



africa

NIGERIA: COMPASS PROJECT SHOWS VAST STUDENT ACHIEVEMENT

The data is in and the results are indisputable. Basic education interventions undertaken by Creative Associates International, Inc. for Nigerian primary school pupils under the COMPASS Project are having a measurable impact, according to the results of a newly released assessment.

The assessment was led by Dr. Denis Mildon and Gilles Fournier of EDUCAN, Creative's student achievement testing partner under COMPASS. Mildon, who developed the English component of the test, said during a recent presentation at Creative Associates' home office in Washington, D.C. that more than 20,000 pupils were tested. If one takes into account that each test had three units, and if each unit were viewed individually, then the scoring and analyses of each unit would amount to more than 60,000 tests scored, making this assessment possibly the largest ever undertaken in Africa. "And they told us there was no way we could pull off an assessment of that size in Nigeria," Mildon added.

The test, given to pupils in grades 1 to 6, measured improvements in math, English language learning skills and included questionnaires to correlate results of academic achievements with elements of pupils' daily lives.

The students who took the test were beneficiaries of the Community Participation for Action in the Social Sector project, known as COMPASS, which integrates education and health programs. The project is primed by Pathfinder International, and is run in partnership with the Federal Government of Nigeria and funded by the U.S. Agency for International Development.

COMPASS is managed in collaboration with ministries of education and health at the federal and state levels, and local NGOs, such as teacher's associations and parent teacher associations, in the implementation, review and monitoring of the program.

Creative manages the basic education component of COMPASS which includes development and implementation of Interactive Radio Instruction (IRI), teacher training (in-service and pre-service),

support to PTAs, and administration of a de-worming program. The basic education component is implemented in the three Nigerian states of Kano, Nassarawa and Lagos. The student achievement testing is a tool to assess student performance in math and English.

According to Mildon and Fournier, assessments conducted in the United States on education interventions indicate that such initiatives normally take 4 to 10 years to measure and improvements usually do not exceed two percent from previous test results. But under COMPASS, pupils in rural schools showed a seven percent improvement in skills for grades two and three, with grade four students' achievement measuring eight percent higher. Results also showed significant achievements in math for all pupils in grades one through four. When compared to a 2006 assessment, test scores confirmed that girls made considerable improvements in all areas.

Mildon and Fournier presented the findings to representatives from USAID and Creative staff in late October. Both analysts

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"If you train teachers in modern teaching methods and show them how to make materials, feed pupils, provide wash rooms and deworm children, you're going to have an impact..."

Dr. Denis Mildon
EDUCAN

A TEACHER MONITORS STUDENTS DURING TESTING WHICH MEASURED THE IMPACT OF THE CREATIVE-LED COMPASS EDUCATION INTERVENTIONS.

PHOTO BY: EDUCAN, CREATIVE ASSOCIATES' PARTNER ON COMPASS.



AFGHANISTAN: TRAINING FEMALE TEACHERS TO INCREASE GIRLS' ENROLLMENT

In a small room, just off the main hallway of classrooms, five young girls whisper to one another. Dressed in black and enveloped in white head scarves, these students represent the first position-holders in grades 4 through 12 of Aqcha Girls School, which serves more than 2,300 girls.

As they recollected their experiences from a year earlier, before the Building Education Support Systems for Teachers (BESST) project got underway, all the students pointed out how vastly different their learning experience is now that BESST has trained their teachers.

Although in some parts of Afghan society educating girls is condemned, BESST is helping these teachers to support and encourage the girls to follow their ambitions and goals. Mawlooda, a seventh grader, said that last year, “many times when I would tell my teacher that I wanted to be a doctor, she would tell me, ‘That is not possible.’ But teachers need to be more supportive of our goals or we will stop believing in them too.” All of the girls nodded in agreement.

Last winter, the teachers and principal at Aqcha Girls School participated in a training carried out under BESST which introduced them to alternative ways of instruction and interacting with students. Funded by the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) and implemented by Creative Associates International, Inc., BESST trainings emphasize pedagogy and methods that encourage teachers to foster child-centered and flexible educational environments. Since one of the project’s primary long-term goals is to increase the number of Afghan girls in schools, BESST’s teacher training package was designed to promote gender equity in the classroom – in part by increasing the number of qualified female teachers and raising girls’ school attendance.

The innovations in BESST training methodology are meant to improve the quality of education of every student. Given the experiences articulated by students like Mawlooda — and the limited prospects often faced by females in Afghanistan

— these Afghan girls stand to gain a great deal from teachers employing these teaching methods.

Working with the Ministry of Education to improve the quality of education throughout the country, the BESST project is taking steps to ensure that Afghan girls benefit from its current interventions and that the educational environment being created fosters the confidence and supports the ambitions of future generations of Afghan women as well.

BESST was designed so that the proportion of trainers hired within a district is roughly equal to the proportion of female teachers in that district. Dwight Lloyd, Teacher Education advisor to BESST, explained: “We want more Afghan girls receiving a quality education. That means, among other things, there needs to be more female teachers—to make both girls and their families more comfortable sending them to school,” he said. “And to make sure there are more female teachers, we need to hire more female trainers.”

Suzanne Griffin, a BESST training manager found that “it’s really important to have a woman on the committee selecting teacher trainers. We were having such a hard time hiring female trainers. I and a female colleague in Shibergan, decided that one of us or a third female would partake in the interviews, which made female candidates feel so much more comfortable,” Griffin said. “The quality of their interviews improved and we were able to hire more female trainers.” Although distance and poor security affect both women and men, female teachers are further constrained by the need to secure a mahram (male chaperone, normally a family-member) who must accompany them to and from the training site. BESST selects training-site locations to ensure easy access for female teachers. Female teachers of Aqcha Girls School, who

received BESST training in early 2007, have found that implementing the strategies they learned has helped make their female students feel more comfortable, enthusiastic, and involved in the learning process. One teacher, Ms. Nazifa, said: “In this seminar, we learned the importance of creating a friendly environment for these girls. Before, students were not allowed child-centered teaching methods and were not motivated students to focus on their studies. BESST’s focus on critical thinking skills is empowering girls to participate in class.

The BESST project, designed to train and support more than 50,000 teachers by 2010, works in three main areas: teacher education through district-level trainings in methodology, development of national credentialing systems for both teacher and school managers, and distance learning for teachers who work in remote and insecure areas.

—Alison Long, BESST External Relations Manager in Afghanistan.

NEW INTERACTIVE TEACHING METHODS HAVE IMPROVED THE DELIVERY OF EDUCATION AND PROSPECTS FOR AFGHAN GIRLS.

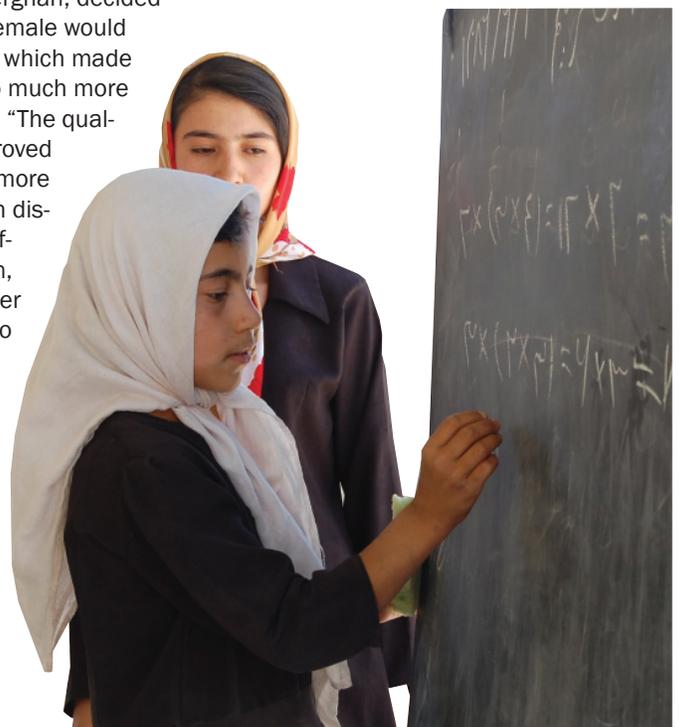


PHOTO BY: SAMIM YAQUBY, BESST/CREATIVE ASSOCIATES INTERNATIONAL, INC.



LIBERIA: IN LESS THAN A YEAR, ACCELERATED LEARNING CLASSES ACHIEVE SOLID RESULTS

Less than a year after its December 2006 launch, the Liberia Accelerated Learning Program Plus is showing measurable impact and results in its efforts to educate war-affected and out-of-school youths so that they may better integrate into Liberian society.

Known as ALPP, the initiative counts its success this way: 10,900 students were enrolled, 1,674 students have graduated from Level III (the equivalent of grade 6) and 1,463 teachers and 2,118 Parent Teacher Association members were trained, among other achievements.

With ALPP, Creative Associates International, Inc. continues to provide out-of-school war-affected Liberian youths learning opportunities that will help secure their transition to peaceful, productive citizenship that began under the predecessor program, known as ALP. Working with the Ministry of Education (MOE), the ALPP initiative condenses six years of primary schooling into three. ALPP is made possible with funding from the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID).

The logistical challenges of implementing a project in a country still emerging from a devastating civil war, makes ALPP's results all the more noteworthy. Liberia lacks paved roads making it a challenge to travel during the rainy season to and from the six counties where the project is implemented. Despite these constraints, ALPP youths gain an education and learn civic values through service-learning activities such as improving school infrastructure to benefit their communities.

"The challenges of implementing ALPP have been many. But the one thing that has made us able to meet the project's goals is the commitment of the Liberian people," said Peggy Poling, ALPP's Chief of Party. "Our local Creative Associates education staff has put in long hours, often under stressful conditions. The community leaders and parents are more than willing to do their part and the students are eager to learn. And our support from the Ministry of Education has made our efforts successful."

Consistent with its goals to promote gender equity, the Creative-managed ALPP puts special emphasis on integrating girls and young women into its activities. To ensure long-term sustainability of the project, ALPP is also working with the MOE to build management capac-

ity to improve the quality and delivery of its education system at the county and national levels.

ALPP is a follow-on to the USAID Liberia Transition Initiative, a project managed by Creative on behalf of the Office of Transition Initiatives. That project began in February 2004, just months after the signing of the peace accords, and concluded in November 2006.

"Looking back, ALPP represents an inspiring example of why we do this work, and how ideas, well conceived and well implemented, can make an undeniably hopeful impact on war-affected societies."

**Shannon Fischer
Former Chief of Party LTI**

Under LTI, Creative implemented an Accelerated Learning Program (ALP) which enabled accelerated learning for war-affected and out-of-school youths. As the successor program, ALPP goes beyond accelerated learning to include service learning and small grants activities.

"The benefits of an educational opportunity tailored to the realities of war-affected youth was so attractive to Liberia's children and young adults that we knew the program was needed. Thus, ALPP was born," said Shannon Fischer, former chief of party of LTI and now Creative's East Africa Regional Representative. "Look-

ing back, ALPP represents an inspiring example of why we do this work, and how ideas, well conceived and well implemented, can make an undeniably hopeful impact on war affected societies."

Along with providing accelerated learning courses to overage youths, LTI intervened in critical bottlenecks in the peace process by supporting civil society's participation through two other distinct but complementary components—small grants and community re-integration of war-affected youths. During its implementation, LTI provided more than \$7.8 million in grants for a variety of activities that helped NGOs and government ministries resume operations, revitalize communities and raise public awareness of issues tied to Liberia's transition.

A three-year project, ALPP is scheduled to end in 2009; it is anticipated that its support to the MOE will enable widespread replication of its accelerated learning classes.

"The government of Liberia's allocation of resources to the Ministry of Education will determine the future of ALPP," said Poling, ALPP Chief of Party. The President's policies are all supportive of education but there is still much to be done in this country. Road and electricity are needed so that schools are more accessible and technology can be integrated into teaching methodology. It is not going to be easy. But if you look into the smiling faces of students, you know that the people are ready!"

—Alexandra Pratt

THE CREATIVE-MANAGED ALPP PROGRAM IS HELPING WAR-AFFECTED LIBERIAN YOUTHS GET AN EDUCATION AND PARTICIPATE IN CIVIC LIFE.

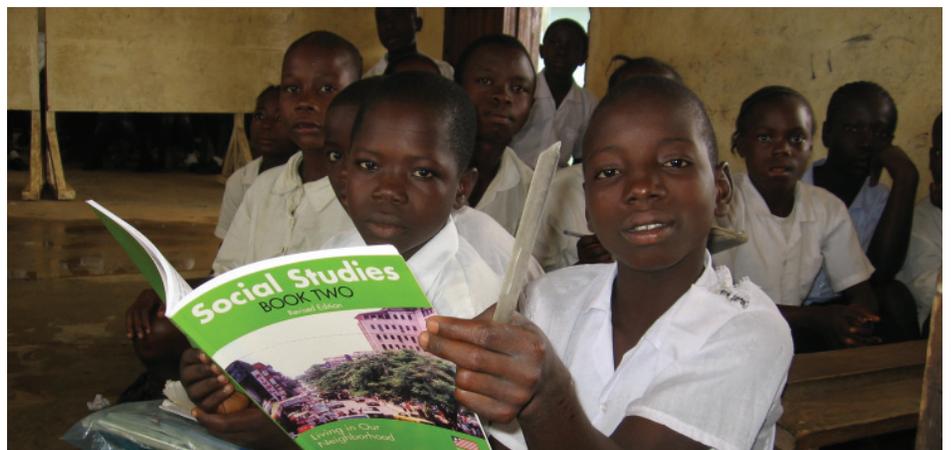


PHOTO BY: CREATIVE ALPP

AFGHANISTAN: NGOS EMBRACE CREATIVE-LED CAPACITY DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM



PHOTO BY: CARLA ROSA BORGES

NGO REPRESENTATIVES DEBATE THE NEED TO BUILD THE SECTOR'S CAPACITY AND TO COORDINATE SERVICES.

In less than a year, the Capacity Development Program (CDP) has become a household name in the Afghan NGO community.

CDP's growing profile is a result of 12 roundtables held throughout Afghanistan to brief Afghan NGOs on the project's aims to develop local and national NGO management and financial capabilities.

The roundtables were attended by 275 participants representing 179 NGOs, which operate in most of Afghanistan's 34 provinces. The activity is designed to build NGOs' basic management skills and to create a cadre of skilled Afghan NGO leaders, adept at financial and administrative management.

Made possible with funding from the U.S. Agency for International Development, the CDP NGO activity is implemented by Creative Associates International, Inc., as a sub-contractor to BearingPoint.

"The CDP strives to deliver a comprehensive and holistic package of management skills along with a certificate program to lend legitimacy to NGO leadership, vis-à-vis the international community and its donors, said Carla Rosa Borges, Team Leader, of the CDP NGO effort. "To date, CDP has laid a solid foundation to support the NGO community in Afghanistan."

Strengthening non-governmental organizations is a focus of the U.S. government and the international donor community

because NGOs have become primary vehicles for providing Afghans with basic public services, urban renewal, advocacy and emergency assistance. In particular, the NGO sector's capacity to attract and absorb knowledge and resources from international NGOs, provides promising prospects for expanding their capabilities to deliver social services and meet public expectations.

Since 2001, NGO activities have led USAID and the donor community to seek innovative ways to assist the sector in meeting social challenges, including delivering public services beyond relief and emergency programs. The CDP is a response to the NGO sector's needs to build leadership and management competency so they can better serve their constituents.

To date, the CDP's NGO team has conducted seven roundtables in Kabul's central regions, two in Kandahar, and one each in Jalalabad, Mazar and Herat. Under Creative's management, the CDP team has surveyed and assessed NGOs across Afghanistan to acquire baseline information of their competencies in seven core areas, so that customized trainings can be developed to meet institutions' particular needs.

The growing enthusiasm among NGOs to participate in CDP activities has also resulted in CDP establishing solid partnerships throughout the country with the four Afghan NGO networks. CDP activities have even extended to visits with NGOs in the

central provinces of Logar and Parwan. Specifically, in Afghanistan's southern provinces, CDP has partnered with the South Western Afghanistan and Balochistan Agency for Coordination (SWABAC), which has a membership of 35 NGOs in its network.

CDP is also planning for the sector's long-term success through its NGO Leadership Program that will enable the next generation of leaders to use their skills effectively. Through the program, CDP will seek a mutual understanding among the sector's leaders of their respective roles, approaches, ethics and code of conduct. With leadership, it is expected NGOs will complement Afghan society's other sectors which also deliver needed social services.

A NGO REPRESENTATIVE LEADS A WORKSHOP DISCUSSION ON BUILDING A MORE DYNAMIC NGO SECTOR IN AFGHANISTAN WITH ASSISTANCE FROM THE CAPACITY DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM.

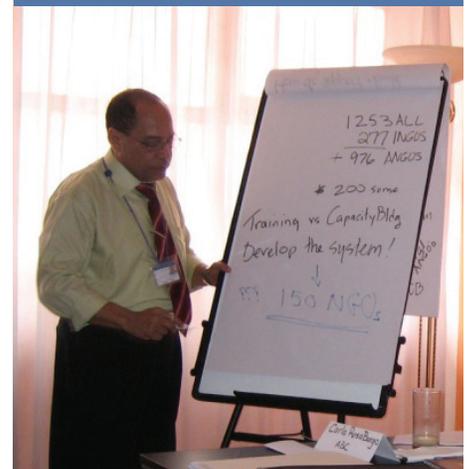


PHOTO BY: CARLA ROSA BORGES



ALGERIA: ONLINE FORUM CONNECTS TEACHERS TO BEST PRACTICES IN TEACHING ENGLISH

Through the U.S. State Department’s Middle East Partnership Initiative (MEPI), Creative Associates International, Inc., is supporting the Algeria Ministry of Education’s goal of improving educational instruction, including English language teaching and learning. As a first step, Creative, its partners, and the Ministry of Education have started with enabling teachers to share English language instruction best practices. These initiatives are being implemented under the auspices of MEPI’s Partnership Schools Program.

Nearly 50 teachers from Setif, a region east of Algiers, and Blida to its south, are now connected for the first time through an online discussion forum. The online forum is helping to build a community among teachers situated in disparate regions of the country who otherwise would have little to no interaction with each other. Managed by Creative along with its partner, World Learning/School for International Training, the forum has been introduced to Algerian English language teachers to supplement an English-as-a-Foreign Language (EFL) teacher training program.

Known as the Blackboard Academic Suite, this online tool has provided increased opportunities for both experienced and newly certified teachers to communicate their concerns and share strategies about language teaching techniques directly to instructors and their peers.

The forum, which began in April 2007, is conducted in English and moderated by World Learning/School for International Training staff.

To teachers, the forum has opened the door to self evaluation.

“For about a period of 15 days, I had learned more about the teacher that I am and about my students, than I had learned for 23 years of teaching,” said one trainee in comments on the forum site.

During its implementation, the MEPI-funded Blackboard EFL training focused on fostering an interactive, modern and student-centered learning environment in the classroom, using the latest language instruction techniques.

“The shining point of this training is that I have learned a lot of strategies that enable my students to communicate. Now my students can speak freely, without being shy of making mistakes since they know that they will not be interrupted or corrected when they are talking,” said another trainee from Setif.

Trainees have discussed topics that range from how to correct students without discouraging them to managing large classes. Blackboard has enabled trainees to reflect on routine practices that could be refined to help motivate students and enhance the student experience.

“Today, I have the feeling that it’s up to me to motivate my students and involve them in the learning process and keep them motivated and involved for an hour, and why not for all the year on,” said another teacher and training participant from Setif.

The introduction of Blackboard was the final component of Creative’s MEPI teacher-training program. Blackboard EFL training included a mix of teachers, both women and men, novice and experienced from middle and high schools. Twenty-one teachers from Setif and 27 from Blida took part in the training.

Blackboard’s success with EFL teachers has now led to its use between English-language inspectors, also in Setif and Blida, and U.S. project staff to complete a Teacher Competency Framework. This document will complement the competency-based curriculum reforms currently underway by defining the competencies and skills expected of Algerian English teachers. In doing so, inspectors will be given a tool to evaluate the needs of teachers, as well as giving

teachers clear standards for assessing their professional growth.

In partnership with Algeria’s MOE, Creative has also introduced other IT innovations such as an eMath program for 3rd grade primary school students. Creative’s MEPI-team is working with the Algerian Ministry of National Education to introduce such programs to improve education outcomes and to ensure the ongoing success of Algerian education reforms.

Creative implements the Partnership Schools Program pilot education reform programs in both Algeria in North Africa and Oman in the Persian Gulf.

The Partnership Schools Program targets priority education reform challenges as identified by the Ministry of Education, with the goals of helping to make the nations’ education systems more dynamic and effective. Under the Partnership Schools Program, Creative’s MEPI team also conducts capacity-building trainings and builds partnerships with education ministries.

—Alexandra Pratt in Washington, D.C. and Sarah Havekost in Algeria.

ALONG WITH IMPROVING THE ENGLISH LANGUAGE TEACHING SKILLS OF HIGH SCHOOL TEACHERS, MEPI-ALGERIA IS IMPROVING MATH COMPREHENSION OF THIRD GRADE STUDENTS USING ITCs.

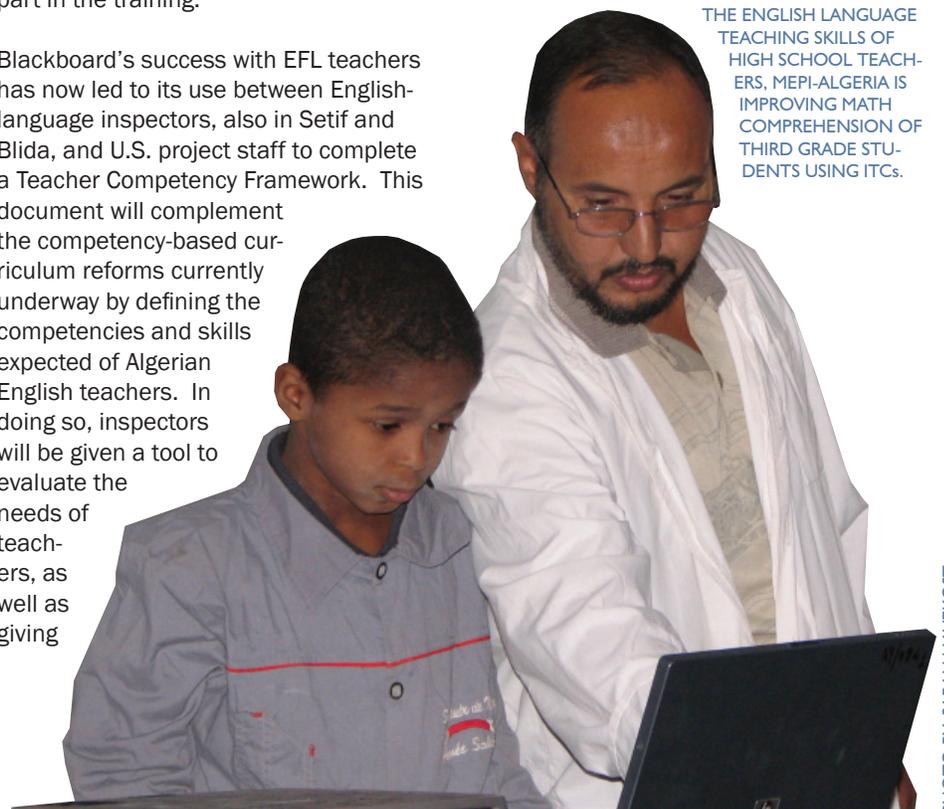


PHOTO BY: SARAH HAVEKOST



AFGHANISTAN: BESST IMPROVES LEADERSHIP SKILLS, ENHANCES LEARNING, REDUCES STUDENT ABSENCES

Sitting in the center of a dusty field in the town of Shiberghan in Northern Afghanistan, the Hazar Family School is a modest one-story building with the ambitious mandate: to educate the community's girls. The school's principal, Mr. Qadir, is a former teacher from a nearby boy's school. Greeting students as they scurry to class, a bespectacled Mr. Qadir confides that he never aspired to manage a school and only recently received the training he needed for the role.

These days, Mr. Qadir sees that role through a new lens.

After working for more than a quarter century in education, he received his first formal training in school management from the Building Education Support Systems for Teachers project, known as BESST. A five-year project, launched in 2006, BESST is made possible with funding from the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) and implemented by Creative Associates International, Inc. The program is designed to improve the quality and effectiveness of teaching and school administration in Afghan schools.

"The goal of these trainings is, in part, to overcome the resistance to asking for help and encourage collective efforts to solve problems," said Suzanne Griffin, a BESST staff member who helped organize the trainings. "We want school leaders to reflect upon the benefits of such open and collaborative approaches to running a school."

Recognizing the significant role played by principals and head teachers in determining the pathway

for change and improvement in education, the BESST project piloted a two-pronged training program in Jawzjan and Sar-e Pul provinces in early 2007. Along with training teachers in methodol-

ogy, BESST provided principals and head teachers an educational leadership and management training.

During the two-week session, these "school managers" were trained in time management, class visits and teacher observations, record keeping, reporting, and teacher/student assessment, fostering parent and community involvement, planning for school development, and managing (limited) school resources.

Five years into his principal career, Mr. Qadir admits that "being a principal has many responsibilities—maybe too many."

But his commitment to bettering his school is unwavering. "I like feeling that I am able to play a key role in the advancement of the school. Trainings to help me become a more effective leader—like this one that BESST led last winter—make me a better principal."

While BESST's trainings provided principals, such as Mr. Qadir, with the improved skills to manage their schools, head teachers also valued the trainings.

Ms. Shoogufa, a head teacher at Hazar Family School, is already applying her newly acquired managing techniques in her teachers meetings. "I always held weekly meetings with all the teachers of my school, but no one ever recorded what was said," said Ms. Shoogufa. "Now, at each meeting, we take notes and record what the teachers say is going on in the classrooms—what is good and what is going poorly. This way, we can give explanations—to the principal or to parents—for the decisions we make and for the way we choose to solve problems in the classroom."

Improving the efficiency of principals and teachers helps enable the delivery of quality education. "But we have few means to measure how well our school is performing, with the exception of occasional competitions between students selected from schools throughout the province," said Mr. Qadir.

From BESST's workshops, however, Mr. Qadir has learned one broad indicator of measuring success:

parent involvement. "When parents come to the school and thank the teachers and me, because they can see that their child is working hard, doing his homework, we know that the education our school is providing is effective and valued by the community. We have to encourage those sorts of exchanges and the training helped us to reflect on how best to do that," Mr. Qadir said.

BESST's school management training — which emphasizes collaboration and communication among schools, students, parents, and the community — brought principals from throughout the district together. "At our school, we discovered a way to increase the number of students who come to school on a regular basis," Mr. Qadir said. "The strategy we applied was effective and so, when I spoke with the principal of Alti Khoja School, and discovered that his school suffered the same problem, I shared with him a way to address it."

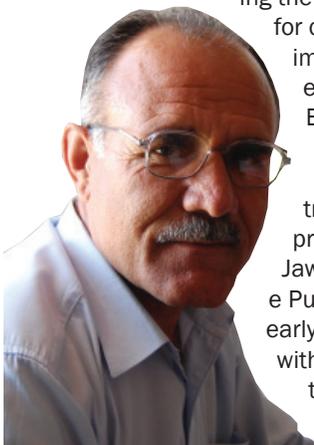
With BESST's guidance, Mr. Qadir and his faculty developed a system of contacting parents of absent students. "In most cases, parents are not aware that their child should be in school or is not in school," Mr. Qadir said. "So our school... helped the parents form a committee to communicate their concerns with us, as a school."

Student absences result in teachers contacting parents and a request for a parent-teacher meeting. When the parents visit, the teacher will ask: "What is the problem that is preventing your child from attending classes?" We use this opportunity to explain to the parents the importance of education in general and encourage them to send their child regularly to school," Mr. Qadir said. The principal of the Alti Khoja School, who learned of this approach from Hazar Family School and has since applied it, has seen a decline in student absenteeism.

BESST's leadership and management training sessions, in revised form, are one part of the training sessions to be implemented in 11 provinces, including Jawzjan and Sar-e Pul, in the coming months.

—Alison Long, BESST External Relations Manager in Afghanistan.

PHOTO BY: SAMIM YAQUBY, BESST/ CREATIVE ASSOCIATES INTERNATIONAL, INC.



MR. QADIR, PRINCIPAL OF HAZAR FAMILY SCHOOL IN JAWZJAN PROVINCE.



GUATEMALA: PUBLIC-PRIVATE ALLIANCES HELP EX-GANG MEMBERS GET JOBS

When the Youth Alliance Program launched its innovative Challenge 100 job training program, civil society stakeholders and participants alike welcomed it and with good reason.

Nearly a year after Challenge 100 was launched, former gang members who have turned their lives around for the better and are gainfully employed are a testament to the program's success. Business leaders who provided job training opportunities are also supportive and encouraged by the commitment to self improvement these ex-gang members have shown.

One businessman, Eduardo Pimentel, president of an electronics firm, recalled how for one hardened ex-gang member known as JJ, receiving a paycheck was overwhelming.

"One day I heard somebody crying in the office and I ran downstairs and found that it was JJ. I got very worried, Pimentel recalled. "But JJ was crying because he had in his hands his very first paycheck."

But JJ is not alone. Many other former gang members – young men and women alike – have discovered new lives through Challenge 100 under the Youth Alliance Program, known in Spanish as Programa Alianza Joven, or PAJ.

The PAJ's Challenge 100 initiative, also known as Desafio 100, is made possible with funding from the U.S. Agency

for International Development's Global Development Alliance. Challenge 100 also relies on public-private alliances to develop business partners like Pimentel who are providing job opportunities.

The importance of programs like the PAJ cannot be underestimated. According to USAID, only two out of every ten Guatemalan youths attend high school and many of them find it hard to find jobs. They and others with less education or unstable home lives are often vulnerable to gang influences where they may feel less alienated.

"We believe that the issue of gangs is the responsibility of all," said Harold Sibaja, who is both Creative's regional director for Latin America and the Caribbean and PAJ's director. "Reducing youth violence is not just the responsibility of the police or the central government. The Youth Alliance Program has successfully motivated the involvement of faith based organizations, private sector, local governments, and the communities themselves. Through Desafio 100, we have seen the private sector become part of the solution and become allies of the program."

In December 2006, Challenge 100 paired 53 ex-gang members with 49 businesses. The program's success led in October to

AT ANY OF THE 9 YOUTH ALLIANCE PROGRAM YOUTH CENTERS, MARGINALIZED YOUTHS ARE PROVIDED EDUCATION COURSES AS WELL AS MUSIC, COOKING AND OTHER LESSONS TO HELP KEEP THEM OFF THE STREETS AND AWAY FROM THE INFLUENCE OF GANGS.

the inauguration of 44 additional former gang members who were integrated into jobs at 32 businesses as part of the program's final round. These ex-gang members will get the chance to build solid job skills, work ethics, values and principles to meet their daily responsibilities as well as improve their social skills.

Feedback from businesses show that this program is working – for both former gang members and the business – by serving the civic interest in helping ex-gang members become productive citizens and contributors to the mainstream economy.

"We are a better business since JJ joined our firm," said Pimentel. "Last month, in fact, JJ was promoted to chief of logistics."

Launched last December, Challenge 100 began its efforts to provide legitimate employment to youths who have largely operated outside of conventional social-economic circles. While Challenge 100 presents ex-gang members with the opportunity to better their lives, joining the program requires participants to

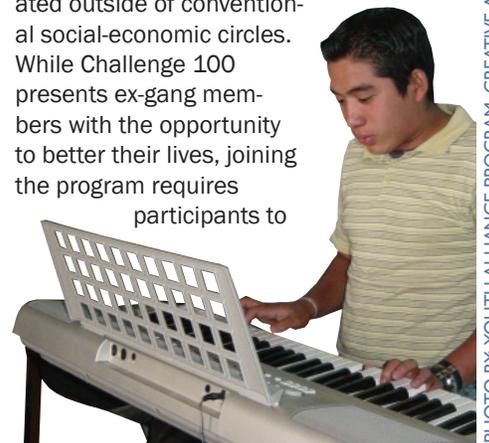


PHOTO BY: YOUTH ALLIANCE PROGRAM, CREATIVE ASSOCIATES

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NIGERIA: COMPASS PROJECT SHOWS VAST STUDENT ACHIEVEMENT

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emphasized the significant impact that Interactive Radio Instruction (IRI) is having in overall achievement scores. Using radio, IRI trains teachers in student-centered methodology in the teaching of literacy and numeracy in urban and rural schools, both public and Islamiyya. Broadcasts for grades one and two are in the Hausa and Yoruba languages while those for primary grades three to six are in English. IRI lessons air three times a week and reach 1,400 schools, over 700,000 pupils and 21,000 teachers.

"I find that the IRI is a solid contributing factor to improving student performance and the teaching materials for teachers were excellent and helped enhance pupil achievement. Denis and I also found that the personnel working under the Creative umbrella who were chosen to develop materials and implement the program, were superb," said Fournier, who developed the math section of the assessment for EDUCAN.

"If you train teachers in modern teaching methods and show them how to make materials, feed pupils, provide wash rooms

and de-worm children, you're going to have an impact," Mildon said. "It's not a profound discovery, it's self evident."

The COMPASS/EDUCAN 2007 assessment marks the second round of testing undertaken by the project. The first assessment, also conducted by EDUCAN, was administered in 2006. EDUCAN developed and designed both assessments and processes for the administration of the tests and provided data analyses of achievement scores.

— Alexandra Pratt and Sandhya Badrinath.



PERU: PERUVIAN, GUATEMALAN FORENSIC TEAMS SEEK JUSTICE FOR FAMILIES OF THE DISAPPEARED

Time alone does not heal all wounds. For the Mayan in Guatemala and Quechua in Peru, two communities terrorized during the years of internal conflict by violence and extrajudicial executions, custom holds that the dead must be given a dignified burial.

The Peruvian Forensic Anthropology Team (EPAF), which works with relatives of the disappeared, collects relatives' blood and saliva samples using the latest DNA collection techniques and modern technologies; the samples are then used to match and identify remains. When identified, the remains are returned to families for burial.

Creative Learning, the sister non-profit organization of Creative Associates International, Inc. is a partner in the Guatemala/Peru Latin America Initiative for the Identification of the Disappeared, funded by the U.S. Department of State's Bureau of Human Rights, Democracy and Labor.

"The internal armed conflict that ravaged Peru between 1980 and 2000 left 70,000 deadly victims of whom over 14,000 remain to date, disappeared," said Jose Pablo Baraybar, team leader for EPAF.

Along with providing technical support and institution building to increase the number of identified remains, the initiative seeks to gather evidence that could be used in legal proceedings.

"Creative Learning has demonstrated that it is a proactive partner in this endeavor and has, as well, contributed significantly in the implementation of parallel and complementary projects to the Initiative," Baraybar said.

EPAF's strategy includes investigative work, the collection of pre-death data and forensic expertise to select cases that may benefit from the use of DNA testing in identifying remains. In addition, EPAF assists the regional Government of Ayacucho in the implementation of an Office on Missing Persons to act as a focal point for civil society to direct their queries on progress on the issues of the missing.

"Unlike Guatemala, systematic work to identify the disappeared is very recent and information regarding their whereabouts is still sketchy," Baraybar said.

In Peru, the search for remains in clandestine and mass graves has led to the use of detection dogs in the Los Cabitos investigation, the site of a Peruvian Army garrison where an estimated 500 people are believed to have disappeared between 1982 and 1992.

Efforts to recover remains using traditional techniques have yielded limited results, so the Team has resorted to using highly trained detection dogs to help locate remains. The identification of remains is

a matter of urgency because the State Prosecutor must file all claims in connection with the Los Cabitos enforced disappearances by the end of 2007.

To help meet that deadline, EPAF is working with the Institute for Canine Forensics in California to use search dogs to detect clandestine burials. "So far, the team has been working in two cases relating to the upcoming Alberto Fujimori trial and will be working for the remainder of the week at the military base of Los Cabitos in Ayacucho, where a large number of people were killed and buried during the 1980s," Baraybar said.

Creative Learning is supporting this component of the activity and seeks \$6,000 in donations to cover costs of the detection dogs at the Los Cabitos army base.

You may also contact Carola Mandelbaum at CarolaM@creativelearning.org.



THE CLANDESTINE NATURE OF BURIALS HAS LED THE PERUVIAN FORENSIC TEAM TO USE HIGHLY TRAINED DETECTION DOGS TO HELP LOCATE THE REMAINS OF THE DISAPPEARED.

PHOTO BY: EQUIPO PERUANO DE ANTROPOLOGIA FORENSE (EPAF).

GUATEMALA: PUBLIC-PRIVATE ALLIANCES HELP EX-GANG MEMBERS GET JOBS

>> CONTINUES FROM PAGE 7

exhibit strong motivation and courage and pass an interview and tests that measure intelligence, aptitude and character traits.

"We have seen former gang members gaining respect for themselves, gaining a legal income and becoming citizens, as in the case of one former gang member, Panadero who signed up as a national observer in the recent presidential elections, or another ex-gang member, Sammy, who manages one of the Youth Alliance Program's outreach centers and was recently involved in the Ciudad del Sol mayors' political campaign," said Sibaja.

Creative, through Challenge 100, has built an alliance with the Comité Coordinador de Asociaciones Agrícolas, Comerciales, Industriales y Financieras (CACIF), a prominent umbrella organization for 9 branches of private business, that offers job training opportunities and jobs to the former gang members, young men and women alike.

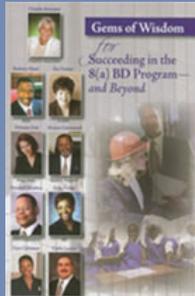
The inauguration of Challenge 100's second phase in October was attended by USAID's Deputy Director, the President of the Chamber of Industry, the Director of CACIF, the Director of USAID's Office of Democracy and Governance, businessmen, government officials, clergy, media and the 44 ex-gang members, who recently joined the program.

Challenge 100 as well as its predecessor, Challenge 10—Peace for the EX™ (Desafío 10—Paz para los EX™), are Sibaja's creations. Challenge 10 was a reality TV series involving 10 male ex-gang members divided into two teams of five; both teams competed to succeed at opening legitimate businesses with the help of private-sector mentors. The series aired in Guatemala and can be seen at www.challenge10.com.

—Alexandra Pratt and the Youth Alliance Program.



Creative's President and CEO, M. Charito Kruvant, Co-authors "Gems of Wisdom" – a Book to Help Entrepreneurs Succeed in the SBA 8(a) Business Development Program



For copies visit:

www.aasbea.com

In their new book, "Gems of Wisdom," co-authors M. Charito Kruvant and Dr. Sharon T. Freeman, share advice and reveal what it takes to succeed based on the experiences of successful entrepreneurs who got their start in the Small Business Administration 8 (a) Business Development Program.

From the "Gems of Wisdom" Foreword

Dear Readers:

I only wish "Gems of Wisdom" had been available when I began my entrepreneurial career almost 40 years ago. It would have made my own experience of working with 8(a) BD firms much easier. This is a remarkably relevant piece.

Aspiring entrepreneurs of all types are fortunate that Charito Kruvant, one of the brightest and most strategic people I've ever met, and her colleague, Dr. Sharon Freeman, have shared lessons about leadership, change management, and ethics.

The obsessive compulsion or, some say, an irrational drive, to make a vision a reality can't be taught – it's an entrepreneur's DNA. But a roadmap, like "Gems," makes the journey to success a bit easier.

Charito Kruvant and her colleagues, owners of successful firms that have graduated from the SBA 8 (a) program, epitomize the American Dream and how it can be achieved. You'll be well served if you follow their advice.

Best Wishes,
Mario Morino
Chairman, Venture Philanthropy Partners

Veteran USAID Official Gives Insider's View of the Iraq Reconstruction Efforts

The old adage that keeping the peace may be as difficult as winning the war is, as in the case of Iraq, a reminder that victory can be elusive. A new book providing an insider's view of the Iraq reconstruction efforts by James "Spike" Stephenson identifies critical steps as to how future post-war situations might be better managed.

In *Losing the Golden Hour*, Stephenson provides a candid view of the daily events that unfolded during his time as the U.S. Agency for International Development's Iraq mission director from 2004-2005. Noting the hubris and incompetence that has led to the Iraq debacle, Stephenson provides a sobering analysis of actions not taken that could have led to a different outcome. Despite these admissions, *Losing the Golden Hour* is not a condemnation of U.S. foreign policy or the current administration because it also mentions the heroes in the war effort.

For Stephenson, the "Golden Hour" is a time of reckoning, that brief period when securing the peace demands three essential societal needs to be set in motion. First, and above all, security measures must be taken to protect the civilian population and to discourage the rise of insurgencies and organized crime. Second is the need to instill democratic processes that encourage pluralism. Finally, economic growth must be promoted. These key elements combined can help to win over a tired and restless population. Though necessary, these critical social needs are "moving targets" says Stephenson. In a conflict or post-conflict environment, a great deal of flexibility is needed to counter new and potentially explosive developments. In other words, though Stephenson's formula for nation-building holds promise, stabilization and reconstruction in the aftermath of war isn't easy.

Primarily, post-conflict nation building requires mutual cooperation from both military and civilian forces during the brief interlude that falls after the cessation of hostilities and the launch of reconstruction – the Golden Hour.

In Iraq, the Golden Hour was lost because the lessons learned from 50-years of U.S.

involvement in post-conflict environments were largely ignored. Among the mistakes made were the disbanding of the Iraqi army and general mismanagement of reconstruction efforts by Ambassador Paul Bremer's staff who were largely inexperienced; many had never been to a conflict area and had little if any knowledge of development. Stephenson said many who joined the reconstruction effort had good intentions but they lacked a logical strategy and leadership.

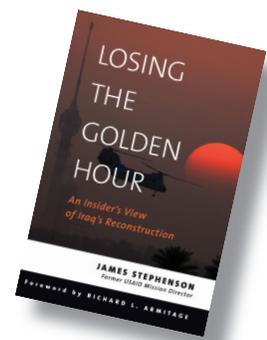
Stephenson's *Losing the Golden Hour* also gives an excellent account of some of those individuals, both civilian and military, who rose to the occasion. These individuals promoted and launched community participation projects, small economic growth initiatives and improved public utilities which won over Iraqis. Unfortunately, budget restrictions and squabbles among various agencies led to the elimination of many of these projects. The rest is history.

Stephenson is a senior advisor to Creative Associates' Center for Security & Stabilization (C2S2), which seeks to play a leadership role in the intellectual and operational realms of the development and security nexus.

Before coming to Creative, he served as a Senior Advisor to the Department of State Coordinator for Reconstruction and Stabilization. He has also authored papers on civilian/military cooperation in Iraq and implementation of assistance in high-threat environments. Stephenson's USAID experience includes senior positions held in missions in Serbia and Montenegro, Lebanon, Egypt, Barbados, Grenada, El Salvador and Washington, D.C.

— Alexandra Pratt

For copies visit: www.potomacbooksinc.com



NEW FACES IN WASHINGTON, D.C. AND FIELD



Andrea Bosch joins the Education, Mobilization and Communication division as Chief of Party for the EGYPT Technology for Improved Learning Outcomes project. Andrea brings extensive development experience working in education with special focus on instructional technologies. She has project experience in India, Nepal, Bolivia, Thailand, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, the Philippines, Laos, Guatemala, South Africa, Grenada and Nigeria.

Prior to joining Creative, Andrea served as Vice President at the Education Center of the International Youth Foundation, based in Baltimore, Md. There, she oversaw education activities internationally and \$20 million in project activity with emphasis on educational media and technology for children and youth, education and employment issues, and the expansion of programs for orphans and vulnerable children.

Before that, she was Chief of Party of the Dot-EDU Technology and Tools for Teacher Training project in India, based in Bangalore. The project focused on improving the quality of early childhood education, primary education and gender equity in three states of India through the application of radio, TV, community participation and broad teacher training.

Andrea received a doctorate in Education with a minor in Cultural Psychology at Stanford University; a master's degree in Education, Administration Planning and Social Policy at Harvard University and a bachelor's degree in Anthropology and Psychology at Duke University. She is a published author of a host of articles on the subjects of interactive radio and computer-assisted instruction, ICTs and active learning.

John Boveington joins the Education, Mobilization and Communication division as Chief of Party for the Sudan HEAR project. John has extensive project management experience, which includes working with a broad cross-section of donor agencies in a variety of developing country settings including post-conflict and tsunami reconstruction situations.



He's been stationed in Southern Sudan, Somalia, Somaliland, Sri Lanka, Indonesia, and Malawi among other locations.

Before joining Creative, he served as the Management Trainer Technical Advisor for the Africa Educational Trust initiative of the UK Department for International Development (DfID). Under DfID, the Somali Integrated Secondary Education Development Program was launched, where John coordinated and implemented training programs for ministry of education senior personnel, umbrella organization representatives and community education representatives.

Prior to that, John was Program Manager for the Tsunami Project Development in Meulaboh, Aceh, Indonesia, funded by World Vision. There, he was responsible for consolidation and handover of the Ujong Tanjong Community School project, which established construction of pre-fabricated classrooms and the development of an out-of-school education program for young adults, of which 70 percent were female students.

John also has extensive experience working on UNICEF and United Nations projects. He received a Masters of Education from Deakin University in Geelong, Australia and a Bachelors of Education in Adelaide, Australia.

NEW FACES



John Dreier joins Creative as Chief of Party for the Central Asia Republic (CAR) School Quality Improvement Project. John brings a unique perspective on education in Central Asia, based on years of experience with faculty training, student assessment, curriculum standards, Ministry of Education reform, faculty supervision and managerial experience.

As Chief of Party for USAID’s Business and Economics Education Project from 2005-2007, he was directly responsible for deliverables and supervision of all work activities in Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Uzbekistan and Turkmenistan. The project improved CAR education systems by making them more responsive to market needs and through a host of innovative pilot programs developed important linkages between the private and public sectors.

Before that, John served as Acting President at American University-Central Asia in Bishkek, Kyrgyzstan, overseeing 430 faculty and staff and more than 1,000 students. There, he worked closely with the governments of Kyrgyzstan and the United States to provide quality leadership of the university.

John holds three degrees from the University of Wisconsin-Madison: a master’s degree in Science in Business Administration, a master’s degree in Business Administration, and a bachelor’s degree in Business Administration. He has taught at the American University-Central Asia, the Teaching Excellence Academy, both in Kyrgyzstan, at the Eurasia Institute in Kazakhstan and the University of Oregon. He has some knowledge of Russian and German.

Stephen Ayoola Oladini is now EMC’s Senior Education Advisor for the Nigeria Community Participation for Action in the Social Sector (COMPASS) project.



Ayo, as he is known, comes from Nigeria and has been a familiar face on the COMPASS project team. Since February 2005, he served as an Education Specialist for the project, where he developed and managed workplans for all state-level education activities in Lagos, including needs assessment, project planning, development of timeliness and monitoring and evaluation activities.

Before that, he was a Project Officer at the National Project Coordinating Unit (NPCU) as part of the Office of the Honorable Minister of Education in Nigeria, where he liaised with the British Council and U.K. Department for International Development on project implementation. Ayo has also occupied other posts with the Federal Ministry of Education in Abuja, including Principal Education Officer for the Research and the Bilateral Agreements, Commonwealth and African Affairs branches.

Ayo received a bachelor’s and a master’s degrees in education respectively at the University of Ife and University of Lagos. His hobbies include playing chess, scrabble and racket games. In addition to English, he speaks Yoruba, one of the 3 major languages predominantly spoken in southwest Nigeria.



My-Hien Truong joins Finance and Contracts as a Contract Administrator. My-Hien is a familiar face at Creative. She previously served as a Contract Administrator and Accounts Payable/ Payroll Manager between 1986 and 1998, and as an Accounting Clerk between 1982 and 1984. Prior to her return to Creative, she served as a Payroll Specialist for Centennial Contractors Enterprises, Inc. My-Hien has taken all core accounting courses at the University of Maryland, University College. In addition to English, she speaks Vietnamese.

NEW FACES

CREATIVE TIMES

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PHOTO OF THE SEASON



PHOTO BY: SAMIM YAQUBY, BEST/CREATIVE ASSOCIATES INTERNATIONAL, INC.

These Afghan children are benefitting from Creative's Building Education Support Systems for Teachers (BESST) project made possible with funding from the U.S. Agency for International Development. BESST works with the Afghan Ministry of Education to improve teachers' pedagogy skills, especially in the use of child-centered teaching techniques, that encourage children to think critically and to actively engage in their own learning.

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