





## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Final Report  
Phase I of the *entra21* Program  
August 2008

*Entra21* is a regional program initially designed to provide 12,000 disadvantaged youth in Latin America and the Caribbean, ages 16 through 29, with employment training and job placement services. Launched in 2001, the Program aimed to place at least 40% of the participants in decent jobs and increase their employability. Executed by the International Youth Foundation (IYF) in collaboration with the Multilateral Investment Fund of the Inter-American Development Bank (MIF/IDB), *entra21* emphasized IT skills and other training that would enable participants to be successful in the 21<sup>st</sup> century workplace. The name “entra” – refers to the “enter” button on the computer keyboard. The Program offered a comprehensive approach – that included ICT skills, the development of responsibility, team work, and other life and job seeking skills, an internship with a local company or government agency, and job placement assistance – all designed to provide youth with the requisite skills and opportunities to find a job and perform well in the workplace.

With an initial MIF contribution of US\$10 million, the program marshaled over \$19 million from the United States Agency for International Development (USAID), global and local companies, and a variety of national and international foundations. Over a six year period, the Program supported 35 projects in 18 countries. The Program is ongoing, as a second four-year phase was approved in 2007. This report focuses exclusively on Phase I of *entra21*.

### ***Findings highlighted in this study include:***

- 19,649 youth benefitted from job training and job placement services, exceeding the target of 12,000
- Program achieved an average job placement rate of 54% (also exceeding target), with males having better odds than females for securing a job and earning more
- Majority of participants were under 20 years old (51%); female (54%); single (90%); urban-based (90%), and with a high school education (64%).
- Average grant was \$343,020 and lasted 28 months.
- Dropout rates were 13%
- Vast majority of participants (86%) described their internships as positive experiences and most (80%) liked their jobs primarily because they were interesting.
- Quality of jobs was high (78% had formal contracts; 74% earned minimum wage or better)
- Employer satisfaction was high, with 36% of the youth gaining their jobs through internships



## ***Key lessons and observations drawn from entra21;***

*Critical factors in the success of the entra21 model included:*

- **Integrated and comprehensive approach:** all programs included some form of ICT training and life and job seeking skills
- **Internships** as critical element in the training cycle
- **Job placement services** and involvement of employers, particularly in the private sector
- **Use of labor market information:** surveys and interviews with local businesses and market studies enabled programs to design training curriculum based on local market needs and trends.

*Other observations:*

**The low dropout rate (13%) was the result of a number of factors**, including careful selection process, provision of stipends, personalized attention, and course content that matched youth interests.

**NGOS of differing background can be successful.** Regardless of origin or different levels of experience in the area of youth employment, the EAs successfully met their objectives.

**Life skills training** is critical to success and must be underscored among the instructors—even those teaching technical skills.

**For job placement to be effective**, a job placement coordinator must be hired, and job placement activities must be initiated at the beginning of the program, not toward the end of the training.

**An unexpected positive trend was observed from baseline to ex post.** Before *entra21* started, 62% of youth were neither studying nor working. By follow up, that percentage had dropped to 25%.

**Youth participants, regardless of whether they were working or not at follow up, felt more positively** about their life skills – particularly their ability to set and reach goals, their self confidence, and their ability to learn on their own.

**Ratings by employers of the youth they hired were positive** across the projects when evaluated six or more months after youth left the program.

**Overall, the EAs were effective in building relationships** with funding sources within and outside of their countries. As a result, once *entra21* funding was ended, these organizations were able to continue all or part of the training and placement services provided under the program, thus ensuring sustainability.