the partner universities establish and strengthen the Offices of University Advancement so that they were better prepared to solicit funds for scholarships and other critical priorities. By building the capacity of the financial assistance professionals, partner universities would be able to provide better services to students in distributing financial aid and be more effective in their implementation of the USAID-funded Merit and Needs Based Scholarship Program (MNBSP).

Although the HEC-FAD program was scheduled to continue until September 2011, the project ended April 5, 2011. As a result of the premature closing of the project, some critical training and two U.S. study tours were cancelled.

SENEGAL: PROJET D'APPUI À L'ENSEIGNEMENT MOYEN

Cooperative Agreement No.: 685-A-00-03-00120-00

Award Amount: $31, 399,295

Dates: August 5, 2003 – September 30, 2010

The Children's Learning Access Sustained in Senegal (CLASSE), known in French as Projet d'Appui à l'Enseignement Moyen (PAEM), was designed to assist the Ministry of Education in implementing many of the elements in its Plan Décennal de l'Education et de la Formation (PDEF), which focused on improved access, quality, and management of middle schools. The project was implemented in two distinct phases: first, the period from inception in August 2003 through December 2006, known as PAEM/CLASSE, and second, from January 2007 until its end in September 2010, known as USAID/PAEM when it received a substantial increase in funding. During the first phase and part of the second phase, a companion program called SITT (Senegal's Improved Teacher Training), funded through the Africa Education Initiative (AEI), provided additional resources. In January 2010, USAID/PAEM also benefited from additional funding ($350,000) provided to USAID/Senegal to support a safe schools campaign for students and teachers of Senegal's middle schools.

USAID/PAEM worked hand in hand with Senegal's Ministry of Education to establish an effective model for mobilizing rural communities, constructing an affordable and expandable middle school structure, and developing a system for setting standards for teacher and principal performance. USAID/PAEM interventions, carried out at the national level and in the targeted regions of Fatick, Kolda, Tambacounda, and Ziguinchor, were developed in collaboration with the Ministry's Direction de l'Enseignement Moyen et Secondaire Général (DEMSG) and reflected the intent of USAID and the project team to form a partnership that works with and through established Government of Senegal (GOS) policies and programs.

USAID/PAEM's greatest accomplishment, as a result of building nearly 60 rural middle schools and working intensively and collaboratively with stakeholders at all levels in four important regions of Senegal, is its significant

contribution to the increased demand for neighborhood middle schools and increased demand among parents, students, community and private sector leaders for quality, relevant middle school programs for students in accessible, safe, and attractive learning environments. This increased demand for high quality, accessible education for Senegal's adolescents took place simultaneously with a corresponding increase in attention paid towards rural communities and a strengthening of the capacity and will of Senegal's formal education actors in the central and regional offices of the Ministry of Education. They have learned to establish strong partnerships with school communities, working for and with them to effect change.

USAID/PAEM resulted in many other accomplishments. Principal and teacher training made significant inroads in implanting learner-centered teaching practices and a supportive environment at the schools. Additionally, community mobilization and the development of school management committees (CGE) resulted in greater community ownership and support for the school, better management, and increased responsiveness and financing from local government and educational authorities to school needs.

The USAID/PAEM project also made notable contributions to education systems and policy reform in Senegal. These contributions included: improved planning for middle school construction; increased involvement of regional and local education officials in improving community and school relations; increased awareness of the inherent inequity in policies excluding pregnant girls and new mothers from schools; support for policy and curriculum changes in teaching math, science and technology; improved access to pedagogic resources by teachers and teacher trainers; increased interest in and understanding of using performance as a basis for staff and system improvements; and an increased concern about the lack of female teachers and leaders, especially in rural parts of the country. In addition, the project developed and administered two data collection tools on both student learning and teaching practices.

Finally, the project made significant contributions affecting how the larger school community supports and ensures that students—especially girls— have safe and structured opportunities to learn and excel. These included promoting school and community forums as a venue for sharing and discussing student performance data, school budgets, and resources, and resolving specific access and quality issues that hinder student learning. Campaigns using radio broadcasts, village meetings, and other interventions were also widely implemented to promote open discussion of gender-based violence, encourage parents and school authorities to provide students with time and space to study, promote transparent management of school budgets,

and encourage community stewardship to maintain school property and resources.

SENEGAL: IMPROVED TEACHER TRAINING PROGRAM

Cooperative Agreement No.: 685-A-00-03-00190-00

Award Amount: $3,264,106

Dates: November 21, 2003 – November 30, 2007

Funded with support from the African Education Initiative (AEI), the SITT program focused on teacher and school director education. The program was designed to be integrated into the PAEM/CLASS (Children's Learning Access Sustained in Senegal) project for improving middle schools in Senegal as a seamless part of the quality component of PAEM/CLASS. The overall strategy for improving quality was tied to refining and implementing teacher and school director education policies based on Senegal's Ten Year Plan for Education and Training (PDEF). The strategy included developing standards, developing and testing training modules, and supporting a training delivery system to provide professional development support for a high-quality middle school teacher and school director corps.

The project worked to establish an integrated set of certification (or pre-service) and in-service professional development programs at the school, regional, and national levels that are sustainable and replicable. The improved training system was expected to produce results that can be observed in the classroom and be supported, maintained, and expanded by the government of Senegal with minimal donor support. The key goals envisaged for the project were:

Component 1: Improve system support to middle school teachers at the school, regional and national levels.

Component 2: Improve the use of effective pedagogical strategies in the classroom.

Component 3: Improve school management by creating an enabling environment for improved school quality.

To achieve the first component, performance standards were introduced as a mechanism to support the capacity building of teachers and principals. A framework and detailed set of performance standards and indicators for

middle school teachers and principals were developed. Principal standards for principal training and development were established. Senegalese educators developed four teacher training modules and accompanying trainers' guides on the following topics: Motivating Students, Planning Classroom Instruction, Managing Classroom Instruction, and Evaluating Student Learning. Similarly, five principal training modules (the fifth was in draft form at the end of SITT and to be completed as part of the larger CLASS project) with accompanying trainers' guides, were developed on the following topics: Leadership, Keeping Students at the Center of the Educational Process, Fundamental Knowledge for Principals, Professional Practice, and Ethics and Professional Behavior. Additionally, Ministry of Education staff in each of 11 academies received training in the delivery of teacher modules, had multiple opportunities to train teachers in their regions, and benefited from professional development support and training from international consultants and national level support staff who supervised regional training activities. Finally, central and regional teacher support units received a stock of teacher and trainer manuals for standards-based modules so that each unit could continue to deliver quality-training programs.

As for the second component of improving the use of effective pedagogical strategies in the classroom, SITT trained 3,793 unqualified teachers in 11 regions of Senegal, many of whom were in multiple training programs. Six hundred and ninety qualified teachers were trained, and over 450 middle schools benefitted from teachers with improved skills and knowledge. The unqualified teachers who were trained exhibited improved pedagogical strategies and techniques in their lesson planning and management as well as in student evaluation and motivation. Regional pedagogic support staff from five regions and teachers at 25 middle schools carried out multidisciplinary project-based learning activities, connecting students with the community to learn about avian flu. Finally, regional pedagogic support staff identified and applied criteria for an effective, school-based, teacher training program.

In regards to the third component of improving school management by creating an enabling environment for improved school quality, every middle school principal in Senegal was trained in four successive training programs. Over 450 middle schools benefitted from principals with improved leadership, management and other skills, and principals that were trained applied new tools to improve school and community relations, introduced a collaborative management style, and better responded to student needs. School management committees at over 450 schools benefited from training in developing school improvement plans. Central Ministry staff and partners engaged regularly in discussions of policy issues and new strategies for improving quality in middle schools.

SOUTHERN SUDAN: TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE PROGRAM, PHASE 1

Cooperative Agreement No.: 623-A-00-05-00322-00

Award Amount: $1,196,000

Dates: September 1, 2005 – June 30, 2007

The EQUIP 2/Sudan project, funded through the USAID Sudan Field Office education team, aims to assist the Government of South Sudan's/ SPLM's (GoSS) Ministry of Education, Science and Technology (MOEST) to develop and establish the institutional structure and capacity required to lead the development of a full and effective education system. To accomplish this task, the EQUIP 2 Southern Sudan Technical Advisors Project worked closely with the newly appointed Minister and Under Secretary.

The first goal related to increased access to general and higher education opportunities. Equality and inclusion make up the backbone of the education system. This goal focused on increasing access to formal and non-formal general education programs as well as higher education programs, including business, vocational, science, and technology education programs.

The second goal related to improved quality of education. The curriculum of South Sudan is "based on the aspirations of its people" with a focus on ensuring that it is culturally relevant and meets the needs of the people. Teachers are the backbone of the education system, and therefore their professional development is essential to ensure that teaching and learning takes place. This objective focused on the development of quality curricula, effective implementation of general and higher education curricula in the classroom, provision of professional development opportunities for teachers and other education staff, and development of an examination and learning assessment program.

The third goal related to the enhanced promotion of gender equity and social change. To ensure fairness, measures must often be put in place to compensate for the historical and social disadvantages faced by girls and women in South Sudan. These disadvantages have often prevented girls and women from accessing and participating in education programs. In an environment of limited resources, the integration of education, water, sanitation, health, and food security is vital to promote long-term development and local sustainability. Schools and non-formal education learning sites provide valuable venues for providing basic health services, conducting school feeding and/or take home rations programs, and

modeling good sanitation practices. Gender and other critical social issues, such as HIV/AIDS, nutrition, and landmine awareness, are an integral part of this integrated social service delivery mechanism.

The fourth goal related to increased professional institutional capacity. Education planning is the underlying mechanism that responds to the demands of the Southern Sudanese population by identifying, acquiring, and allocating the resources needed to improve the quality of the education system. A performance-based management system with clearly delineated roles and responsibilities is vital to ensure effective and efficient administration of education programs. Skill building in the areas of education planning, monitoring and evaluation (EMIS), management and administration, and supervision and budgeting is the basis for long-term sustainable development.

SOUTHERN SUDAN: TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE PROGRAM, PHASE 2

Cooperative Agreement No.: 650-A-00-07-00004-00

Award Amount: $17,600,000

Dates: September 2007 – September 2011

The USAID-funded Southern Sudan Technical Assistance Project (SSTAP) provides technical assistance to the Government of South Sudan (GOSS) and ten state Ministries of Education (SMoEs) through capacity development and institutional system strengthening activities. Specific program objectives are to strengthen the GoSS and SMoEs' capacities to develop the policies, plans, programs, and implementation capabilities that increase equitable access to, and the quality of, education in Southern Sudan.

SSTAP advisors and assistants are fully integrated into the SMoEs, working side-by-side with education officials. This approach has allowed for maximum interface and knowledge transfer in the SMoEs' actual working environments. SSTAP's capacity-building model incorporates learning-by-doing and on-the-job training and mentoring. SSTAP also organizes formal training activities based on the needs of the GoSS–MoE.

UGANDA: EVALUATION OF TEACHER DEVELOPMENT AND MANAGEMENT SYSTEM

Cooperative Agreement No.: 617-A-00-03-00013-00

Award Amount: $61,421

Dates: May 27, 2003 – February 27, 2004

The terms of reference for this evaluation were formulated through a series of joint consultations between the Ministry of Education and Sports (MOES) and the Education Funding Agencies Group (EFAG). These terms reflect the strong need stakeholders felt to establish clarity on the status and future of the Teacher Development and Management System (TDMS), and specifically, on the role that Coordinating Centre Tutors (CCTs) should have in assuring the improvement of primary education quality. The urgency for this clarification was articulated in the Education Sector Review of 2003, where it was recommended that the evaluation carry out re-examination and re-definition of CCT roles and responsibilities with a view to strengthen their support-supervision function within their areas of operation. The EQUIP2 Evaluation Team was able to evaluate CCT effectiveness and associated costs, and formulate a long-term strategy for enhancing primary education quality within plausible sector financing scenarios. The team did not attempt to work out the specific operational steps for implementing the proposed strategy because it felt that these steps would be worked out they reached consensus on the strategy.

The key findings and recommendations focused on several areas. First, the MOES needed to reaffirm legitimacy of the TDMS as well as the policies and the program for the CCTs, acknowledging their weaknesses and constraints while recognizing that they provide a key mechanism for improving quality through training and development within the schools. Second, a program orientation on the principles and guidelines for the work of CCTs and inspectors was recommended for all District Education Officers (DEOs), inspectors and CCTs, as well as for District Education Secretaries and local education leaders. Third, the current workload, size of circuits, and low level of support for CCTs undermined effectiveness. Fourth, it was a priority to staff and equip the core Primary Teacher Colleges (PTCs) so that they can perform their role in pre and in-service training, and provide professional support to the outreach activities of the CCTs. Fifth, the evaluators advocated a School-based Development model for improving educational quality, establishing learning milestones for each grade and core subject, engaging the school to establish plans for improving learning outcomes, and assessing results.

Finally, the evaluators proposed a strategy for moving towards quality basic Education for All by 2015, a strategy which included an expanded and improved teaching force with a focus on managing improvements through a School-based Development model to improve teaching and learning. The analysis of the financing requirements for these changes was consistent with macro-economic considerations, showing that the primary pupil annual recurrent unit expenditure should rise from its current level of 38,000/= to approximately 54,000/= by 2015. This is the level of financing required to achieve Education for All.

UGANDA: STRENGTHENING THE EMIS PROGRAM

Cooperative Agreement No.: 617-A-00-04-00001-00 USAID

Award Amount: $1,506, 390

Dates: November 21, 2003 – November 30, 2005

Uganda's Education Management Information System (EMIS) measures the state of the country's education system on an annual basis to ensure effective education management and planning, based on an annual school census. By supplying timely, relevant, and reliable information about schools, pupils, personnel, finance, and infrastructure, EMIS is vital to the daily planning and management activities of the Education Planning Department (EPD) within the Ministry of Education and Sports (MOES). In this context, a World Bank audit identified the need for a school-mapping project as a short-term goal.

USAID contracted the Academy for Educational Development, via EQUIP2, to conduct the school-mapping project. The scope of work included six activities, which were all completed by Dec 31, 2004, including:

- School mapping of all schools/institutions, with the exception of pre-primary schools, to improve credibility of the EMIS data to all stakeholders;
- Intensive ED*ASSIST policy and maintenance training for key MOES staff;
- Follow-on EMIS skills training for MOES staff, district education officers, and district planners;
- Coordination and supervision of the ESIP-II document;
- Creation of a mini-census for twice-yearly updates for primary schools. This activity was replaced by School Attendance Registers, which are more relevant to the Ministry's current needs: and

- Completion of Wide Area Network (WAN) Concept, a task that was cancelled. The funds were re-allocated.

When the results of the main School Mapping exercise were presented to education stakeholders and their partners in November 2004, the need for additional work was highlighted. Additional tasks included:

- Map additional education sites, including 570 coordinating centers;
- Introduce new education quality indicators, including survival rates, P7 Completion Rate, and Schools P7 Examination Performance Index, that are disaggregated by sex;
- Create linkages among EMIS, the Uganda National Examinations Board (UNEB), and the GIS system, a critical step for sustainability;
- Production of additional GIS maps for districts and the proposed Parliamentary presentation;
- Intensive technical training for GIS maintenance and enhancement to support the district teams;
- Creation of Core Analytical & Training Teams and supporting additional district level training to improve analytical skills and data collection and updating. At the request of MOES, this activity was converted into EMIS/GIS Skills Training Workshop for District Education Offices and District Planners.

YEMEN: BASIC EDUCATION SUPPORT AND TRAINING
Cooperative Agreement No.: 279-A-00-07-00092-00

Award Amount: $20,000,000

Dates: September 30, 2007 – December 31, 2012

Basic Education Support and Training (BEST) builds on the learning and success of the four-year Basic Education (BE) Project that was implemented under EQUIP1. The BE project emphasized interventions that are especially intended to generate synergies around targeted schools through activities, such as infrastructure renovation, adult literacy support, teacher professional development, and community participation. BEST is designed to be particularly attuned to replicating proven strategies under BE to improve girls' access to quality education and to increase the supply and retention of qualified female teachers, while contributing to the analysis of relevant policies within the Ministry of Education (MOE) that affect the conditions of girls, boys, and educators throughout the education system. The BEST goal is to strengthen the capacity of communities, schools, and the Ministry

of Education to sustain educational improvements for their children and their children's children.

In this framework, BEST has four objectives. The first goal is to enhance the capacity of targeted MOE units at all levels to support educational improvement consistent with the national decentralization policy. The second goal is to expand work on the improvement of education management and information systems (EMIS), learning environments, teacher training, mothers' and fathers' councils (MFCs), learning materials, and adult literacy in the schools and communities. The third goal is to work with the MOE to develop a community-school policy to address the issue of parity between boy's and girl's enrollment and retention in schools. The fourth goal is to support the development of policies and actions that result in the recruitment and retention of female teachers.

ZAMBIA: IMPROVING INFORMATION AND STRENGTHENING POLICY IMPLEMENTATION

Cooperative Agreement No.: 690-A-00-04-00095-00

Award Amount: $20,083,657

Dates: March 11, 2004 – September 30, 2010

Launched in 2004, EQUIP2 Zambia's overarching goal was to build quality systems, management, and policies with and within the Ministry of Education (MoE).

The project focused on five core areas. First, it built the foundations for a systemic, nationwide, school-based reform across nine provinces, 73 districts and eventually, all primary schools (8,000+), by training head teachers on education leadership and management, particularly in instructional leadership. Second, it fostered the practice of using data, information, and research to improve decision-making, accountability, and the allocation of resources at all levels (from national- to school-levels). Third, EQUIP2 strengthened the management systems and coordination guidelines within the MoE headquarters, across the wide range of stakeholders in the education sector, and "up and down" the system. Fourth, it brought a new level of energy, ownership, engagement, and accountability around school quality, teaching, and learning throughout the education system through the support of local policies, guidelines, and practices. Fifth, it provided technical assistance (TA) on a daily basis inside the MoE, in accordance with the Paris Declaration and SWAP environment approach to foreign assistance.

The project targeted four institutional programmatic areas for which TA and support were required: policy and research, education quality and school effectiveness, integrated information management, and health education.

EQUIP2's work in policy and research strengthened the Ministry's capacity to develop and implement policies that address education priorities and gaps in access, equity, quality, and efficiency. It supported districts to develop district profiles to facilitate decision-making processes. The successful hosting of two national research symposiums in 2009 and 2010 enhanced the Ministry's research profile and capacity. Multiple policy and research documents developed in the last two years, such as the Opportunities to Learn (OTL) study and the analysis of the Re-entry Policy for girls who left school due to pregnancy, helped shape the policy environment with clear guidelines for community schools and evidence-based systemic changes. Similarly, Institutional Management (IM) and Development allowed the MoE to build policies, guidelines, and approaches to planning.

In terms of education quality and school effectiveness, the nationwide Educational Leadership and Management (ELM) training program grew out of MoE's request for EQUIP2 to help train school managers in records management at a time when head teachers were appointed with little or no training to be administrators. Through the Provincial Intervention, Provincial Education Officers assumed an active role in implementing provincial-level strategies. Finally, EQUIP2 designed and piloted a Continuous Assessment (CA) strategy for the MoE to determine its usefulness and feasibility. The process built the capacity of the Examination Council of Zambia, MoE, and its beneficiaries, such as teachers, district, and provincial officials. Results of a randomized control study demonstrate higher learning outcomes in participating schools, lower absenteeism of teachers and pupils, improved teacher confidence and preparation, and greater parental involvement.

In the area of integrated information management, EQUIP2 provided the ICT infrastructure, equipment, and systems that enhance communication, productivity, and effectiveness at national, provincial, and district levels. ICT infrastructure and networks consisted of two systems: 1) the Education Management Information System (EMIS), and 2) Human Resource Information System (HRIS). The EMIS coverage rate increased from 70% in 2005 with 20% of the community schools (25% of primary school population) to 99% of all community schools. The HRIS dramatically increased efficiency in the MoE's teacher tracking. HRIS also worked with the Bursaries Committee to develop a financing system for students. The central Ministry directorates, provinces, the MOFNP, and the donor community collaboratively designed a Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E)

framework aligned with the Education Sector Plan and NIF. The M&E Technical Committees at the national, provincial, and district levels developed common performance indicators, ensuring that the practice of evidence-based decision-making and accountability were put in place.

In the area of health education, EQUIP2's School Health and Nutrition (SHN) program was an effort to strengthen SHN policy and programmatic interventions at the national level across all provinces of Zambia. Disability issues, based on identified health, nutrition, and environmental needs of learners with disabilities, were integrated into the implementation plan. The EQUIP2 team and the MoE developed a national-level HIV/AIDS Workplace Program. Officials, who previously rarely discussed this topic because of stigma, now promote counseling and testing. Through project support, the MoE began to hold Teacher Health Days in provinces and districts. With decreased stigma, teachers, their families, and the public openly queue up to be tested. Furthermore, HIV/AIDS is now seen not only as a health issue, but also as a complex problem cutting across gender lines and human rights issues.

Annex: EQUIP2 Associate Awards

For more information, please contact: