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INDIA EDUCATION ACTIVITY

FINAL REPORT



India Education Activity

Final Report

**Basic Education and Policy Support (BEPS) Activity
Contract No. HNE-I-00-00-00038-00
Task Order 20**

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The author's views expressed in this publication do not necessarily reflect the views of the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) or the United States Government.

I. Background

From February 3, 2000 through August 3, 2006, the Basic Education and Policy Support (BEPS) Activity served as a key rapid response, technical assistance contracting mechanism whose purpose was to support and respond to, as requested, USAID education sector needs and priorities in basic education, education policy reform, prevention of abusive child labor, and education in crisis situations. BEPS was managed by Creative Associates International, Inc. in collaboration with BEPS sub-contractors CARE/USA, George Washington University, and GroundWork. Specifically, the contract intended to:

- Improve the quality, efficiency, access, and equity of education, particularly basic education;
- Support educational policy dialogue and reform;
- Carry out restorative and beneficially additive basic education, educational policy, and planning activities in crisis and non-presence countries; and
- Carry out pilot projects, and provide technical assistance and information on child labor.

It was through the BEPS mechanism that USAID-India allocated \$1,800,000 for various education development-related activities in India. The contract period was September 2002 to August 2006.

II. Task Order Activities

The following is a summary of activities that were carried out under BEPS HNE-I-00-00-00038-00, Task Order 20 (CAII internal number 748-21).

Education Sector Strategic Planning

In March 2002, short-term technical assistance was provided to USAID/India in order to evaluate and prioritize among education programming strategies. The BEPS team proposed initial activities in which the mission could engage to jump start its education projects. Joint programming with key institutions in the education sector was suggested. The consultant team also recommended long-term activities and a related implementation plan.

Building Capacity to Improve Education Access for Vulnerable Children

Later in 2002, BEPS began a phased assessment and implementation analysis of the Indian education sector in order to identify areas of need regarding improving access to primary education for vulnerable children, particularly girls, and subsequently recommended actions to address these needs. A study assessing the feasibility of implementing these recommendations was later conducted. In 2003, BEPS continued its involvement by conducting a rapid assessment in two states of the UNICEF-supported Sanitation and Water at Schools Towards Hygiene and Health (SWASTHH) Program in order to inform future USAID assistance to the project.

Quality Education and Skills Training (QUEST)

As per the request of USAID-Delhi, BEPS hired the services of a consultant to assist the mission in developing the Quality Education and Skills Training (QUEST) alliance among local NGOs that are engaged in delivering education to the poor in India. QUEST is a private-public partnership established by USAID to bring selected NGOs in the education sector together to share knowledge and to advocate to government to improve the quality of basic education provided to vulnerable children. Among them, the implementing partner NGOs work with both government primary schools and non-government skills training centers. QUEST was initiated in 2004. During its formation, the QUEST partners agreed to focus on using education technology (ET) as a means of reaching more children.

The QUEST concept however faced several hurdles during its implementation. NGOs that were to form the crux of partnership—Pratham, the Dr. Reddy Foundation (DRF), and the Azim-Premji Foundation (APF)—faced financial- and personnel-related issues when it came to collaboration on various projects. There may have been projects, outside of BEPS, where these partners were collaborating. However, when the India mission CTO tried to bring these NGOs together to collaborate on small-scale projects through partial funding from BEPS, things did not seem to have worked as planned.

It is now hoped that under the International Youth Foundation (IYF), the QUEST concept may become more vibrant and DRF, Pratham, and APF will engage in more robust activities.

BEPS fixed priced contract with Pratham to Host QUEST Secretariat: Total amount \$84,000; later reduced to \$63,750.

In August 2005, at the suggestion of CTO BEPS-India, Pratham was contracted to host the QUEST secretariat from where all future QUEST activities would be programmed and monitored. Under Pratham's supervisory role, some meetings among partners were held in which educational collaboration activities were planned, but somehow the idea did not stick. In the end, Creative Associates International, Inc. had to modify its contract with Pratham, reducing the total amount down from \$84,000 to \$63,750, and reprogramming the monies that were initially awarded to Pratham's own activities such as equipment purchase for ASER study, some support for the Lucent technology project, and travel and salary expenses for the remaining QUEST-related activities.

Dr. Reddy Foundation - Child and Police (CAP) Project – Madrassa Education Quality Improvement

BEPS partnered with an Indian NGO, named the Dr. Reddy Foundation (DRF), which was implementing a highly successful Child and Police (CAP) Project in Hyderabad, to implement a pilot program to provide formal, full-time education opportunities to difficult-to-reach children of Muslim minority communities in Hyderabad, India. In particular, BEPS signed five contracts with DRF/CAP to do the following:

- help Madrassas in Hyderabad's slums to introduce the government's education curricula into their programs;
- establish remedial classes for those Muslim children who had dropped out of school due to poverty or academic difficulties;
- train Madrassa teachers in child-centered pedagogy skills;
- provide leadership skills to Madrassa operators; and
- establish vocational centers to provide tangible economic benefits to Muslim adolescents.

Encouraged by the promising results of the pilot, the Education Department of Andhra Pradesh state announced it would provide free registration and recognition to any Madrassa that participated in the program. Currently, 13 Madrassas are directly participating in the project, and 212 are dialoguing with the MoE to expand their curriculum. Following is the summary of each contract.

Child and Police Project (CAP) – Phase 1 - HNE-I-00-000-00038-00, Task Order 20 – Total amount \$99,977

The purpose of this project was to initiate quality interventions in three Madrassas in Hyderabad slums. CAP carried out various surveys, mobilized children and community members to enroll more children into Madrassas, provided school supplies to children,

engaged Muslim religious leaders in the process, identified Madrassa students' siblings for vocational training interventions, provided training to parents on health-related issues, provided teaching materials to Madrassa teachers, provided basic training to Madrassa teachers on how to integrate formal curricula into their religious subjects, and held a small conference to study the results of work with the Madrassas.

Child and Police Project (CAP) – Phase II - HNE-I-00-000-00038-00, Task Order 20 – Total amount \$99,600

The objectives of this project were to facilitate capacity building of the religious/madras educators, Madrasa Board, and mothers' groups to build leadership from within so as to integrate and deliver formal education, life skills, and career exploration along with their existing education program; document the experiences and successful strategies emerging from the implementation of the initiatives for wider dissemination and impacting the difficult-to-reach children of the minority communities; and disseminate and advocate the project strategies by using the existing networks of Madrassas, Board, formal education service delivery system, and other key stakeholders for mainstreaming the project initiatives.

The project covered 10-12 Madrassas in Muslim-dominated urban/suburban communities of Hyderabad. More than 1,500 very difficult-to-reach urban children in the age group of 6-16 years were directly covered in this project. Through dialogue with the local religious leaders, 30-40 teachers of the Madrassas and religious educators as well as 10-15 mothers' groups were provided teaching as well as life skills training under this program. A resource pool of master trainers and advocates for the model was developed from within this group of Madrassa teachers/educators, board members, and mothers' groups.

This project was also instrumental in opening the dialogue between Madrassa leaders and the government's Education Department for further collaboration.

Child and Police Project (CAP) – Phase III - HNE-I-00-000-00038-00, Task Order 20 – Total amount \$98,548

The objectives of this project were to provide the at-risk adolescents (14-17 years) from economically disadvantaged Muslim backgrounds access to quality formal education so that they are able to obtain elementary and secondary certificates to allow them to have some formal education to be able to improve their employability. Another objective was to strengthen the economic base of the poor families by developing employability and entrepreneurship skills among the young adults (18-30 years) in new market-oriented jobs that would provide assured income to the family on a sustainable basis. This was done by establishing vocational education centers in these communities. An added objective was to build human resources capability for a replicable, scalable, and locally sustainable program for quality learning and business mentor networking for youth.

The project directly worked with 450 additional adolescents in the 11-17 age group and 250 newly identified young adults and family members between 18- 30 years from

economically disadvantaged families in Musheerabad and Shapoor Nagar communities. Indirectly, through networking with local businesses, schools, religious leaders, Madrasas, community learning centers, mothers groups, self help groups, and local NGOs and CBOs, CAP disseminated the project lessons learned/strategies and indirectly impacted the sustainability of these interventions in these communities. At a wider level, this projected impact inspired the media, the business community, and policy makers to engage more with Muslim and poor minorities of Hyderabad.

Child and Police Project (CAP) – Phase IV - HNE-I-00-000-00038-00, Task Order 20 –
Total amount \$42,312

The main objectives of this project were to train teachers of Madrassas in Hyderabad in activity-based teaching and using the teaching/learning material in classroom transaction; provide the Madrassas appropriate and adequate teaching/learning material for formal education; and facilitate first level education leadership development of the select head teachers and Madrassas leaders for wider dissemination and scaling up of the program interventions in select Madrassas across the state, in a move towards mainstreaming of the program.

All of these objectives were more than satisfactorily met by the CAP team.

Child and Police Project (CAP) – Phase V - HNE-I-00-000-00038-00, Task Order 20 –
Total amount \$ 21,200.

Under this agreement, CAP hired the services of two local consultants to:

- Review the existing life skills modules, including the gender ones that were being used by CAP in all its projects.
- Visit CAP training sites and visit groups working with victims of trafficking to assess what types of modules should be developed to assist the victims of trafficking with a special focus on gender.
- Review other life skills curricula and especially the gender components and bring interested stakeholders together in a half-day or full-day session in Hyderabad to share ideas (CEDPA, UNICEF, UNFPA, DFID, etc.)
- Review IOM's safe migration training materials and work with IOM on an integrated module that would be adapted for CAP purposes.
- Recommend new topics for the gender module and amendments/additions to other modules to incorporate gender. While the target group will be youth at risk ages 14-25, some provision may also have to be made specifically for the Muslim minority and older women.
- Develop the fleshed out safe migration and gender modules for trial with existing CAP trainees and for further adaptations. The gender module must be capable of being delivered as part of its life skills module within the overall framework of an employability skill development program.

The consultants developed modules related to human trafficking and migration, HIV/AIDS prevention, gender and life skills, and prevention of sexual harassment. Modules produced by IOM, CARE, and UNICEF were studied and modified to make them relevant to CAP's work with poor communities in Hyderabad.

Child and Police Project (CAP) – Phase VI - HNE-I-00-000-00038-00, Task Order 20 – Total amount \$ 77,880.

The objectives of this project were to:

- Set up six computer labs in Madrassas and community learning centers where the Madrassas did not have space to house computer centers/labs.
- Provide for one material-sharing workshop for sharing of formal education learning materials for use in the Madrassas.
- Provide for larger dissemination of the efforts of this project and for building closer ties between the religious (Madrassas) and formal education service providers (government education department officials).

CAP purchased all the equipment through which the community learning centers would be operationalized. The Urdu materials-sharing workshop was also organized in which several organizations that are engaged in Urdu materials development in India were brought together to share what was being done and how to better utilize each others' materials.

Dr. Reddy Foundation (DRF) Child and Police Project (CAP) – HNE-I-00-000-00038-00, Task Order 20 – Total amount \$ 49,000

BEPS signed a contract with DRF to organize a national conference, which brought prominent businesses and education delivery organizations to link education skills to what is required by the major industries in India. This conference was very successful in that it paved a way for dialogue between educators and employment sectors—a dialogue that barely existed before.

Madrasa Case Study (CAP)

BEPS provided in-house expertise to USAID-Delhi to conduct a case study of the success of Madrasa interventions in Hyderabad. This study was published and distributed to all concerned.

Azim-Premji Foundation (APF)

Creative Associates also contracted several activities with the Azim-Premji Foundation (APF). These are described below.

Azim-Premji Foundation (APF) – Conferences Contract - Total amount \$ 109,032

Under this contract, APF proposed to hold a national conference on quality education at Bangalore. The conference aimed to focus discussions and action outcomes on at least the three most critical issues that, in APF's judgments, were to have maximum impact on enhancing the quality of learning in elementary schools: building accountability in the education system; upscaling successful projects; and teacher-related and school leadership issues. Two additional conferences in the North and South were held, and dialogue with government departments was initiated.

Azim-Premji Foundation (APF) – Child Friendly School Chitoor - Total amount \$199,998

Through BEPS, USAID contributed equipment, library materials, and some training to education department personnel for this project, which is spread over two phases and covers more than 527 primary schools.

To begin, APF conducted a baseline survey to fully understand the issue facing students and teachers in Chitoor. Then a strategy was devised to engage Mandal Resource Persons (MRPs) in education development in this district. APF also provided leadership training to the relevant education department officials. APF provided Computer-aided Learning Centers to 50 schools (as stipulated in the contract) and provided training to the teachers in how to use these centers for pedagogical purposes. APF also provided library books to more than 500 schools in Chitoor.

Azim-Premji Foundation (APF) – Equipment for Computer-Aided Learning Project - Total amount \$12,409

Under this project, APF purchased some equipment to facilitate its CAL projects. Items purchased were: 60 solar powered INK laptops; 12 UPS -.75 KVA capacity with 2 hours power back up; 6040 GB hard drive with USB port (1 per laptop); 1 pair of speakers per laptop; and 12 LED projectors (1 per school)

Other Support

In addition to contracts with the above partners, BEPS also provided the following support to USAID-India:

- ***QUEST Evaluation*** – BEPS provided in-house expertise for the monitoring and evaluation of the QUEST activities in India
- ***REACH Evaluation*** – BEPS hired the services of two consultants to evaluate the progress under REACH – which is another project being implemented by USAID-Delhi in collaboration with a local NGO

- ***Madrassa Project Expansion Strategy*** – BEPS provided support to USAID-Delhi to review the Madrassa projects and develop a strategy whereby the project could be expanded to deliver improved education to Muslims and include more areas with maximum impact in poor Muslim communities.