

Afghanistan – Female Youth Employment Initiative (FYEI)**Project Details:**

- Pilot financing: US\$ 2.05 million.
- Target population and location: 1,300 young women aged 18 to 30 who are high school graduates from Balkh’s urban areas and select districts.
- Lead ministry: Ministry of Education (MoE).
- Implementing agency: MoE, Deputy Ministry of Administration and Finance, through the Educational Quality Improvement Project (EQUIP) arm.

Implementation Update: The project received request forms from 2,800 eligible girls, and selected 1300 trainees through a random lottery to begin training in November, 2013. The training includes job skills, computer and English skills, as well as nutrition and life skills. The training will conclude in May, 2014 (a total of seven months) and will be followed by six months of employment assistance.

Emerging findings: To-date, the project has maintained a good attendance rate of above 85%. A retention strategy is in place to help keep participants engaged for the duration of the training.

Haiti – Adolescent Girls Initiative**Project Details:**

- Pilot financing: US\$ 2 million.
- Target population: 1,000 vulnerable young women aged 17 to 21 living in Port-au-Prince.
- Partner ministry: Ministry of Women’s Affairs (MCFDF) and the Secretariat for Vocational and Technical Training (INFP).

Implementation Update: An official launch of the project took place in May 2012 and training for the first cohort of young women began in October 2012. In June 2013, a graduation ceremony was held for the first cohort of young women. The second cohort of over 500 (including a small group of young women with disabilities) is currently being trained in four public and private training centers in the Port-au-Prince area.

The project offers an integrated approach combining technical and soft skills training with financial and psycho-social support puts beneficiaries in the center of a professional and support network. The specific components include four to six months of technical vocational training in a trade non-traditional for Haitian women including plumbing, construction work, heavy machinery operation, IT, etc. Alongside technical training, young women receive training in 8 core soft skills modules which are specifically tailored to the Haitian context. These topics include self-esteem, civic engagement and leadership, sexual and reproductive health, gender-based violence, professional development and work ethic, disaster preparedness, financial literacy, and living with a disability. Following the skills training, the young women participate in a one-month internship in a company to further refine their skills and boost their professional experience to facilitate entry into local labor markets. Participants also receive a monthly stipend to cover the cost of transportation and food that is being delivered through mobile money (Tcho-Tcho).

Emerging Findings: Project monitoring data, captured through an electronic monitoring system, show that the project has maintained good participation rates. Out of the 492 young women in the first cohort, 421 (85.6%) graduated on time and the retention rate in the first round was 94.5%. Results are captured through qualitative assessments and a rigorous impact evaluation, for which preliminary results are expected in mid-2014.

Jordan NOW – New Work Opportunities for Women (NOW)

Project Details:

- Pilot financing: US\$ 1.05 million.
- Target population: 1,800 young women graduates from eight community colleges.
- Implementing agency: Ministry of Planning and International Cooperation; Ministry of Higher Education and Scientific Research was also involved in design and implementation.

Implementation Update: The pilot launched in December 2010. 373 young women were trained in employability skills and 97% of these graduates completed training in November 2010. 301 young graduates successfully used job vouchers to secure employment by the time the incentive payments expired in August 2011. The pilot has now ended.

Evaluation Results: Results from the impact evaluation found that while the job voucher was active, female graduates with vouchers were 39 % more likely to work than female graduates without vouchers. However, this effect was temporary and did not last after the vouchers expired. Outside Central Jordan, girls with vouchers continued to have higher employment rates, but this may have come at the expense of those who did not have vouchers. Employability skills training showed no statistically significant impact on employment outcomes in either the short- or long-term. However training did boost self-confidence and mental well-being among the graduates. Insights from the evaluation are being used to illuminate demand-side and regulatory constraints to the school-to-work transition of young people in Jordan.

Lao PDR – Adolescent Girls Initiative (AGI)

Project Details:

- Financing: US\$ 0.4 million.
- Target population: Youth aged 18 to 35 (majority of whom are female) from three provincial capitals.
- Implementing agency: Young Entrepreneur Association of Lao PDR (YEAL), National University of Laos and Pakpasak Technical College.

Implementation Update: The pilot project has now ended. Under the project a ‘Market Place Model’ was launched in December 2010 to identify strong business ideas and support young entrepreneurs with business skills training, mentorship and seed grants. Nearly 100 young entrepreneurs partook in a 10-day start-up and business plan development training. Following the training, more than 85% of participants submitted business plans, and 30 finalists were selected to showcase their business ideas at an exhibition. Judged by leaders in the private sector, representatives from the Ministry of Industry and Commerce and YEAL members, 11 winners were awarded with a total funding of approximately \$50,000. Non-winners were offered SME loans and services from commercial and private banks, allowing the AGI participants access to finance should they wish to make their business plan a reality.

Under the second project component, two Career Counseling Offices (CCOs) were launched—at the National University of Laos and Pakpasak Technical College in October 2012. The CCOs provide job placement services to students and recent graduates who are looking for employment in the private sector. More than 400 students (80% female) received job preparedness training, and 24 counselors were trained by certified career counseling specialist in order to provide a quality advisory to students.

Emerging Findings: Project monitoring data shows that 59 % of Marketplace Competition participants (more than half of whom are female) have started or expanded a small business 12 months after finishing the business skills training. 47% of the graduates registered with the Career Counseling Office at the National University of Laos (more than a third female) and 44 % at Pakpasak Technical College (also more than a third of whom are female) reported that they were employed within 12 months of graduation. Through AGI program, YEAL also managed to increase their female members from 3% to 8% within one year.

Liberia – Economic Empowerment of Adolescent Girls and Young Women (EPAG)

Project Details:

- Financing: US\$ 5.2 million.
- Target population: 2,500 young women aged 16 to 27 in Greater Monrovia and Kakata City.
- Lead ministry and implementing agency: Ministry of Gender and Development (MoGD).

Implementation Update: 1,131 girls received training in the first round (March 2010-February 2011) and 1,277 girls were trained in the second round (July 2011-June 2012). 70 % of the girls were trained in business development skills and 30% were trained in job skills. All girls also received life skills training. Post-training all graduates enter a 6-month support period where they are assisted with job searching and placement or otherwise supported to start their own businesses.

The pilot phase has ended. EPAG is currently targeting 1,000 adolescent girls and young women in its third round of implementation, supported by the Umbrella Facility for Gender Equality. EPAG Round 3 is implementing several design changes based on lessons learned from the pilot phase including a condensed training period (4 months of training and 5 months placement), increased effort to reach younger and less literate girls, a savings matching scheme to assist with business start-up capital, and formalized agreements with the private sector for job skills training and placement. In addition, EPAG has expanded geographically to reach young women outside greater Monrovia.

Evaluation Results: The EPAG impact evaluation provides strong evidence that skills training can be an effective policy option for increasing employment among young women in Liberia. Results show that the program led to a 47 % increase in employment and an 80% increase in average weekly income among project beneficiaries, compared to those in the control group. The majority of the employment increase was driven by the business skills track. The program also significantly increases the frequency and amount of young women's savings. Results from an end-line survey show that impacts were sustained more than a year after the classroom training ended.

Nepal – Adolescent Girls Employment Initiative (AGEI)

Project Details:

- Financing: US\$ 2.05 million.
- Target population: 4,375 young women aged 16 to 24 who are socially discriminated, poor and have low education attainment.
- Lead ministry: Ministry of Education.
- Implementing agency: Helvetas/Employment Fund, with 20-25 Training Providers.

Implementation Update: Implementation began in February 2010. Three rounds of training have been completed: 810 adolescent girls were trained in 2010; 1,664 in 2011; and 1,936 in 2012. Livelihood trainings span 39 occupations across 44 districts of Nepal. All trainees also receive life skills training, as well as business and enterprise skills training for those interested in starting their own businesses. Trainees are assisted with job searching and placement or are otherwise supported to start their own businesses.

The pilot phase of AGEI has now ended. The project is now working to document AGEI lessons and innovations, and to share knowledge and build the capacity of other key implementers of skills training in Nepal. In particular, AGEI is working to build the capacity of the Enhancing Vocational Education and Training Project (EVENT) project, which opened a window targeting 5,000 women, and the Asian Development Bank's Skills Development Project (approved in June 2013), which has a target of reaching 40% women trainees of a total of 45,000 expected trainees.

Emerging Findings: The evaluation assesses the impact of the Employment Fund training program on a sample of participants from 2010 and 2011 (men and women age 16 to 35). Preliminary estimates of one-year program impacts among these two cohorts show positive and highly significant effects on employment outcomes. The treatment group experienced approximately a 16 percentage point increase in non-farm employment, for an overall gain of 47%. Average monthly earnings increased by about 45%. These impacts tended to be larger for women than for men, including young women aged 24 and under. In contrast, limited effects are found on empowerment, reproductive health, or household level outcomes.

Rwanda – Adolescent Girls Initiative (AGI)

Project Details:

- Financing: US\$ 2.7 million.
- Target population: 2,000 young women aged 16 to 24 who are literate from two urban and two rural districts of Rwanda.
- Lead Ministry: Ministry of Gender and Family Promotion (MIGEPROF).
- Implementing agencies: MIGEPROF, Workforce Development Authority (WDA), and Imbuto Foundation.

Implementation Update: The project was launched on April 2, 2012 in Kigali. Under Component I, vocational training began in May 2013. The first cohort included 621 girls, who were trained in food processing, culinary arts, arts and crafts, and agri-business (nursery beds and bee keeping). Life-skills training is being conducted side by side with the technical components. Technical training of the first cohort ended in December 2013. Plans are underway to transition the girls to the next phase of the project which constitutes mentorship, internships, engagement with the private sector and cooperative formation. The second cohort of trainees was recruited in December, 2013 and began the technical training in February, 2014. The project will recruit cohort three in March, 2014 and will train this cohort concurrently with cohort two. The pilot project will conclude activities on December 31st 2014.

Under Component II, the project has been supporting eligible adolescent girls and young women (30 per project district) aged 15 to 24 who dropped out of school with scholarships to resume formal education. This component was administered by Imbuto Foundation and concluded activities in December 2013. Out of the 120 girls who were enrolled in school, the project closed with 98 girls remaining in school.

Emerging Findings: A pre- and post-test evaluation of the project was launched in January 2014 and will assess the impact of the program among the second cohort of trainees. A qualitative assessment will accompany the quantitative survey to shed light on potential empowerment impacts of the project and beneficiary satisfaction.

South Sudan – Adolescent Girls Initiative (AGI)

Project Details:

- Financing: US\$ 1.9 million

- Target population: 3,000 young women age 15 to 24 from four states.
- Lead Ministry: Ministry of Gender, Child and Social Development
- Implementing agency: BRAC South Sudan

Implementation Update: 100 adolescent clubs, staffed with 100 Adolescent Leaders, have been established in five counties in four states of South Sudan. To-date 1,659 club members have received livelihood training. About 60% of members have received agriculture training; other fields include poultry farming, goat rearing, small business, tailoring, salon, catering and carpentry. Through BRAC’s cascade model of training, all 3,000 girls have received life skills and financial literacy training. BRAC also provided savings and credit services to qualified girls. To date, BRAC has provided loans to 140 members to support their business development plans. The pilot phase has ended; BRAC is committed to maintaining the adolescent clubs established under the AGI.

Emerging Findings: Anecdotal evidence suggests that AGI participants show high levels of engagement and confidence, reflected in increased awareness of such issues as protection against rape, early pregnancy, contraception and family planning in general, and increased knowledge and awareness of HIV/AIDs. Project implementers report that family members and communities have increased their respect for adolescent girls as they find their daughters more knowledgeable and able to earn money to support family expenses. The end-line survey for the impact evaluation is currently suspended until the security situation improves.