

**SYLP
Somalia Youth
Livelihood Program**

**QUARTERLY REPORT
(January 1 to March 31, 2009)**

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ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

AOTR	Agreement Office Technical Representative
EDC	Education Development Center
ILO	International Labor Organization
SYLP	Somalia Youth Livelihood Program
USAID	United States Agency for International Development

EDC Somalia Youth Livelihood Program (SYLP) Quarterly Report
January 2009 - March, 2009
Associate Cooperative agreement No. 623-A-00-08-00053-00

I. Executive Summary

This period marks the second quarter of the implementation of the Somalia Youth Livelihood Program, now called *Shaqodoon*, a 16 month program whose goal is to add to the stability and development of Somalia by engaging 1200 Somali youth in market-driven employment opportunities. In January, EDC submitted a reprogramming and budget revision request to USAID based upon learnings from the first quarter and received approval for requested changes in early February, enabling the project to advance critical components of the project launch.

The second quarter of implementation built upon the achievements and learnings of the first three months, completing several key tasks such as hiring of core staff, establishment of the project office and the launch of the project website in Somali and English, www.shaqodoon.org. Following three days of workshops and planning for core staff with participation from the International Program Manager and a career counseling consultant, EDC then introduced and launched Shaqodoon at a ceremony held in the EDC Hargeisa offices that was attended by government officials, UN agencies, international and local NGOs, private sector business representatives and other potential partners of the EDC Shaqodoon project.

The reporting period also included the drafting of an agreement between EDC and Souktel, an SMS text messaging technology provider that is based in Ramallah in the West Bank, and an MOU between EDC and Telesom, a Somali telecommunications company which will provide the systems for the text messaging activities, the gateway for communication for the program.

Shaqodoon began laying the groundwork for effective implementation partnerships by issuing a Request for Applications and facilitating an orientation workshop for potential applicants in order to clarify particular technical guidelines of the project. The capacity limitations of potential of partners and the inability of existing mediums to disseminate information to the targeted areas were among notable challenges during this reporting period.

II. Program Achievements

In the next quarter, Shaqodoon intends to enter into sub-award agreements with selected partners approved by USAID. Staff will facilitate development workshops and capacity building for training execution with these partners in order to start work with the first cohort of youth. EDC will be able to draw on the learnings from this first round of implementation while preparing for the selection of the second and third cohort partners. Security issues did not have an impact on the overall project.

The second quarter of the program commenced with the setting up of the field offices and the official launch of the program and concluded with reviewing applications from potential sub-awardees to implement program components. Among the key activities during this reporting period were:

1. **Establishment of the Somaliland Youth Livelihood Program offices.** SYLP/Shaqodoon confirmed arrangements to share office space with the EDC SIRIP program. Offices renovations, furniture, computers and other necessary accessories were procured.
2. **Assembly of core staff.** The core program staff signed their contracts and began their employment with the project. Project Director Abdi Hashi Ahmed assumed local leadership on March 1st and was soon joined by his team: Mohamed Nur Hassan, the Opportunity Placement Director, Rahma Sagadhi, Youth Training and Development Director, Mustafa Othman, Information and Communication Technology Manager and Muna Said Warsame, Administrative Assistant. SYLP Shaqodoon has a staff-sharing agreement with SIRIP to utilize the services and expertise on 20% basis on the Finance Manager Ayreen Mohamed Adan, the Accountant Fouzia Houssein, Logistics officer Abdi Aideed and Rahma the office Receptionist.
3. **Official launch of the program in Hargeisa.** On March 18, 2009 the Shaqodoon program was officially launched in Hargeisa and was met with a lot of enthusiasm from the community. Within a very short time, the program has built support among the authorities in Somaliland, the business community, both local and international development agencies and the general population as demonstrated by the impressive number of participants during the launching ceremony. The Somaliland authorities were represented by the Minister of Family Affairs Mrs. Fatuma Sudi, Deputy Minister of Health and Labour Mr. Mahdi Osman Buuri and the Director General of the Ministry of Health & Labour Mr. Ibrahim Dirie Haid. The occasion was also graced by the heads of UN agencies, international and local NGOs, University Deans and representatives of various businesses operating in Somaliland.
4. **Invitation of applications for implementation sub-awards and partnerships.**
 - a) Shaqodoon staff utilized two methods for disseminating the Request for Applications. An advertisement was posted in the local media and direct outreach was done via email announcements to local and international NGOs, training institutes, universities and businesses to invite potential partners to apply. The process raised a lot of enthusiasm among these networks. Following an orientation session to answer any questions and to clarify some of the more technical points of the project, a total of 37 applications

were received by the closing day and another 15 were submitted soon thereafter. Among the many fields of interest put forward in the applications, media and journalism, hospitality, information technology, medical technology, vocational training, English language skills and overall professional readiness emerged with the greatest potential for success based upon the review and scoring criteria that had been established.

- b) A panel to screen and select all applications was set up which included key Shaqodoon staff (Abdi Hashi, Mohamed Nur, Rahma Sagadhi, the International consultant Rose Sang Tarus), home office EDC staff (Paul Sully, Sarah Nogueira Sanca) and two community representatives Charles Wabwire, Norwegian Refugee Council Program Manager and Ahmed Haid, a member of the Private Business Advisory Council. Neither of them was affiliated with any of the submitted applications. Through the process of a committee meeting and discussion, followed by additional staff review and consideration, the panel identified four potential Hargeisa-based partners for the first cohort which could provide a combined **442** youth with training and work experience. These four agencies include:

- i) Hope Medical Technology University, seeks to recruit, train and place a total of 50 youth, 25 as Junior Laboratory technicians and 25 in Information Technology for Accounting.
- ii) University of Hargeisa seeks to train 247 graduate youth who are currently unemployed. Training would include English language learning, workforce readiness and internships with a cross-section of industries.
- iii) Jamhuuriya Media Group seeks to train and place 65 youth on various media skills in partnership with local universities and other media entities operating in Somaliland.
- iv) Universal Engineering Company, a construction firm, seeks to train and place 80 youth in various skill areas including masonry, carpentry and electrical work through both theoretical and practical sessions.

- c) Twenty additional applications demonstrated promise and will be reviewed with the possibility of partnering with them for the second and third cohorts.

5. Two workshops were held.

- i. **Orientation of potential partners on project technical guidelines.** March 10, 2009 a one day orientation session was held for potential applicants. A total of 47 participants representing various NGOs and training institutions registered and attended the session. The project technical guidelines were distributed by email ahead of time. The meeting was used to review the RFA application process and to answer questions pertaining to the partnership process.
- ii. **Conducted technical orientation and refresher workshop for project staff.** A three day workshop was held for the SYLP/Shaqodoon staff, with technical assistance, guidance and participation of Sarah Nogueira Sanca, EDC International Program Manager, Rose Sang Tarus, a Kenyan who was hired as the International Career and Job Developer Consultant, the EDC Somalia Project Director and the Shaqodoon team. The objectives of the workshop were team building, affirming a shared staff vision for the project, and technical orientation on the implementation of the program. The takeaways of the workshop included a more detailed development and understanding of the program work plan, development of individual work plans, identification of roles to be played by individuals, the EDC Somaliland administrative policies and procedures, and EDC best practices.

6. Agreements signed with major partners during the reporting period

- i. **EDC and Souktel.** The agreement has been negotiated and nearly ready for signature. The agreement enables the SYLP shaqodoon to use the Souktel system of SMS technology that can match trained youth to jobs and entrepreneur opportunities.
- ii. **EDC and Telesom.** An agreement was signed to enable SYLP to use Telesom services as a gateway to end users for the Souktel SMS technology. The agreement will be modified to clarify the revenue sharing component in accordance with mission approval for income generations for the project.

7. Set up of the SYLP/Shaqodoon Website and workspace: www.shaqodoon.org.

The *Shaqodoon* website will play a major role in the program. The website will contain information about the services that *Shaqodoon* offers including the latest updates on opportunities, partnerships and impact. The website will contain regular information such as partner’s activities, Gallery, mini video clips and news sections. The website can be accessed by both Somali and English speakers. All partner organizations will have their own workspace online where they will share information among one another and can also link to the Souktel site. The ICT manager has received trainings on the Souktel systems and has begun to train his SYLP colleagues in preparation for the system use.

III. Lessons Learned and Challenges

The overall roll out of the program implementation is going well. Several issues stood out clearly during this implementation period:

- 1) The quality of applications (responses to February RFA) submitted by potential partners indicated that more capacity building work needed to be factored into the work plan. More than half of the proposals submitted lacked clarity in presentation, necessary details on staffing and training, and budgets needed reworking. The requirement of the work experience component was clearly a new challenge for them as was indicating a commitment to incorporate more technology such as the cell phone accessed database.
- 2) The medium used to advertise the RFAs and vacancy announcements had limitations in terms of outreach. All electronic and print media circulation targets Hargeisa only, although, applications for sub-grants did arrive from several entities in the project areas of Burao and Las Anod. Given the results of this outreach, SYLP shaqodoon team will travel to those areas and advertise any future information using the available local government offices, LNGO offices and posters. EDC will also promote and popularize the *Shaqodoon* website which can be used in future communication outreach strategies.
- 3) Based on the model that EDC presented to address the issues of at-risk youth in Somaliland, which focuses on topping up training and accessing employment opportunities within an environment of high youth unemployment, a certain type of applicant emerged through our Request for Applications: those who focused on “topping up” skills of more educated/trained youth in the areas of higher education, IT accounting, medical lab technicians, and journalism. The construction and hospitality industry applicants that are being considered are aimed at skills development for less-educated youth. The required timeframes and activities to link training to real employment opportunities appear well-suited to the populations of targeted youth and to the agencies which serve them. Part of the project activity will be to monitor these variables to determine such things as length of the training periods and type and delivery of support structures.
- 4) The establishment and engagement of a Private Sector Advisory Council added value to the project implementation by ensuring that market needs are addressed through training and employment programs for youth. For example, we learned from these partners that there are approximately 43 industries in Somaliland, but only about 13 are functioning. They say an important factor is a lack of an appropriately-trained/skilled workforce. We plan to utilize the the Advisory Council to guide training agencies and

youth toward the areas of greatest opportunity while also building relationships with the companies that may offer internships and employment to project graduates.

IV. Next Steps

While the screening of the applications received was achieved during the reporting period, EDC will continue to further engage the potential partners. Critical next steps include:

1. Communicate with all sub-award applicants in the three cohorts. After the initial screening the EDC panel categorized the applicants into three cohorts. Each cohort will have a different start times and targets to reach within a seven month period.
2. Work directly with top applicants to revise their submissions for greater program activity clarity and budget alignment within the prescribed guidelines.
3. Submit request to Mission for sub-award approval and process approved sub-awards with EDC home office.
4. Host workshop with approved sub-awardees to reconfirm their technical roles and identify synergies among the group. During the training workshop the selected partners would also be trained on the Souktel systems.
5. SYLP will conduct site visits to Burao and Las Anod, engage potential partners in reviewing the applications received and assess the proposed Livelihood Resource Centers
6. Determine partnership possibilities with ILO/LEDAT for the Youth Livelihood Resource Centre for trainees in Hargeisa.
7. Set up the SMS technology system with Telesom. Conduct the test running of the Souktel system, to be followed by the official launch of the system.
8. The identification of the second and third cohorts' partners and youth to be completed.
9. Interview and recruitment of the Specialists positions for Hargeisa and satellite offices in Burao and Las Anod.

V. Security Issues

Security issues have not had a direct impact on program implementation during this quarter.