



## SUCCESS STORY

# Partners in Workforce Development

**USAID is revolutionizing the way those who have little prospect of employment are mainstreamed into society.**



*Young men picking up computer lessons at a Workforce Development Initiative Centre*

**USAID assistance has helped institutionalize the Ek Mouka model and set up systems that ensure the quality of the training while it is scaled up and sustained through the multi stakeholder partnerships. More than 50,000 youth are expected to be placed in jobs by September 2009.**

Sachin, the eldest son of a farmer in a village in Uttar Pradesh, India hoped to get a job and support his family after completing school. Although he left for the city and searched for a year, he was unable to find work. Pressured by his family to return to join his father in farming, he was about to give up hope when a friend told him about a USAID-supported Employability Training Center. He attended a counseling session at the Center and decided to begin a training course on Information Technology Enabled Services. After successfully completing the course, he was placed with a well regarded insurance company. Today, he earns an excellent salary and has made his family proud.

Despite India's booming economic growth, large segments of the youth population lack the education and skills necessary for success in the modern economy. Corporations need skilled labor but there is huge disconnect between the skills acquired through the current education and vocational training systems and those required by corporations. The curriculum is de-linked from market needs and students often lack the communication skills, critical thinking abilities, and spoken English that will make them employable.

To address this gap, the USAID and CAP Foundation supported Workforce Development Initiative (*Ek Mouka*, which means "one opportunity") mobilizes poor and marginally educated youth, provides them with training in skills demanded by industry (computers, spoken English, communication skills, customer relations, teamwork, etc), and links them with jobs: both fulfilling corporate workforce needs and creating opportunities for vulnerable youth. During 2007 and 2008, the program trained 16,620 young people and placed 74% of them in modern economy jobs. Several other graduates elected to continue their education rather than enter the workforce. The success of the program is due to its close collaboration with the private sector; 50% of the program costs come from non-USAID sources.

Apart from providing financial resources and sharing training costs, the private sector is also engaged in market surveys, curriculum development, classroom lectures, training, and placement. This close engagement has resulted in a sense of ownership of the program by the industry. Some of the most prominent corporations in India, such as Microsoft, Alcatel-Lucent, Moser Baer, Genpact, Reliance Energy, Apollo Hospitals, the Tata Group etc., are partners in this initiative.

Photo: Heather Sullivan/USAID