

EQUIP YOUTH

도전하는 청년

The Global Initiative

To address the challenges facing youth seeking to enter the labor force, the International Youth Foundation (IYF) and the Caterpillar Foundation have joined forces to create **EquipYouth**, an \$11million global initiative that has provided over 8,000 young people in 12 countries with market-relevant life and skills training along with job placement support and services. **EquipYouth** increases employability among disadvantaged youth through improved life and technical skills, internships and on-the-job training, job placement support, and capacity building for local partners and trainers. **EquipYouth** works with partners in every country to develop or adapt curriculum to ensure it meets the demands of local employers. Youth in the following countries are reached through this initiative: Brazil, China, India, Indonesia, Jordan, Mexico, Panama, Peru, Russia, Singapore, South Africa, and South Korea.

South Korea: The Challenge

South Korea's youth unemployment rate is more than double the national average, even as parts of the labor market are hungry for workers. One quarter of all college graduates under the age of 30 are classified as "neets" – not in education, employment or training – and are excluded from unemployment data. The issue in South Korea is one of "over-educated" youth vying for the same jobs. Virtually all Korean youth enroll in high school, 95% graduate, and 74 to 84% enter. However, there exists a skills mismatch whereby schools are overinvesting in general skills and under-investing in industry specific skills. Employers also note that youth lack creativity, problem solving, entrepreneurial and other critical life skills. The President of South Korea is working to change the culture of academic ambition, pushing a "work first, study later" policy and new tax incentives for companies who hire high-school graduates. Vocational training high schools and junior colleges report that the percentage of youth going straight into the workforce (versus pursuing higher education) increased from 30 to 40% in 2011. However, this is not enough to address the mismatch between workforce supply and demand. Disadvantaged youth – namely youth from low-income families and those with mental and physical disabilities – face additional challenges in gaining the skills and support required to find decent work.

The Initiative

To address these barriers to youth employment, **EquipYouth** in South Korea seeks to provide 480 young people with life and technical skills training combined with increased linkages to employment. To implement the three year program (March 2013 – Feb 2016), IYF is working with the National Council of YMCAs of Korea (NCYK) and the Pyeongtaek YMCA to provide 480 disadvantaged young people (ages 15-20) in the city of Pyeongtaek in Gyeonggi Province with vocational and life skills training, professional internships, and job placement support. Specifically, the program provides life skills training to 30 disabled youth and 450 disadvantaged young people at vocational high schools. Participating youth also receive vocational skills training in areas such as automotive engineering, equipment industry, product automation control, and business. Upon completion of the training, youth complete internships and are supported to secure decent jobs. To develop a strong foundation for the program, IYF worked with NCYK to customize IYF's *Passport to Success* (PTS) life skills curriculum to the Korean youth context and build the capacity of YMCA to deliver PTS. The program also develops private sector linkages in order to validate demand for vocational trades, define skills employers want from new workers, establish relationships for internship and job placement, and provide a basis for evaluating employer satisfaction with workers they hire.



Anticipated Outcomes

By the end of the program in February 2016:

- 480 young people from Pyeongtaek will have gained appropriate training to obtain employment in business management and mechanical trades, including computers, automotive and construction.
- At least 50% of program participants will be employed in decent jobs within 6 months of program completion.

Outcomes Accomplished To Date

As of February 2015:

- 348 youth have gained appropriate training to obtain employment in business management and mechanical trades, including computers, automotive and construction.
- 40% of program participants found employment immediately after the program. Follow-up is currently underway to determine the number of youth that have found decent jobs within 6 months after completing the program.

DONOR

The Caterpillar Foundation

LOCAL PARTNERS

National Council of YMCAs of Korea and Pyeongtaek YMCA

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