Pilot Implementation and Results

**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 1,300 trainees through a random lottery to begin training in November 2013. The pilot provided job skills training in computer and English skills, as well as nutrition and life skills to 1,300 young women aged 18-30. The training concluded in May 2014 (a total of seven months) and was followed by six months of employment assistance.

**Evaluation Results:** All courses were appreciated by the beneficiaries, with over 60% of interviewed graduates judging them very or extremely useful for finding a job (on a five-point scale). According to FYEI the field office, the majority of graduates (62±2%) went on to complete a practical internship in an office or school environment. Graduates generally found the experience beneficial both in terms of their own personal development and their enhanced prospects in the labor market. However, the evaluation of the pilot was conducted during the internship phase due to the closing of the project. As such, the evaluation was not able to monitor durable labor market outcomes (i.e. graduates’ engagement in stable paid employment beyond the project period). Nonetheless, results show 7±1% of FYEI graduates holding jobs in the private sector or schools at the time of the endline evaluation. These results are low, but they were captured during the internship phase.

**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:** Between October 2012 and 2014, the Haiti AGI provided technical and soft-skills training to over 1,000 young women in two consecutive cohorts of approximately 500 girls each. The project offers an integrated approach, combining technical and soft-skills training with financial and psycho-social support that 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: plumbing, construction work, heavy machinery operation, IT, etc. Alongside technical training, young women receive training in eight 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, delivered through mobile money (Tcho-Tcho).

**Evaluation Results:** Impacts measured three months after program completion show that beneficiaries were changing the type of work they do, while the share who were participating in income-generating activities, as well as their earnings, had not increased. However the project did improve the overall agency of beneficiaries, i.e. their capacity to make choices and to pursue desired actions. Participants’ autonomy in their decision making and in their mobility increased, as did their standing in relations with their families. The project also led to decreases in stress and increased aspirations for the future. Although the impact evaluation did not unbundle the intervention, the integrated design of the project and the importance given to soft-skill training appear to have been key determinants of those outcomes.

**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.

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 the 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 entered a six-month support period where they were assisted with job searching and placement or otherwise supported to start their own businesses.

The pilot phase has ended. EPAG targeted 1,000 adolescent girls and young women in its third round of implementation, supported by the Umbrella Facility for Gender Equality. 988 girls completed the training (a 94.7% completion rate). EPAG Round 3 implemented several design changes based on lessons learned from the pilot phase, including a condensed training period (four months of training and five 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 expanded geographically to reach young women outside greater Monrovia. EPAG recently received additional financing through the Umbrella Facility for Gender Equality to implement EPAG Round 4, which will likely include a small pilot for boys and a pilot to train girls as early childhood development (ECD) providers.

**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.

**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 spanned 39 occupations across 44 districts of Nepal. All trainees also received life skills training and business and enterprise skills training for those interested in starting their own businesses. Trainees were assisted with job searching and placement or otherwise supported to start their own businesses.

Following on the AGEI pilot, AGEI II was implemented between December 2013 and December 2014. AGEI II focused on documenting AGEI lessons and innovations and sharing knowledge and building the capacity of other key implementers of skills training in Nepal. In particular, AGEI II worked to build the capacity of the Enhancing Vocational Education and Training (EVENT) project, 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.

**Evaluation Results:** One year later, the treatment group had increased their non-farm employment by 14 percentage points, for an overall gain in employment of 47% relative to the control group. Average monthly earnings increased by approximately 45% for the 2010 cohort and 66% for the 2011 cohort. In contrast, limited effects were found on empowerment, reproductive health, or household-level outcomes. Employment outcomes were marginally better for women, but other outcomes showed no difference between men and women.

**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:** Component I (Skills Training) was launched on April 2, 2012 in Kigali and the training was delivered sequentially among three cohorts. Training of Cohort 1 began in May 2013 and the follow-up
ended in May 2014. 621 girls entered Cohort 1 and 597 completed. Due to implementation delays, the second and third cohorts were compressed in order to finish before the project closing date in December 2014. The second cohort of trainees began the technical training in February 2014 and concluded the project in December 2014. 692 girls entered in Cohort 2 and 657 completed. Cohort 3 was trained concurrently with Cohort 2 in staggered morning and afternoon classes. Cohort 3 began training in March 2014 and concluded the follow-up period in December 2014. 696 girls entered Cohort 3 and 659 completed the project. The overall completion rate for the training project was 95%. Participants were trained in food processing, culinary arts, arts and crafts, and agribusiness. Girls also received week-long training in life-skills and entrepreneurship. Following the classroom training, the girls were supported by trainers, school managers, and business mentors to enter jobs or internships in the private sector or form cooperatives to pursue a small business venture.

Under Component II, the project supported 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.

**Evaluation Results:** A non-experimental evaluation revealed a substantial increase in non-farm employment among beneficiaries, with the share of girls reporting businesses, wage employment or internships rising from 50 percent to 75 percent. There was only a modest increase in the share of respondents who reported being paid for at least one income generating activity (from 55% to 58%), but amounts earned increased significantly. By the end of the program, respondents were more likely to be members of savings groups (from 27% to 81%), to have saved recently (from 18% to 37%), and to have saved larger amounts (from RwF 7,050 to RwF 20,086). The impact of the AGI project on beneficiaries’ lives went beyond the economic realm; respondents reported having larger social networks, higher life satisfaction, and greater entrepreneurial self-confidence. Notably however, reports of gender-based violence increased considerably, with a larger share of respondents indicating that they experienced sexual harassment at least once in their lifetimes (25% to 43%).

**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 participating girls have received life skills and financial literacy training. BRAC also provided savings and credit services to qualified girls. So far, 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 endline survey for the impact evaluation was completed and analysis of the results is underway. The results are expected by December 2015.