IsDB

البنك الإسلامي للتنمية
Islamic Development Bank

INVESTING IN YOUTH
IsDB INTERVENTIONS IN YOUTH DEVELOPMENT

List of Acronyms

BDCs	Business Development Centers
CORAF	West and Central African Council for Agricultural Research and Development
ECD	Early Childhood Development
E4E	Education for Employment
E4C	Education For Competitiveness
GVCs	Global Value Chains
HPs	Harmful Practices
ICTs	Information and Communication Technologies
IHS	In Her Shoes Methodology
IsDB-BISEW	Islamic Development Bank-Bangladesh Islamic Solidarity Educational Waqf
IsDB	Islamic Development Bank
ISFD	Islamic Solidarity Fund for Development
IYF	International Youth Forum
LDMCs	Least Developed Member Countries
MENA	Middle East and North Africa
MCs	Member Countries
MDBs	Multilateral Development Banks
MFIs	Mediating Financial Institutions
MSEs	Medium to Small Size Enterprises
M4P	Making Markets Work for the Poor
OIC	Organization of Islamic Cooperation
NCoS	National Center of Specialization
NEYAT	Nurturing Enterprising Youth in Agricultural Technologies
PFIs	Participating Financial Institutions
SIGAs	Survival Income Generating Activities
SDIs	Service Delivery Indicators
SDGs	Sustainable Development Goals
S&T	Science and Technology
VCA	Value Chain Approach
VCs	Value Chains
VET	Vocational Educational Training
VOLIP	The Vocational Literacy Program
WBG	World Bank Group
UPAY	Unemployed Potentially Active Youth
YDF	Youth Development Forum
YDS	Youth Development Strategy
YES	Youth Employment Support

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Executive Summary

Since the mid 1990s, youth[1] have been recognized as a specific social category with specific needs and challenges that demand dedicated interventions based on sound policies and adequate diagnostic. Across the world, a number of countries, including the Islamic Development Bank (IsDB) memebr countries (MC) have started to develop and implement youth programs and national youth policies and strategies. The political desire to engage youth has especially mounted in the last few years. Between 2013 and 2014, for instance, the number of states with a national youth policy has increased from 99 (50% out of 198 countries)[2] to 122 (62% out of 198 countries)[3]. Currently, about 50% of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC) MCs (27 out of 57 MCs) has national youth policies; the majority of those were developed in the early 2000s[4].

BETWEEN 2013 AND 2014, THE NUMBER OF STATES WITH A NATIONAL YOUTH POLICY HAS INCREASED FROM 99 TO 122

50% ⇨ 62%

CURRENTLY, ABOUT 50% OF THE OIC MCs (27 OUT OF 57 MCS) HAS NATIONAL YOUTH POLICIES; THE MAJORITY OF THOSE WERE DEVELOPED IN THE EARLY 2000s

57 MCs ⇨ 50%

This political will has been driven in part by youth demographics. The world has never been this young: In 2014, people aged 10 to 24 amounted to 1.8 billion making up a youth constituency that is greater than any point in human history[5]. The IsDB-served regions host a significant proportion of the world's youth constituency. Since 2014, the Arab region, for example, has been hosting the youngest population in the world —the largest youth generation the region has witnessed in 50 years— and in Africa alone, there are almost 200 million people aged between 15 and 24.[6]

There has been a paradigm shift in how youth are perceived, from "problems to be managed" to a more positive image of youth as important "resourceful" members of society that are crucial players in advancing the Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) agenda. It is now well understood that youth-inclusive societies are more likely to prosper and that the exclusion of youth not only results in a missed generation for global development but also leads to numerous challenges, from stinted growth, lack of creativity to loss of social cohesion and stability that could

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1   The Youth Development Strategy of the IsDB defines "youth" as the period of transition from the childhood state of dependence to the full independence of adulthood, covering the age bracket of 15 to 35 years.
2   The State of youth policy 2014. Youth Policy Press.
3   An up-to-date list is available at Youthpolicy.org. http://www.youthpolicy.org/nationalyouthpolicies/
4   Calculations are made by the author using Youthpolicy.org data. http://www.youthpolicy.org/nationalyouthpolicies
5   The State of World Population 2014, United Nations Population Fund.
6   ibid.

lead to crisis and conflicts. Young people, as such, play a critical role in development. This role has been especially reinforced in contemporary societies, where young women and men are more aware of development challenges and are increasingly willing and able to publicly express their quest for equitable economic opportunities, good governance, and greater wellbeing.

The IsDB has been working to address youth development related issues since its establishment, specifically in the areas relating to young people's education, skills development, employment and engagement" pppparticipation.

During the past decade, IsDB has strengthened its work towards youth development, focusing on enabling youth to unlock their potential as partners and leaders in sustainable development. This new stage is crystallized in the Bank's 10-Year Strategic Framework (10-YS), the President's Five-Year Program (P5P) and the development of the Youth Development Strategy (2020-2025). The Youth Development Strategy (YDS) seeks to provide a coherent, coordinated, and holistic framework for the Bank's future youth development activities to increase impact of its interventions and to ensure that they are best placed to achieve the desired outcomes.

Furthermore, the Bank is committed to developing knowledge products and undertaking analytical work that can inform and examine issues and progress in the area of youth development. As such, this publication is intended for more than documenting the strides made by IsDB interventions. Rather, it aims

to (i) contribute to the global debate on youth by raising awareness on youth issues, and documenting good practices and successful approaches.

The publication reviews a number of youth-oriented initiatives implemented by the IsDB in MCs and through Communities Outreach in Non-Member Countries. The report is organized into three sections corresponding to the strategic pillars of the YDS. In the first section, the review of the select cases on the Bank's efforts towards improving young people's educational outcomes. The second section examines case studies in the area of economic empowerment that aim to increase youth employment and economic opportunities. The final section presents the Banks's interventions for enhanced youth engagement.

The analytical review of the cases follows a standardized structure across sections. The review first introduces the scope of the selected cases (objectives, target segments, activities, etc.); it then identifies their value-added and significance.

The select cases cover a range of relevant and salient development challenges to young people. Addressing these challenges and striving, more largely, to empower youth, the cases are fully aligned with the commitments of the Bank and its MCs to the 2030 Agenda "leave no one behind" and the Sustainable Development Goals. They also reinforce the IsDB's growing role as a center of excellence.

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Introduction

IsDB's work in the area of education is underpinned by a comprehensive approach, which views education not merely through a technical lens but defines it as the foundation of human development. In line with this comprehensive definition, the IsDB has focused on two streams of work to improve educational outcomes: helping MCs to tackle long-breathed challenges in education and supporting MCs to use education to and seize opportunities in a rapidly changing global economic and social environment.

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The requisite on national education systems to keep pace with the changing social and economic realities is becoming more pressing in the current 'Age of Agility' most notably, for effective school-to-work transition and labor market success in the new Millennium. Not only should domain knowledge be oriented to actual market needs, but it must also be complemented by delivery of employability skills and attributes that enables agility and lifelong learning. A nation's talent competitiveness will increasingly depend on self-motivation, continuous learning, waves of skills upgrades and interaction with technology. There is also an urgent need across MCs to invest in and expand Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) as a new but solid path for boosting youth employment and equipping students with in-demand and work-oriented skills. Furthermore, national education systems are required to enhance inclusive education, by targeting the specific needs of young women and vulnerable youth, and improve second-chance learning opportunities so that all learners are given the opportunity to become agents of their own development and that of their families and communities.

To illustrate how the IsDB's work has contributed to sustainable improvements in national education systems and models , four initiatives were reviewed:

PROJECTS

1. Islamic Development Bank-Bangladesh Islamic Solidarity Educational Waqf (IsDB-BISEW)
2. IsDB Scholarship Program and IsDB/ISFD Scholarship Scheme for Vocational Training and Undergraduate Studies
3. Education for Competitiveness (E4C) Initiative
4. The Vocational Literacy Program-Senegal (VOLIP-Senegal)

Together these cases build a portfolio of good practices through which education can be used to produce a talent pool with transferable and globally competitive skills.

SECTION 01
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1.1 ISLAMIC DEVELOPMENT BANK-BANGLADESH ISLAMIC SOLIDARITY EDUCATIONAL WAQF (IsDB-BISEW)

SUMMARY OF THE REVIEWED CASE	
Title	Islamic Development Bank-Bangladesh Islamic Solidarity Educational Waqf (IsDB-BISEW)
Country	Bangladesh
Projects	**Project 1**: IT Scholarship Project **Project 2**: Vocational Training Project **Project 3**: Madrasah Project
IsDB Funds Dispersed (as of 2019) for all three projects	Total: US $19,691,776
Objective	Transforming disadvantaged youth into a productive workforce by strengthening their technical capability and employability skills.
Duration	• IT Scholarship Project: 2002 – on going • Vocational Training Project: 2002 – on going • Madrasah Project: 2006 – on going

Target Group(s)	1. IT Scholarship Project:
	  • IT graduates: 10,619
	  • IT trainees currently under the project: 1,053
	2. Vocational Training Project:
	  • Vocational graduates:1,285
	  • Vocational trainees currently under the9project: 89
	3. Madrasah Project: 6 Madrasahs and 24,000 students

Jointly established by IsDB and the Government of Bangladesh (1997), the Islamic Development Bank-Bangladesh Islamic Solidarity Educational Waqf **(IsDB-BISEW/ the Waqf)** provided financial support to Muslim students and Islamic educational institutions to contribute to addressing key development challenges related to education, human resource development, and institutional strengthening. Within this broad goal, IsDB-BISEW's **core objective** has been to empower disadvantaged young people by equipping them with competitive technical proficiencies and employability skills so they can join the workforce.

To realize its core objective and broader development goals, the **IsDB-BISEW** carried out

three **Projects**. Each Project targeted a specific youth segment facing distinct educational challenges and strived to address these challenges to enable their employment, as specified below:

IT Scholarship Project targeted the educated but unemployed youth, equipping them with digital skills and facilitating their gainful employment;

Madrasah Project targeted students, who are in traditional education systems, but lack skills demanded by the market, aiming to up-skill these youth with competitive and market-relevant skills;

Vocational Training Project targeted underprivileged young people, who could not continue their education, re-integrating dropouts into the education system and ensuring they complete their education.

The IsDB have disbursed $19,691,776 in total, for all three Projects, as of 2019 However, the Waqf has set up an innovative financial mechanism to generate its own revenue, rather than relying on grants or funding by external agencies. The Waqf has done so by renting out commercial spaces to host computer markets, shopping centres, as well as offices of renowned national and international organizations)[7]. As such, ensured financial sustainability of its interventions.

1.1.1 OVERVIEW OF THE IsDB-BISEW PROJECTS

Male graduate: "I URGE ALL OF YOU WHO ARE FRUSTRATED WITH LIFE AND UNEMPLOYMENT TO ENROL IN THIS PROGRAMME. IT WILL COMPLETELY CHANGE YOUR LIFE!"

1.1.1.1 PROJECT 1 IT SCHOLARSHIP PROJECT

The **main objective** of IT Scholarship Project was to enhance the employment prospects of financially challenged meritorious Muslim youth coming from different non-IT backgrounds (Science, Humanities, and Business and Management tracks, etc.). In realizing this objective, the Project offers training in the field of Information and Communication Technologies (ICTs) and delivered job placement services for graduates.

Both ICTs training and job placement services focus on improving education to employment transition results. To that end, the ICTs training utilized 'Skill Survey Report". The Report surveys randomly selected ICT organizations to identify current market demands and integrate these in the training content to ensure that students were endowed with the needed skills. Moreover, the training provided international recognition through Vendor Certification, as such, expanding employment trajectory of the graduates.

The job placement services, on the other hand, brought complementary solutions to technical

training to optimize employment outcomes of graduates by:

– Providing students with soft skills training (CV writing and interview skills) and career planning advice;

– Keeping the status of graduates accessible for trainees through a Placement Cell and a dedicated website, 'Career Hub',[8] exclusively for the CVs of graduates; and

– Facilitating job placement both nationally and internationally.

By addressing both training and employment needs of students, the Project takes a holistic approach, supporting students from training to employment transition.

1.1.1.2 ACHIEVEMENTS AND KEY RESULTS

To date, the IT Training Project has achieved the following:

8000 students (M/F), have completed training in Computer Literacy and Professional Courses .

Job placement of 92% of the students(5,549 students).

Over 1500 organizations at home and abroad employed graduates of the Project.

Job placements took place nationally and internationally, including in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, United States of America, UAE, Qatar, Malaysia, and across a wide range of sectors and firms, including sector giants such as Amazon and EXIM Bank Limited.

1.1.2.1 PROJECT 2 VOCATIONAL TRAINING PROJECT

Male Student: "AFTER THE COURSE, ... I WILL NOT BE DEPENDENT ON ANYONE ELSE!"

The Vocational Training Project targeted a particularly neglected and vulnerable section

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7   For an introduction of the Bhaban complex, see https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8Ha9ftQaLCE
8   http://careerhub.idb-bisew.info

of the student population of the country. These students completed their Secondary School Certificate (SSC) /Dakhil (vocational) exam but failed to progress to the Higher Secondary Certificate (HSC) levels due to poor results as well as poverty and thus are not attached to formal education. The **main objective** of the Project was to provide flexible and demand-driven vocational training to those HSC/Alim non-completers to allow them to continue their education and gain employment.

1.1.2.2 ACHIEVEMENTS AND KEY RESULTS

By providing training to dropouts, the Project opens up a second window of opportunity to the disadvantaged youth to acquire employment and accomplish economic, social, and emotional well-being. More specifically, the Project has achieved the following:

16 rounds of training completed;

100% job placement realized up to 2017. Succeeding rounds are in the process of job placement; and

164 organizations are partners for the job placements post-training both at home and abroad (such as Qatar, Austria, and Singapore, etc.).

1.1.3.1 PROJECT 3 MADRASAH PROJECT

Graduate, Female: "I HAVE ACQUIRED TECHNICAL SKILLS FROM THE VOCATIONAL TRAINING. I HAVE BEEN PAYING MY EDUCATIONAL EXPANSES FROM THE EARNING; I HAVE BEEN SENDING SOME AMOUNT TO MY FAMILY, AND SAVE SOME AMOUNT FOR MY FUTURE".

General, Madrasah, and Vocational Institutions constitute three main streams of education in Bangladesh. Although Madrasahs have played a significant historical role in the country for education and scholarship, currently Madrasah curriculums fall short in delivering the human resource development compatible with the

current skills and demands of the market. In fact, while only a minor group of graduates are absorbed in social religious services, the majority are excluded from mainstream economic activities and employment.

The **main objective** of the Madrasah Project was, therefore, to equip Madrasah students with employability skills without having them sacrifice their choice of traditional and religious education. To realize this objective, the Project provided vocational education and training to Madrasah students in the trades of their choice.

1.1.3.2 ACHIEVEMENTS AND KEY RESULTS

Since its inception, the Project has achieved the following:

6 Madrasahs equipped in different areas of the country with modern infrastructure, facilities, and raw materials and fully covered salaries of staff and trainers;

Dakhil (Vocational) courses were introduced into Madrasahs for the first time in Bangladesh;

A 24.000 beneficiaries were reached;

Madrasahs (and students) social standing improved by enabling Madrasahs to be positioned among the top 20s in Bangladeshis Technical Education Board Exam, with an average pass rate in the Board final exam at 97%.

Based on these successful results of Dakhil (Vocational) training in Madrasahs' in 2016, IsDB-BISEW expanded its intervention further and started a project that would provide meritorious Dakhil (Vocational) graduates with financial assistance for a 4-year Diploma Program under the Government Polytechnic Institute. The project is still in progress —the first cohort will graduate in 2020—, hence the results are yet to be seen. However, it constitutes a

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logical step to elevate the IsDB-BISEW's efforts in vocational educational training to the next level, given the record of excellent results and against the backdrop of vocational educational training (VET) increasing profile globally.

1.1.2 VALUE ADDITION

SOLVING THE SKILLS MISMATCH

IsDB-BISEW could certainly inspire solutions to tackle the widening skills gap and shortage of skills threatening businesses and economies across MCs. With its three Projects, the Waqf addressed the skills gap by offering solutions custom-tailored to specific educational and skill building needs of diverse youth segments: IT Project upgraded the skills of educated youth by introducing them to IT technologies and endowing them with digital competencies; The Vocational Training Project equipped dropout youngsters with work-oriented and functional vocational skills; and The Madrasah Project reskilled students enrolled in traditional streams of education with competitive and market relevant competencies. Importantly, across all Projects the content of trainings has been developed in observance of the latest demands and trends in national as well as international markets to ensure greater transition to employment results and gainful employment prospects post-graduation.

GLOBAL TRENDS: DIGITALIZATION, INCLUSIVE EDUCATION, AND VET

Each Project also responded to a particular emerging global trend or pressure by focusing on particular youth segments and related challenges namely: increasing digitalization of the economy, enhancing inclusive education and increasing the growing role of VET in youth employment. Together these three projects built a multi-dimensional approach to youth education and employment that can inspire solutions for sustainable employment across IsDB MCs, as detailed in BOX.1.

BOX.1. IsDB-BISEW & SUSTAINABLE EMPLOYMENT

IsDB-BISEW provided a comprehensive package of actionable insights and interventions that can assist national and regional economies to move towards sustainable youth employment by responding to primary global trends;

- Up-skilling educated but unemployed youth through the IT Scholarship
- Reskilling students in traditional education with competitive skills through Madrasah Project;
- Skilling students unattached to formal education with work-oriented and functional competencies through Vocational Training Project.

GLOBAL DEVELOPMENT TRENDS

Digitalization

Inclusive Education

Work-oriented VET

IT Training Project and Digitalization
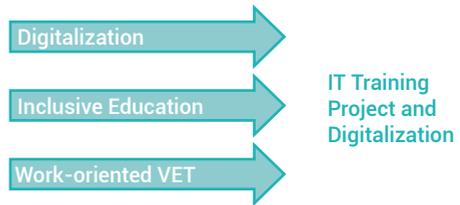
IT Training Project and Digitalization

It is estimated that by 2024 the number of roles requiring digital skills will grow by 12%.[9] On the part of the young workers, especially for youth entering the labour market for the first time, this rapid transformation requires attainment of new skills.[10] On the part of the national economies, it requires the establishment of an environment that would enable young people to acquire and master digital skills.[11] The IT Project present practical and effective solutions on how to respond to the increasing global pressures on national economies to keep up with digitalization of life and markets. More specifically, it present

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9 Accenture (2017). New skills Now: Inclusion in the Digital Economy. New York, NY: Accenture.www.accenture.com/_acnmedia/PDF-63/Accenture-New-Skills-Now-Inclusion-in-the- digital.pdf.

10 World Bank (2018) "Digital Jobs for youth: Young Women in the Digital Economy"

11 Blix. Martin (2015) "The economy and digitalization – opportunities and challenges" http://www.martenblix.com/uploads/6/2/7/2/62723607/blix_digitalization_report_20160204.pdf

manageable interventions to alter the existing education systems for equipping students with digital skills and creating an enabling environment that connects the young population to the digital economy.

The Madrasah Project and Inclusive Education

The Madrasah Project mainstream competitive education/training into culturally-shaped educational institutions to address the skill needs of students, who lack those skills. By furnishing students with competitive skills the Project addresse both "the learning gap" and "skills gap", in turn strengthening their livelihood trajectory. This is particularly relevant for IsDB MCs, where traditional educational systems streams continue to play a fundamental role in national education systems and continues to be a preferred choice for many learners and their families. For IsDB MCs, the Project, therefore, sets a prime example on establishing hybrid models that would safeguard traditional institutions while, however, improving their educational performance and relevance to value chains and labour markets.

At a broader level, the Madrasah Project contributes to inclusive education and enhances access to quality education by custom-tailoring solutions to students with culturally shaped educational preferences. Enhancing inclusive education by taking culture into account is particularly pivotal to ensure gender inclusiveness in education in various MCs, where traditional educational streams may constitute the only option for young female learners.

Vocational Educational Training

While most youth continue to consider the track of university education as the optimal path for securing transition to employment and reducing VET to a less desired alternative[12], in the last decade or so, VET has been proven, at a global scale, to be an effective way to fight youth unemployment and address the talent shortage. The IsDB-BISEW Vocational Training Project, similarly, demonstrates, with tangible results, the pivotal economic function that VET can assume in a global economy, which is increasingly stunned by a shortage of jobs as well as skills. As the profile of work-relevant vocational education training increases, governments across the world are seeking ways to expand VET's functions in economic development[13]; Therefore, the global investment on VET will most likely increase. In this context, the Project can provide a road map and concrete solutions for IsDB MCs to take part in this global momentum at the national level and develop strategies to invest in VET better preparing educational system and the young workforce for future global competition.

1.1.3 CONCLUSION AND THE WAY FORWARD

Across all three Projects, the IsDB-BISEW has achieved sound results, overall demonstrating its conceptual and operational ability to address skill needs of the disadvantaged youth to facilitate their integration in the job market. It has also managed to come up with alterations and solutions that can help MCs to reflect on and face emerging global trends in their national education systems. In particular, the Waqf can benefit other MCs by sharing its experience and know-how on:

> Formulating solutions to harness economic benefits of VET for economic growth and empowerment of young women and men.

> Effectively responding to and engaging digitalization of economies and markets to prepare work forces for future global trends and competition.

> Closing the skills gap to strengthen the national economy, by creating synergies and links between the private sector and the youth.

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12 Mourshed, M., Farrell, D., & Barton, D. (2013). Education to employment: Designing a system that works. McKinsey Center for Government.

13 OECD (2010) "Learning for Jobs: Synthesis Report of the OECD Reviews of Vocational Education and Training"

1.2 IsDB SCHOLARSHIP PROGRAMS AND IsDB/ISFD PROGRAM FOR VOCATIONAL TRAINING AND UNDERGRADUATE STUDIES

The current state of the MCs in educational performance and human development, particularly in science and technology, places a pressing call for more assertive efforts and interventions in the area of education. As a response to this call, IsDB has been providing two main schemes of scholarships, which broadly aim to: i) combat poverty and youth unemployment; ii) build a productive workforce that can respond to global economic pressures and technological/ scientific trends; and   iii) empower youth as leaders who would dedicate themselves to the cause and well being of their communities:

i.   **Scholarship Scheme 1: IsDB Scholarship Program:** Since the 1980s, IsDB has been awarding scholarships to youth in MCs and to communities in non-member countries and young professionals across undergraduate, Masters, PhD and Post-Doctoral levels.

ii.   **IsDB/ ISFD Program for Vocational Training and Undergraduate Studies**. In 2018, in partnership with the Islamic Solidarity Fund for Development (ISFD), the IsDB established a new scheme to focus on the least developed member countries (LDMCs) through communities outreach in non-member countries and enhance scholarship options by offering vocational degree scholarship awards.

1.2.1 OVERVIEW OF THE PROGRAMS

1.2.1.1 IsDB SCHOLARSHIP PROGRAMME

The **main objective** of the IsDB Scholarship Program has been to assist talented male and female students, from MCs and through communities in non-member countries, to pursue studies and research in top ranked universities worldwide. The aim of this Program was to strive to establish a strong foundation in fundamental sciences and technologies to help MCs reduce the gap of their scientific workforce as well as to remain abreast with the current technological changes happening at the same time. In 2018 the Program evolved to become more responsive to the discourse of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), and therefore its scope broadened to include a focus on "Sustainability Science" supporting the achievement of the SDGs in their respective communities and countries.

The Program offers scholarships across three levels of higher education: Undergraduate, Masters, and PhD and Post-Doctoral research, where:

–   The Undergraduate Scholarship aims to enable young students to pursue high quality tertiary education;

–   The Master Scholarship Program aims to increase the number of intermediate level technological manpower in the beneficiary countries, which is necessary for an effective technology development, transfer and maintenance; and

–   The PhD and Post-doctoral research Program aims to meet the national needs for science and technology by developing technically qualified human resources and enhancing the scientific, technological and research capability of scholars and institutions.

1.2.1.2 ACHIEVEMENTS AND KEY RESULTS

The Program provides scholarships to 380 students/scholars annually in the fields of science and technology. Since its inception in the 1980s, it has achieved the following results:

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15,611 students, 30% of them female, have received scholarship opportunities. Over 9,000 students/ scholars have graduated in subjects such as Health, Agriculture, Infrastructure, Energy, ICT for Development, Environment and Natural Resources;

13,253 development professionals and researchers were trained;

90% of the graduates gained employment, a majority of which in strategic positions.

Placement of Graduates: Select Examples

> Produced first Muslim doctors in Nepal and Malawi.

> One graduate from Malawi was appointed as Ambassador of Malawi in Kuwait to cover the Gulf region.

> One graduate from Guinea was appointed as Senior Adviser to the President of Guinea and later Secretary General of Ministry of Telecommunication.

> One Scholar from Egypt is the Special Advisor in Science and Technology to all Governments in the Gulf region.

> One Ph.D. Scholar from Libya, undertaking PhD research at the University of Sydney received the prestigious international Robert Australian Research Award in Pneumococcal Vaccinology.

> One PhD scholar from Pakistan studying in the UK developed a new system to prepare Nano-sized Hydroxyapatite for bone replacement applications. The work is entirely novel and patented in the UK through UCL business department.

1.2.1.3 VALUE ADDITION

A TRUE COMMITMENT TO YOUTH

By having such a global outreach, the IsDB shows its true commitment to youth and its inspiration to address barriers in the way of education for all learners. By including communities in non-member countries, the Program, at a broader level, addresses developmental needs of neglected Muslim communities, facing ethnic and religious challenges and conflicts.

A DEVELOPMENT PROJECT

The Program has managed to move the idea of scholarship beyond the traditional standard of being a mere financial reward and remodelled it as a development tool that can form dynamic partnerships, develop engaged young leaders, and contribute to the realization of core development goals. The Program, therefore, was designed to improve the socio-economic conditions in general and make significant contributions to the advancement of communities and countries in the most challenging areas. The Program, more specifically, assists in the realization of the social inclusion and capacity development objectives of the IsDB 10-Year Strategic Plan that are fully aligned with the SDGs and the international development agenda.

PARTNERSHIPS ACROSS THE WORLD

One of the greatest challenges facing IsDB member countries is the lack of educational opportunities available to young men and women, and the absence of mentorship and training, necessary for them to become leaders. To face this challenge, the Program developed strategic partnerships with reputable universities worldwide as well as governments in MCs to place students and scholars at top universities on a cost-sharing basis. Such partnerships allow not only savings, but they also provide more advanced opportunities for study and research, thus enhancing the Program's effectiveness.

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Some of the Program partners include prestigious universities namely Cambridge, Queen Mary, Imperial College of London in the United Kingdom, Copenhagen University in Denmark, and McGill University in Canada as well as higher education institutions such as the Ministry of Education in Malaysia, the Council of Higher Education in Turkey, the Ministries of Higher Education and Scientific Research in Tunisia, Morocco and Jordan.

In addition to establishing global partnerships, the Program also set-up an Alumni Association for the graduates. By making them a part of a larger community of Alumni around the world, the Program maintains the graduates' capacity to exchange knowledge, capitalize on their experience and contribute to the development of local communities and countries with innovative solutions.

1.2.2.1 SCHOLARSHIP SCHEME 2: IsDB /ISFD PROGRAMME FOR VOCATIONAL TRAINING AND UNDERGRADUATE STUDIES BASIC ELEMENTS

The Scholarship Scheme, IsDB/ISFD Scholarship Program for Vocational Training and Undergraduate Studies, is a recent scholarship programme introduced by the IsDB in strategic partnership with the Islamic Solidarity Fund for Development (ISFD) in 2018.

The Program's specific objective has been to provide opportunities to financially impoverished but academically talented young men and women from 21 LDMCs classified as such by the U.N. to provide them with opportunities for a Bachelor Degree or Technical Diploma in scientific, social and technical fields.

The 21 LDMCs targeted by the scheme include: Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Benin, Burkina Faso, Chad, Comoros, Djibouti, Gambia, Guinea, Guinea-Bissau, Mali, Mauritania, Mozambique, Niger, Senegal, Sierra Leone, Somali, Sudan,

Togo, Uganda, Yemen. The Scheme has two components:

− Supporting the existing IsDB Scholarship Program at the undergraduate level in LDMCs to enable the most disadvantaged students to pursue tertiary education.

− Enhancing Vocational/Polytechnic education in LDMCs to enable the neediest students in the LDMCs and MCs affected by emergency situations to pursue vocational education in acutely needed vocations, hence making youth employable and/or enabling them to start their own businesses.

1.2.2.2 ACHIEVEMENTS AND KEY RESULTS

The Program anticipates enrolling 25 students for Bachelor's and 50 students for technical studies each year from 2018 onwards, in specializations needed by their countries. Furthermore, 750 young men and women will benefit from the Programme by 2028. Starting from 2018, the implementation period of the Scheme is 16 years for the undergraduate scheme and 13 years for the Vocational Training/Polytechnic Diploma scheme. Upon graduation, students will be part of the IsDB Alumni Chapters and will have access to opportunities to participate in community-based projects, support from fellow alumni and local participating leaders.

1.2.2.3 ADDED VALUE OF THE PROGRAMME

A TARGETED RESPONSE TO THE MOST IMPOVERISHED

Extreme poverty, pervasive unemployment, political instability, and structural weaknesses have left some MCs and communities in a fragile situation. By targeting students and scholars of all 21 LDMCs, the Scheme seeks to cover the educational needs of the most impoverished student population to provide them with greater opportunities for employment and graduation from poverty.

VOCATIONAL TRAINING SCHOLARSHIPS

IsDB/ISFD Scholarship Program has been limited to undergraduate and postgraduate levels. The new scheme capitalizes vocational trainings and technical diploma to turn unemployed young men and women "from job seekers to job providers". By introducing the option of vocational training, the Scheme can help countries to establish a skilled work force, in turn alleviating poverty and averting the rate of unemployment in targeted countries/ communities. This new initiative is also in line with a global trend that rapidly increases investments to Vocational Training, viewing it as a viable path for job creation.

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1.3 EDUCATION FOR COMPETITIVENESS (E4C) PHASE-I

1.3.1 OVERVIEW OF THE E4C INITIATIVE

Education for Competitiveness (E4C) is a joint initiative of the World Bank Group (WBG) and the Islamic Development Bank. The Initiative started in the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) region; however, it intended to eventually cover all common MCs of the two institutions across different regions to improve outcomes for all.

In the MENA region, E4C interventions were designed to be implemented through two phases, Phase-I (2016-2018) and Phase–II (2018-2020). This case reviews the approach and core interventions of E4C's Phase-I. The total targeted financing for both Phases was set for the amount of US$500 million; Phase-I having set for the amount of US$300 million.

1.3.1.1 E4C INITIATIVE

The specific **objective** of the E4C initiative was to support countries in improving their education and training systems so that they contribute to higher productivity and economic growth as well as social cohesion and shared prosperity.

To realize this objective, the E4C identified five Intervention Areas. Each of these Intervention-Areas corresponded to a particular educational stage, from early childhood development (ECD) to the tertiary levels and targets a regional fundamental educational challenge related to that stage. The E4C, therefore, adopts a holistic approach to education, where Intervention-Areas provided an entry point to different levels of education, therefore, allowing the initiative to address specific needs of learners across all educational stages. The five core intervention areas are grouped as follows:

EDUCATION FOR COMPETIVENESS (E4C) INITIATIVE ESPECIALLY BUILDS ON "EDUCATION FOR EMPLOYMENT (E4E)" INITIATIVE, ALSO A JOINT PROJECT BETWEEN THE WBG AND ISDB (2011). E4E AIMED TO DEVELOP A PRIVATE SECTOR AGENDA TO ADDRESS THE MISMATCH BETWEEN NEEDS OF THE MARKETS AND EDUCATIONAL OUTPUTS IN THE ARAB WORLD.

INITIATIVE AREAS	ENTRY POINTS	REGIONAL CHALLENGE
Area-1: Expanding Early Childhood Development (ECD)	ECD	Lower levels of pre-primary enrolment and public provision compared to other regions with similar economies.
Area-2: Strengthening Early Grade Literacy and Numeracy	Early Grade	Low level of literacy and numeracy in the early grades with children not meeting the minimum benchmarks. Inadequate instructional resources, ill adopted teaching methods and limited parental support in early learning.
Area-3: Promoting Information for Accountability	All stages (ECD to Tertiary)	Lack of relevant information on quality of educational services in schools.
Area-4: Enhancing Career Guidance and Opportunities	Secondary and Tertiary	School-to-work transition is the weakest among all regions.
Area-5: Boosting 21st Century Skills and Values	All stages (ECD to Tertiary)	Education systems fall behind in deliverary of 21st century skills

In identifying its objective and interventions, the E4C capitalized on the experience in terms of policy dialogue, operations, and regional initiatives undertaken by both the WBG and the IsDB, both in the MENA region and beyond, such as " the Arab Regional Agenda for Improving Education Quality", the "University Governance Network" and "the MENA Region Transition Fund".

Education for Competeliveness (E4C) initiative especially builds on "Education for Employment (E4E)" initiative, also a joint project between the WBG and IsDB (2011). E4E aimed to develop a private sector agenda to address the mismatch between needs of the markets and educational outputs in the Arab World. E4C strived to advance efforts for quality education by improved interventions in scope, coverage, and approach. E4C outcomes brought in by the E4E included:

> While E4E focused merely on tertiary education, E4C adopted a holistic approach

to education by addressing all educational stages, from early childhood to university.

> E4E mainly focused on education's role on short-term employment generation, whereas the E4C lined up with the new global way of looking at the work force development and emphasized the wider range of "employability" skills, necessary to enable the workforce to adapt to the ever-changing world and staying relevant in the market.

> Moving beyond partnerships, the E4C established a regional unifying mechanism in MENA and developed regional targets to shape and steer educational policy in the region.

> While E4E issued an extensive research report to form the basis of its agenda, the EC4 initiative integrated a consultative process into the development of its design

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to ensure ownership by key stakeholders and to make sure that interventions responded to the realities on the ground as experienced by various stakeholders. The

E4C developed its core interventions based on these consultations; all E4C interventions were, therefore, demand-driven and based on stakeholder interests for action.

BOX.1. COUNTRY AND STAKEHOLDER CONSULTATIONS

As part of its design, the E4C carried out wide consultations to understand what citizens, policy makers, teachers and students thought the key challenges were in education in the MENA region. Consultations with these stakeholders were conducted both through online questionnaires and face-to-face meetings. Online consultations began in mid 2015 through the MENA Facebook page of the World Bank and generated 400 comments; the questionnaire reached over 200 thousand people. Face-to-face meetings, on the other hand, were conducted in August-October 2015 in eight countries (Egypt, Jordan, Lebanon, Libya, Kuwait, Morocco, Palestinian territories, and Tunisia) and included over 100 participants, consisted mostly of two-hour sessions with 15-20 participants from government, academia, private sector, civil society and youth. The consultations focused on three areas: main challenges identified by the consultants, priority actions viewed to be necessary, and interventions participants would like to see the E4C initiative supporting.

1.3.1.2 INTERVENTIONS

Across all areas, in identifying interventions, the initiative identified the following criteria: (i) being implementable in a span of 2-3 years and could yield results quickly, (ii) being eligible for results based financing, and (iii) having a potential for replication and scalability.

Moreover, the initiative built on successful ICT experiences to broaden accessibility of education and foster creative teaching and learning processes and adopted a gender sensitive lens, in both design and implementation, providing both males and females with equal opportunities.

INTERVENTION AREA-1: **Expanding Early Childhood Development (ECD)**

ECD yields benefits throughout children's lives up to adulthood. These benefits range from higher school enrollment rates to less repetition

and fewer dropouts. ECD is also associated with more productive economic trajectories in adulthood, and stronger economic growth for countries. Yet, the MENA region lags significantly behind in ECD when compared to other regions of similar economies. This limits the potential of a generation of children while making the region's economy less productive and competitive in the long-run.

To achieve the objective **catalyzing countries' efforts to expand quality early childhood development in the region,** representatives from 14 MENA countries and territories met at a high-level workshop on early childhood education (ECE) in Kuwait. They agreed on principles for a roadmap for the development of ECE including a timeline for setting national targets, the importance of ensuring equitable access, the need for quality to be at the heart of the agenda, and regional cooperation. An agreement was reached on 5 areas of regional

cooperation: (1) regional minimum standards for ECE, (2) regional communication and advocacy materials, (3) a regional tool for measuring child development outcomes, (4) a costing tool, and (5) a set of mechanisms for the periodic and systematic exchange of regional success stories in ECE.

INTERVENTION AREA-2: **Strengthening Early Grade Literacy and Numeracy**

All MENA countries continue to face major challenges in providing quality education needed to develop strong foundational literacy and numeracy skills for all children, as evidenced by results in international and national student assessments.

To achieve the objective of **improving the acquisition of basic literacy and numeracy in early primary years in MENA countries,** a regional agenda for early grade literacy and numeracy was developed. This included the formation of a Regional Advisory Board, which advised a group of policy makers and MOE technical specialists from MENA countries on developing country action plans. The advisors have regularly met via video conferencing, and have agreed on their terms of reference. On assessing students' early grade literacy and numeracy outcomes and developing innovative resources to strengthen foundational skills, a framework paper was drafted to provide a comprehensive summary of existing early grade assessment mechanisms, early years learning programs, and evidence from MENA and other regions. The Early Grade Reading Assessment (EGRA) and Early Grade Math Assessment (EGMA), were implemented in several countries in the region. Follow-up actions and updated goals were discussed by the Advisory Board for a few countries, including Egypt, Iraq, Jordan, and Morocco. These countries have already implemented EGRA and are now implementing early grade reading improvement interventions.

INTERVENTION AREA-3: **Promoting Information for Accountability**

Relevant information about the quality of education services has largely been unavailable to stakeholders—families, civil society, and even policy makers—in the MENA region. Yet, without consistent and accurate information on how service providers are performing, and so it has been difficult for stakeholders to diagnose issues and, ultimately, bring about school improvement.

To achieve the objective of **strengthening accountability by all stakeholders for school improvement by producing and disseminating a set of robust indicators on quality of service delivery at the school level,** a partners meeting took place, which included IsDBG, WBG, OCED, and UNICEF and awareness of issues around the school disciplinary climate in MENA was raised. At this workshop in Marseilles, prepared jointly by IsDB and WBG, included 12 participants from 5 countries. In advance of the workshop, papers were prepared for discussion on School Safety and Classroom Disciplinary Climates in MENA, Socio-emotional Skills Development in MENA and its Influence on Social Development, and Violent Extremism." and Development.

INTERVENTION AREA-4: **Enhancing Career Guidance and Opportunities**

The transition from school to work in MENA is one of the slowest and least successful of all regions in the world. There are many reasons that account for this, but one significant binding constraint is a lack of timely and correct information enabling prospective and current labor market participants to make informed choices.

To achieve the objective of **assisting students to make better-informed educational, training, and occupational choices, as well as find internships and first jobs in the MENA region,**

a prototype of an online platform for general career education, personalized career guidance and counseling, and an internship matching service was developed. It aimed at secondary school students and higher education students across the MENA region.

An internship program was developed in which students or recent graduates can participate in internships or mentorship opportunities with companies (starting with Jordan, Morocco, and the UAE).

INTERVENTION AREA-5: **Boosting 21st Century Skills and Values**

Education systems in MENA currently do little to promote 21st century skills and values, which are critical for success in today's interconnected world. Twenty-first century skills refer to a set of knowledge, skills, attitudes, values and ethics that are believed to be critically important to success in today's world.

To achieve the objective of **supporting the delivery of educational services that produce graduates with the 21st century skills needed to achieve economic prosperity, human well-being, and social cohesion in the MENA region,** during the workshop in Marseilles, the terms of an evidence base and agenda for the acquisition of 21st century skills were set. Other important issues discussed included establishing targets and agreeing on a methodology and timeline for the development of a classroom measurement tool for the acquisition of social and emotional skills

A key result of these interventions has been developing a regional agenda as well as mobilizing partners and resources. This includes strengthening of existing ones and formation of new partnerships with international, regional, and local stakeholders, which will benefit from advocacy, financing, and knowledge sharing.

1.3.2 VALUE ADDITION

A HOLISTIC APPROACH TO WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT

Early interventions are especially important to close the soft-skills gap as they build individuals equipped with, from early on, an array of personal and intellectual attributes and socio-adaption skills, such as creativity, critical thinking, and leadership. More broadly, these skills enable students to become lifelong learners with "on-going, voluntary, and self-motivated" pursuit of knowledge and wider social awareness and engagement. As the economy and value chains become more prone to tech disruption and sudden changes, life-long learning will become one of the core factors determining whether a workforce can stay relevant in and adapt to the changes in global markets by acquiring new skills.

Additionally, the E4C recognizes that to strengthen school-to-work transition and prepare students for the labour market, soft and technical skills need to be complemented by enabling students to make informed choices for career and training options and job search. Information on career paths, placements, and market opportunities are important to prevent crowding of certain jobs that are already saturated, shorten the length of time for school to work transition and facilitate gainful and sustainable youth employment.

A REGIONAL MECHANISM

Regional collaboration is a pragmatic way to address common regional problems. The increasing interconnectedness and globalization of economies and societies, however, require not only collaboration but also establishment of regional mechanisms; the education sector is no exception to this. The E4C initiative takes steps

to address this precise need by helping countries to shape up a regional agenda in education as well as regional education targets. More specifically, as a regional initiative, E4C aims to make a difference with regard to three goals:

> Setting up a regional agenda in education, which will identify common goals and targets for the sector, thus enabling policy focus, extra resource mobilization and added incentives for regional integration via education.

> Facilitating more effective management of regional-level knowledge production and dissemination as well increased mobility of students, teachers, administrators and education researchers, and developing more solid partnerships among national institutions.

> Building stronger regional institutions able to produce regional public goods in education and better manage the cross-border implications for competitiveness.

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1.4 THE VOCATIONAL LITERACY PROGRAM-SENEGAL (VOLIP-SENEGAL)

SUMMARY OF THE REVIEWED CASE	
Title	VOLIP (The Vocational Literacy Program)- Senegal
Location	Pilot Phase in Diourbel and Kafrine (Kaolack), Phase Two in Fatick, Thiès and Kaolack
Duration	8 years (2008-16) for the Pilot Phase and 5 years for Phase Two (April 2017 -April 2021)
IsDB Financing	$ 11.75 million IsDB financing for Pilot Phase and and Euros 8.84 million ISFD Loan and Euros 8.84 million Istisna'a financing for the Second Phase
Objectives	To reduce poverty by addressing the education financial gap that face poor rural populations

Target group(s)	Poverty stricken rural children, youth, and women; namely:
	  - **2000** illiterate adolescents and young adults
	  - **6000** out-of-school children
	  - **5000** women workers

Outcomes	**Outcome 1**: Access to Alternative Basic Education **Outcome 2**: Youth's Literacy and Vocational Training **Outcome 3**: Women Workers Literacy and Vocational Training **Outcome 4:** Microfinance support Scheme

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The Vocational Literacy Program (VOLIP) is one of the flagship programs of the ISFD, approved in 2008, that was developed to realize the mandate of the Bank to alleviate poverty by reducing unemployment, eliminating illiteracy and building capacities in member countries. As a pro-poor initiative, VOLIP Program aims to address two major sources of poverty simultaneously: a gap in knowledge and education and a gap in access to financial services. The VOLIP Program covers six IsDB MCs: Senegal, Chad, Tajikistan, Tunisia, Yemen, and Mauritania, and has been approved for US$ 32.62 million IsDB financing annually.

VOLIP-Senegal is the first VOLIP operation that has successfully completed implementation. It is composed of two phases: the Pilot Phase

(2008-2016), which was implemented in two of the poorest regions of Senegal, Diourbel and Kafrine (Kaolack), and Phase Two (April 2017 -April 2021), which scales up the Program by replicating it in three new poverty stricken regions; namely, Fatick, Thiès and Kaolack. The Ministry of Women, Family, Gender and Child Protection (MFFGPE) is the main implementing body of the Program as a whole.

1.4.1 OVERVIEW OF THE VOLIP-SENEGAL PROGRAM

Both phases of VOLIP-Senegal share the overarching objective of contributing to poverty reduction by focusing on children of both sexes, adult women and young women and men living

in rural environments. To realize this objective, the Program:

(i)   Equips the rural poor with relevant functional literacy competencies and basic practical skills, as such addressing the knowledge and education gap;

(ii) Provides the rural poor access to microfinance devices, as such addressing the finance gap.

Both phases of VOLIP-Senegal also share the same structure and are articulated around four components, each catering to the needs of a specific group of beneficiaries. Together these components combine a package that aims to benefit the family unit as a whole.

Although Phase Two shares the same objectives and structure with the Pilot Phase, through improvements drawn from the lessons learnt of the Pilot Phase, the Second Phase aimed to help VOLIP Program to (i) consolidate achievements of the antecedent phase in the pilot regions and (ii) scale up the Program by replicating it in three more regions, Fatick, Thiès and Kaolack, which have high rates of poverty and were hit by food crises.

> ❝ PROVIDING LITERACY AND VOCATIONAL PROGRAMS TAILORED TO WOMEN WORKERS.
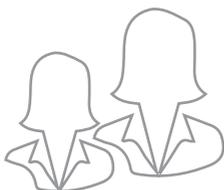
VOLIP A VEHICLE FOR POVERTY REDUCTION.

VOLIP is an ISFD initiative that aims to enable the poor, particularly women and youth of both sexes, to gain functional literacy competencies and vocational skill and to have access to micro-finance to combat unemployment and escape the poverty trap and gender inequality by:

- Providing non-formal education and literacy programmes to children, youth of both sexes and adult women
- Providing literacy and vocational programmes tailored to women workers
- Providing opportunities for decent work for all, especially for women and youth

Key Development Outcomes

Universal Education

Gender Equality

Eradicate Poverty

PILOT PHASE (2008-2016)

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1.4.1.1 ACHIEVEMENTS AND KEY RESULTS

Pilot Phase of the Program has produced sound and relevant results beyond the defined targets, attesting to the effectiveness of the VOLIP concept. In a nutshell, the Pilot Phase enabled out-of-school children to get access to alternative education and subsequently to higher levels of education and gave young people and women access to microcredit. The ability of trainees to refund credits granted testifies to the viability of their enterprises and to the success of the Pilot Phase. More specifically, at the closure, with a total disbursement rate of 99.7% of the loan proceeding, the Pilot Phase achieved the following results:

- 4,681 out-of-school children, 61.33% of whom are girls were given access to education;

- 2,880 youth were provided with vocational technical training and functional literacy

training, and 88% of those benefitted from training in micro-projects management;

- 9,996 young women were provided with technical training on various crafts and on-the-job functional literacy training, while about half of those benefitted from

training in micro-projects management; and

- 526 potential micro enterprises were formulated and 361 micro-projects were submitted to Micro Finance Institutions (MFIs) for financing.

VOLIP-SENEGAL PILOT-PHASE TARGETS & ACHIEVEMENTS

COMPONENTS	TARGETED	ACHIEVED BY 2016
1. Access to Alternative Basic Education	• 200 Community Based Schools (EBCs) constructed/equipped • 15 Educational Centers for Adult Learners • 8000 out-of-school children given access to basic education, 65% being girls	• 193 EBCs constructed/equipped • 8 Educational Centers for Adult Learners • 4681 out-of-school children enrolled, 61% being girls • 620 learners (57.42% females) received certificates for secondary education
2. Youth's Literacy and Vocational Training	• Literacy and Vocational Training of 3000 youth	• Literacy and Vocational Training of 2880 youth • 1,811 of those received management training • 212 artisans were trained • 48 youth received the Vocational Aptitude Certificate
3. Women Workers' Literacy and Vocational Training	• On the job functional literally and vocational training for 10.000 women • Acquiring 50 milling facilities	• On the job functional literacy and vocational training for 9,996 women • 123 milling facilities acquired against a target of 50. This has impacted on the time women spend on domestic work thus freeing up their time for training and other economic activities.
4. Microfinance Support Scheme	Establishing 600 Micro-enterprises	Establishing 578 Micro-enterprises. A total of 158 (against a target of 120) funding proposals/ projects were approved for an amount of approximately $445,623. A monitoring framework has been established for the recovery of the credit facilities.

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1.4.1.2 PILOT-PHASE: LESSONS LEARNT

The Pilot Phase served as a vehicle to support the Second Phase by, on the one hand, validating the strengths and effective interventions of the VOLIP concept for further consolidation and, on the other hand, identifying where there was a need to develop superior responses to further and new challenges.

- Regarding the double or triple burden faced by girls and young women (due to their productive and reproductive works), throughout the pilot implementation, it was observed that the heavy and time-consuming load of domestic work (supply of water, firewood, food milling and processing, cattle breeding, yarning etc.) hampered female participation at the trainings. This has been fully addressed in the Second Phase to ensure the Program addresses women's needs and therefore enhances time-saving and community level solutions to achieve targeted female enrolment while also reducing their work burden.

- Due to the lack of knowledge of new Islamic Finance mechanisms by stakeholders, which delayed the availability of credits to trainees, this led some trainees to abandon the process. The Second Phase provided continuous training to institutionalize Islamic Finance to all stakeholders and trainees.

- The Pilot Phase also emphasized the need for a greater focus on closing the skills gaps by strengthening the consistency between trainings offered and the competencies the market needs and the existence of local job opportunities. The Pilot phase affirmed the strengths of the VOLIP concept to be reinforced and sustained by the Second Phase.

- The Pilot Phase experience verified the **usefulness of Community Based Education** (ECB-écoles communautaires de base) to address the education gap. Adaptable to local development needs and community realities and leading to greater community involvement in education, ECBSs constitute an appropriate vehicle to help reduce school dropouts towards the goal "zero dropout" among the rural poor.

- VOLIP's tryptic model proved to be effective by combining Technical and Vocational training, Functional Literacy Training with access to micro-finance programmes, the VOLIP concept managed to address poverty with a multi-sector and multi-dimensional approach. By providing micro finance line of credit, it also offers incentives for the beneficiaries and families to enrol in the Program and ensures sustainability.

- Ownership and community participation were achieved; by establishing a regional platform—which includes all the stakeholders from decentralized services, local authorities, community leaders to the general public— the Pilot Phase managed to develop close monitoring of various activities and create a synergy among diverse stakeholders and sectors. Additionally, decentralized implementation and management structures enabled regional and community authorities to assume responsibility and ownership of the Program.

Overall, the Pilot Phase enabled the establishment of a sustainable and replicable mechanism that can serve as a model for scaling up in the country or implement in other similar contexts.

1.4.1.3 PHASE TWO (April 2017 – April 2021): IMPLEMENTATION AND TARGETED KEY RESULTS

COMPONENT 1: **Increased access to quality non-formal education for 6,000 out of school children to facilitate their socio-economic integration and future productivity.**

This component enables schooling of children who have dropped out of school, those who are above the primary admission age but have never attended school, and those who are attending

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Daras (madrasah) and willing to enrol in the formal education system. The schooling lasts from 3 to 4 years and covers both theoretical (reading, arithmetic, science for 800-1,000 hours per year) and practical training (200-300 hours per year).

COMPONENT 2: **Increased access to vocational skills and literacy education for 2,000 illiterate poor teenagers and young adults to ensure equitable access to skills training.**

This component provides training for young learners, for 14 to 18 months. Training covers literacy, basic business skill development, and financial skills (preparing Program proposal for the micro- finance scheme) as well as vocational skills, delivered in a local workshop by a local craftsman. The content of trainings are matched to the local employment opportunities and economic activities of each area. The component also helps incubate micro-enterprises of youth, providing technical supervision to assist youth to set up micro-projects.

COMPONENT3: **Increased on-the-job functional literacy competencies of about 5,000 women workers to improve their income generating activities and productivity.**

Through this component, VOLIP-Senegal specifically focuses on equipping young women with functional literacy competencies and vocational skills related to their occupation. The component also helps incubate micro-enterprises of young women, providing technical supervision as well as management and financial skills training to support them setting up micro-projects. An important dimension of the component is ensuring targeted female

enrolment by addressing their practical and strategic needs, acquiring time-saving facilities (grinding mills, hullers, etc.) at the community level. These facilities lessen the daily and burdensome household workload on women and allow them to devote time and energy to the education program.

COMPONENT-4: **Increased access to micro-finance opportunities for 1500 young adults (both sexes) and 2500 women workers to ensure equitable access.**

The final component provides women and youth with qualified training on the productive use of micro-finance coupled with access to micro-finance for self-employment, raising livelihood, and reducing volatility in incomes. This component is anchored in the greater effort to leverage micro-credit for the economic and social development of rural women and youth.

A significant aspect is encouraging trainees to organize as groups to foster solidarity and collaborative entrepreneurship. Other trainees will be either absorbed by the job market or have access to a second round of microfinance through the microfinance revolving fund.

1.4.2 VALUE ADDITION

EMPLOYABILITY SKILLS

Differing from conventional adult literacy and educational programmes, VOLIP-Senegal is not merely focused on alphanumerical literacy and academics. Rather, the vocational and functional literacy training privileges the skill development of the learners. As such, the Program not only addresses the education gap, but it simultaneously equips beneficiaries with employability and practical skills that would help them increase their job prospects, productivity and livelihood.

MULTI-SECTORAL APPROACH

The multi-sectoral concept and activities of VOLIP-Senegal can be seen as more than just a

contributor to increase statistics on educational enrolment. Rather, by complementing vocational and literacy training with access to and training on productive uses of micro-financing, the Program aims to establish new paths for the poor, where, using their newly gained skills, they can generate greater wealth opportunities to graduate from poverty.

WOMEN'S EMPOWEREMENT

By having a component dedicated to young girls and women, the Program manages to adopt a strong gender focus. Compared to their male counterparts, women face additional bottlenecks as they struggle to get out of poverty traps. Notably, while women constitute the most active membership in the cooperatives, many of them are not formally authorized. Financial interventions of the Program aims to precisely address these gender inequalities with regards to access to finance. Additionally, through financial training delivered by the Program, women acquire well−targeted skills, which will enable them to master concepts such as market and entrepreneurship opportunities.

The Program, however, delivers more than financial interventions and responds to broader gender challenges by reducing the housework burden on women through community-level solutions and freeing women's time for enrolment in trainings. In fact, the Second Phase acquired a greater number of facilities to further support women's participation.

FAMILY UNIT

By targeting children who are not attending school, young adults (ages 15-24) who never had access to school or dropped out before completing primary school, as well illiterate adults (aged 25 and above), especially women, the Program combines a package that aims to benefit the whole family and adds to intra-family incentives to learn, encouraging, in turn, greater participation by all family members.

The micro finance option adds extra incentives for adults in families to participate in the

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Program. Similarly, throughout training, the Program enables trainees (especially women) to participate in income generating activities and accumulate savings (selling water and products, practicing gardening and carpentry, using grinding mills, etc). The Program also ensures the sustainability of the centers long after Program completion.

VOLIP-Senegal can inspire and guide the Bank to improve its own efforts for poverty eradication. Based on the lessons learnt and insights drawn from VOLIP-Senegal. It is recommended for the IsDB to put greater emphasis in its flagships poverty reduction program and strategies to:

Make Markets Work for the Poor. Poverty is multi-faceted and increasing skills and financial assets alone often are not enough to address prevailing inequalities. To generate lasting improvements to the lives of the poor, it is necessary to leverage markets for development. Making markets work for the poor requires the adoption of a systemic approach that can look at the market system as whole (market players, its core and supporting functions, policies and regulations, cultural, social norms, social institutions. etc.) and identify pitfalls that fail the poor (for example, not only access to finance but also lack of social services) as well as pro-poor opportunities across the market systems.

Accessing Regional and International Buyers: VOLIP is developing a partnership with an e-commerce platform for African local products that connects entrepreneurs in Africa to local regional and international buyers. This partnership will help develop women led businesses amongst VOLIP beneficiaries to make a huge social and economic impact, which contributes to women's empowerment.

Identify and Address Systemic Failures for Gender Inclusiveness: Just like policy and regulatory environments, social norms and cultural practises too shape market participation and outcomes. Social norms and social institutions especially impact terms of participation for young women. For sustained gender equality outcomes, poverty reduction programmes, should aim to develop a thorough understanding of how, why and where market systems serve women and men differently (gender analysis and gender responsive diagnostics) and bring gender-specific interventions to address systemic and constraints faced by poor women. In the case of VOLIP-Senegal, for example, the gender component could have been enhanced by social interventions to address cultural practises and structural constraints that disadvantage women's market participation and outcomes to further facilitate the system's ability for gender inclusiveness. Overall, these would help the VOLIP Programne to not only strive for adopting a gender-sensitive lens but rather to establish a gender-transformative route by responding to the root causes of gender inequalities and ensuring all members of the communities benefit from the Programs.

Helping Women Move Up the Value Chain: Moreover, pro-poor initiatives with a gender component should pay a particular emphasis to identifying gender-related constraints and opportunities in Value Chains, constituting a core function of the market systems. Programs in particular should uncover opportunities that can enhance the wellbeing of women in value chains, avoid crowding of women in tasks with limited opportunities, and support women to move up the chain towards higher-value-added tasks that are more empowering, socially and economically.

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