

Caterpillar Foundation and Global Communities Launch \$4.4 Million Partnership to Improve Job Prospects for Youth in Middle East and North Africa

The Caterpillar Foundation and Global Communities today announced a \$4.4 million, three-year partnership to prepare youth in Jordan, Lebanon and Yemen for the labor market and job placement. The Middle East and North Africa Youth Empowerment Strategy (MENA-YES), which targets young people aged 15-29, will place special emphasis on disadvantaged youth, low- to medium-level skilled individuals, women, rural youth, and individuals working in hazardous environments.

MENA-YES will emphasize building solid linkages with the private sector and potential employers to determine the precise nature, scale and timing of needed skills to ensure placement of trainees. By building upon its 18-year presence in the region, Global Communities will provide up to 1,920 youth with demand-driven training to prepare them for labor opportunities. At least 60 percent of those placed in internships/apprenticeships or receiving technological training will be on track to be employed or to pursue further training 180 days after completion of program activities.

Additionally, more than 1,000 youth will receive training in financing, market development and business management skills to help them develop entrepreneurial skills. Of these, at least 230 youth will be linked with banks and credit opportunities.

The program is critically important given that the region has the highest youth unemployment rate in the world, estimated in 2010 at 25 percent, and 30 percent for young women alone. "Given the size of rural populations in the region, illiteracy rates, underemployment, and employment that is transient, cyclical and short-term, these estimates are probably low," says David Weiss, President and CEO of Global Communities.

"The numbers are likely to worsen over the next decade, given the high number of youth entering the labor markets," says Weiss. "These problems make the Middle East North Africa region ripe for this kind of partnership, which directly helps those most affected by the dire labor market and ensures that they have the training and jobs to support themselves and their families."

"The Caterpillar Foundation is delighted to partner with Global Communities to address one of the most pressing needs facing the Middle East and North Africa. This is a forward-looking, regionally focused program, which will leverage public and private sector expertise to bring about the greatest positive impact on community needs," said Caterpillar Foundation President Michele Sullivan.

The MENA-YES program is the first multi-country initiative that Global Communities and the Caterpillar Foundation have launched in the region. Global Communities has been active in the Middle East since 1995. Its work has included U.S. Department of Labor funded programs in Jordan, Lebanon and Yemen, which facilitated the provision of formal and informal education and vocational training to children at risk of entering child labor and children withdrawn from child labor.

About the Caterpillar Foundation

Caterpillar Inc. supports the philanthropic efforts of the Caterpillar Foundation. Founded in 1952, the Caterpillar Foundation has contributed more than \$500 million to help make sustainable progress possible around the world by providing program support in the areas of environmental sustainability, access to education and basic human needs. To learn more about the global impact of the Caterpillar Foundation, please visit www.caterpillar.com/foundation.

About Global Communities

Global Communities (formerly CHF International) is an international non-profit organization that works closely with communities worldwide to bring about sustainable changes that improve the lives and livelihoods of the vulnerable. Global Communities believes that the people who understand their needs best are the people of the community itself. Learn more at www.globalcommunities.org.

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