

ISSUE NO. 6 | SPRING 2013

# Youth

international  
**youth**  
foundation®



SPECIAL EDITION



## THE EVIDENCE IS IN— AND BUILDING.

The seeds of a global movement have been planted. Leaders from every sector are stepping forward in the shared belief that in order to reignite the engines of economic growth and social progress—governments, businesses, civil society, and youth must join forces and work together. Their common goal: to ensure today's 1.2 billion young people become the healthy, productive, and civically-engaged citizens who can drive the future peace and prosperity of our society.

The key to reaching this goal is putting an end to the global youth unemployment crisis. The good news is we know how to do it. We invite you to turn the page—and find out just how far we've come over the past decade by building alliances to expand opportunities for young people to stay in school, get decent jobs and revitalize their communities. In this Special Edition, you will also hear from a dozen corporate leaders, government officials, policy makers, and young social entrepreneurs—sharing their thoughts on what remains to be done to move this global youth agenda forward.

## JOIN US.

The illustrations are the work of Gabriela Reygadas and Jorge Acosta, 26-year-old Mexican artists who graduated from *Escuela Nacional de Artes Plásticas* (UNAM) with a bachelor's degree in design and visual communication. Gabi is currently pursuing a master degree at the School of Visual Arts in New York and Jorge is a freelance artist in Mexico City.

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IYF envisions a world where all young people achieve their full potential and shape the future with power and confidence.

##### Mission

IYF prepares young people to be healthy, productive and engaged citizens.

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# The Power of Partnerships for Economic Prosperity: A Decade of Progress in Youth Employment

by Bill Reese, CEO of International Youth Foundation

**LAST APRIL**, I attended the Summit of the Americas meeting in Colombia's coastal city of Cartagena. There, I joined the President of the Inter-American Development Bank (IDB) and business leaders to make an historic announcement: the formation of a new alliance aiming to prepare one million youth across Latin America and the Caribbean for decent jobs over the next ten years.

Standing with corporate executives from Walmart, Caterpillar, Microsoft, CEMEX, and Arcos Dorados (McDonalds), IDB President Luis Alberto Moreno laid out a bold agenda for the *New Employment Opportunities for Youth* initiative (NEO): "Through NEO, companies, governments and development institutions will work together to address two of the most urgent issues facing our region: youth unemployment and unmet demand for skilled workers." NEO's founding partners immediately took action, announcing an initial commitment of US\$34 million to fund training, internships, and job placement programs for the region's most vulnerable youth.

## Economies in Crisis Spur Multi-sector Collaboration

This memorable event unfolded against the backdrop of a global recession that has hit young people particularly hard, leaving what the International Labor Organization estimates to be 75 million young people without



jobs—a figure that I believe could be closer to 100 million considering those societies with poor data collection, not to mention the huge numbers of underemployed. The combination of stalled economic growth and growing frustrations among unemployed and disenfranchised youth across the globe has forced some real changes in how we think about and approach youth development. An unprecedented number of government and private sector leaders—like those gathered in Cartagena—are now working together, often for the first time, to find real and sustainable solutions to this crisis. Increasingly, leaders have come to recognize that public-private partnerships bring the unique perspectives, strengths, and shared interests of each sector to the table, opening up invaluable opportunities to tap additional expertise, knowledge sharing, and resources.

There is also, I believe, a deepening understanding within the private sector that investing in areas like youth development and education—"doing good" in other words—creates real value for both business and society. And perhaps most importantly, there is growing agreement—on all sides—around the International Youth Foundation's (IYF) core belief that young people are invaluable assets to society who when given the necessary skills and opportunities can be the

leaders of social and economic progress in their countries and beyond.

But these advances in both thinking and action, so readily apparent to the leaders on the stage with me in Cartagena, have taken much time and effort to come to fruition. I want to share some highlights of that story—by tracking the evolution of IYF's multi-sector alliance building over the past decade. Our efforts, in cooperation with many others, have helped transform the landscape of youth development and led to significant breakthroughs in public policies, shared understanding, and in some instances, concrete and sustained change in the way governments and businesses carry out their work.

## entra21: A Model for Effectiveness, Scale, and Sustainability

Going back nearly 14 years now, IYF has been leading the call to put youth employment at the top of the world's policy agenda and to develop powerful tools and strategies to address the enormous challenge. The principles that have guided our efforts are captured in three simple words: effectiveness, scale, and sustainability. Our goal, from the very beginning, was to create multi-sector alliances to bring policy-makers and business leaders to the table; demonstrate real and measurable impact; and achieve scale and sustainability to reach more youth over the long term.

The program that first put these principles into practice—and ultimately became the seedling that bore the fruit of larger, more comprehensive efforts like NEO—was *entra21*.



## BEST PRACTICE

### *entra21*

### SCALE

**137,000**  
YOUNG PEOPLE

**22**  
COUNTRIES

### EFFECTIVENESS

**45%**  
GOT A JOB

**27%**  
BACK TO SCHOOL

### SUSTAINABILITY

**3:1**  
INVESTMENT MATCH

**US\$20M**  
SEED FUNDING

**US\$69M**  
ADDITIONAL SUPPORT

The name, literally, means ‘enter 21’—preparing disadvantaged youth to enter the 21st Century by giving them the employability and life skills they will need to be successful in today’s marketplace. We launched this program in 2000, inspired by a meeting with leaders from the Inter-American Development Bank’s Multilateral Investment Fund (MIF) in Washington, DC. Our shared mission was to expand employment opportunities among ‘nini’ youth across Latin America and the Caribbean—those young people who are neither working nor in school. Sound familiar?

From the outset, *entra21* was innovative in both design and implementation. It offered what we now know to be critical success factors in this field—a comprehensive, holistic approach to job training that included life and employability skills development, mentorship and internship opportunities, and job placement assistance. From the beginning, we focused on building relationships with and meeting the needs of the local private sector. The program’s founding donor, the MIF, challenged us to “match” their initial US\$10 million investment with an equal amount of support from private and civil society sectors. Robust monitoring, evaluation and knowledge management systems were also put into place to track progress, identify challenges, address immediate program needs, and inform the design of future employability programs. In addition, *entra21* committed to widely sharing its lessons learned and best practices with the broader community.

It took time to get this right, and we gained some valuable experience along the way. For example, we learned how to go from running small scale pilot projects to working with governments to ramp up our tested models—thus reaching far more youth. As a result of this ongoing process of testing, re-assessing, adapting, and scaling up, *entra21* was able to make significant achievements. In ten years, more than 137,000 young people across 22 countries gained critical employability, ICT and technical skills. Nearly half of these youth were placed in jobs, while another 27% went back to school. From the combined seed funding of US\$20 million from the MIF, IYF and its partners leveraged a remarkable US\$69.1 million in additional resources and support over the 10-year life of the program.

#### Going Global

With *entra21*, IYF found the formula to deliver an effective employability program that had evidence-based results that could be taken to scale and sustained over time. So we began asking ourselves: could this model be adapted and replicated to be effective in communities beyond Latin America? Could we go global?

The answer, it turns out, was yes. Key elements of *entra21* began to take root elsewhere. In 2005, for example, IYF launched a youth employability initiative in Egypt, India, Indonesia, Morocco, Pakistan, and the Philippines—with a focus on building multi-sector partnerships designed to expand education and employment opportunities for Muslim youth.

# BUILDING CAPACITY

..... YOUTH:WORK\* .....

**12** PROGRAMS  
**139** PARTNERS  
**19** COUNTRIES  
**300** LEARNING EVENTS  
**77** LEARNING PUBLICATIONS  
**1,523** TEACHERS, INSTRUCTORS, AND YOUTH SERVICE PROVIDERS TRAINED

\*NUMBERS TO DATE

In this case, our co-designing and funding partner was the US Agency for International Development (USAID). Our experience in recruiting new partners—some global corporations but also local businesses—was paying off. In fact, one of the real learnings during this period was recognizing that significant “buy in” from local companies and governments was the critical link to a program’s long-term sustainability. Some call this “country ownership.”

## 2008: Getting on the Fast Track

Even before demographers had warned us that the world needed one billion new jobs to absorb the historic youth cohort over the next decade, youth unemployment was already

skyrocketing—pushing the topic front and center on the agendas of world leaders and policy analysts. By that time, our global efforts to address the issue were adding more and more evidence to support a comprehensive and collaborative approach to youth unemployment—including better matching skills training to the demands of the local business community—something that made IYF’s programs stand out.

With a growing urgency to do more, IYF and USAID joined together again in 2008 to offer a faster, more efficient way for USAID bureaus and missions—as well as other US government agencies—to access IYF’s employability knowledge, alliance-building expertise, global network

of partners, and capacity building services. Called *Youth:Work*, the initiative also provides a solid platform to share learnings and best practices in youth employment so that others could more readily benefit from the proven programs being implemented around the world. As of today, IYF has led such efforts in 19 countries in Latin America, the Middle East, Africa, and Asia. Our primary goal: to foster local youth well-being and economic growth through youth employment, by working in close partnership with governments, companies, and civil society organizations. Another critical component of these initiatives is that each one is tailored to meet the particular needs and aspirations of the countries’ youth.



In Ciudad Juárez—one of the world’s most violent and drug-plagued cities—*Youth:Work Mexico* targets young people, as well as local training institutions and government agencies, to expand job opportunities and spark the economic revitalization of their city. In Kyrgyzstan, we’re supporting a new generation of young leaders to help create a more open and democratic society. In Jordan, we’re seeking to engage that country’s youth in community development and civic activities, as well as offering job training and entrepreneurship support. While varied, these programs all share elements that are fundamental to IYF’s youth employment model: a holistic approach to youth development; the use of labor market assessments to ensure job training matches local employer needs; building the capacity of local youth-serving organizations by sharing best practices and lessons learned; and the challenge to leverage significant resources from the public and private sectors. A consistent priority has also been to ensure young people have a greater voice—and a far greater role in shaping their own futures.

*Youth:Work* has also demonstrated the enormous power of partnerships to expand the impact on young people and their communities. Over four years, an initial US\$2 million investment from USAID has now grown to US\$86.8 million. Together, IYF and its partners have so far leveraged an additional US\$62.1 million in investments, primarily from the international private sector—but also from local companies, local governments, bi- and multi-lateral institutions, and international and local NGOs. Solid evidence of a good idea catching on!

Capturing and sharing all of this youth employment experience and knowledge has been a particular priority for the World Bank, which in 2008 asked IYF, along with other regional and global organizations, to establish the *Global Partnership for Youth Employment* (GPYE). Its primary goal is to collect and disseminate evidence on youth employment outcomes and effective programs that help young people make the transition to work. Whether it’s producing studies on youth employment issues and policies; supporting robust impact analyses via strong monitoring and evaluations; or hosting policy and learning conferences in the Middle East, Latin America, and Africa, the GPYE is playing a valuable role in disseminating lessons and best practices that are helping to strengthen youth initiatives worldwide.

### Goal 2015: Going for Scale with the Private Sector

So, where does this leave us today? Where do we go from here? One particularly promising area of activity is our work with the private sector—specifically within the hospitality industry. Currently the world’s largest employer, travel and tourism businesses alone are expected to generate 73 million new jobs by 2022, which makes that industry uniquely positioned to address the twin challenges of rising youth unemployment and the shortage of qualified, skilled workers. Chris Nassetta, the CEO of Hilton Worldwide, explains the growing ties between business and youth development efforts. “Leading companies invest in issues that impact their businesses and benefit from their unique resources and expertise. As a growing employer of young people around the globe, youth are of critical importance to our bottom line and the future of our company.”

I was very pleased to join Chris this past January at the World Economic Forum in Davos, Switzerland, where we released a white paper putting forth a

course of action for the global hospitality sector to combat youth joblessness, while also creating career pathways within the industry for this emerging workforce. Hilton also committed to take the lead in mobilizing other travel and tourism companies to support youth employment programs. A corporate commitment like Hilton’s offers a new model that can be a real game-changer. If we can successfully engage leaders from companies in other sectors, like financial services, mining and exploration, retail and IT—to lead the call within their own respective industries, just as Chris is doing, we stand a real chance of achieving the level of scale required to reverse the trend in youth unemployment—while also giving a much-needed boost to business and ultimately local economies.

### The Flip Side of Scale: Putting Policy into Action

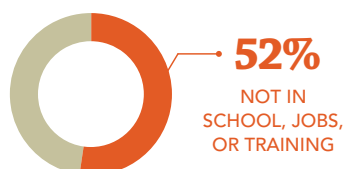
Companies and civil society however cannot do it all alone. The other ingredient needed to secure hard fought gains in youth employment and continue to make the push for systemic change is to put into place



## OPPORTUNITY FOR ACTION

### YOUTH

1.2 BILLION, AGES 15 TO 24



**75M**  
UNEMPLOYED

### JOBS

**3M**  
UNFILLED  
EACH MONTH  
IN USA IN 2012

**85M**  
UNFILLED DUE  
TO LACK OF  
SKILLED WORKERS  
BY 2020\*

### EMPLOYERS REPORT

**15%**  
UNFILLED DUE  
TO LACK OF  
SOFT SKILLS

**36%**  
UNFILLED DUE  
TO LACK OF  
TECHNICAL SKILLS

\*WORLDWIDE ESTIMATE

public policies and investment strategies that support and promote these goals. And here again, we see real progress. Under the leadership of then Secretary of State Hillary Clinton, the US Department of State is instituting its first-ever youth policy. The strategy places great emphasis on collaboration with the private sector to expand economic opportunities for today's youth, while also involving youth more directly in the development of policies and programs in their own countries and communities.

As a result of this policy, IYF and the State Department have signed a Memorandum of Understanding to create the Youth Livelihoods Alliance (YLA), bringing together leaders from business and government to identify and promote best practices in support of youth employability. The Office of Global Youth Issues was created to help move this youth agenda forward and to coordinate activities. In the words of Zeenat Rahman, Special Advisor for Global Youth Issues at State, "Five or ten years ago you wouldn't have had an office focusing on youth issues here. Looking at the history of diplomacy, this is a new development."

Last year, USAID launched its own "Youth in Development" policy. While USAID has always been a great supporter of our work in communities around the world, for the first time, it has established a strong framework and set of overreaching goals within which to pursue and evaluate youth-focused efforts on the ground. It promotes a holistic approach to youth development, and underscores the need to strengthen programming in employment and citizenship. The policy also affirms USAID's support for building public-private partnerships to leverage greater resources and impact. In the words of USAID Administrator, Dr. Rajiv Shah, we need to pursue "smarter, more innovative and evidence-based approaches to empowering youth in development."

### Unfinished Business

When I sit back and reflect on all of these activities, I am very proud of what we have—collectively—been able to accomplish. Today, a network of visionary leaders from every sector of society is working together to address one of the greatest social and economic challenges of our time. We are also developing new tools, like our recently announced partnership with the Center for Strategic and International Studies (CSIS) to create a Global Youth Wellbeing Index, which will provide a way to measure our progress and guide new and smarter investments in youth.

Despite the advances, however, the fact remains that millions of young people still can't find jobs, support their families, or imagine a life of hope and dignity. For years, we've been saying that to transform this "youth bulge" from a potential liability into an opportunity—or what I call a demographic dividend for greater economic growth and security—we must empower the world's young people with the skills they need to be successful in life, on the job, and in society. Today, more than ever, we need to scale up proven-practice programs that can reach and benefit not hundreds or tens of thousands, but millions of young people to make a lasting impact. So, this is no time to let up on our efforts.

Just about a year ago, IYF and Microsoft joined together to issue a global call to action through the release of *Opportunity for Action*, a white paper that specifically appeals to business, government, civil society, and youth leaders to act in an organized and collaborative way to dramatically expand investments in education, employment, and civic engagement opportunities for our young people. I'd like to think that some of the remarkable surge of activity over the past few months can be traced back to this global appeal. I'm also confident that a lot more is yet to come. **Y**





“

*The*  
**YOUTH**  
**EMPLOYMENT CRISIS,**

*considerably aggravated by the  
global economic and financial crisis*

*— now requires —*

**GOVERNMENTS,  
EMPLOYERS & WORKERS**

*— to work even harder —*

*to promote, create, and maintain*  
**DECENT AND PRODUCTIVE  
JOBS**

”

*The Youth Employment Crisis: A Call for Action,  
International Labour Organization (ILO) 2012*



# A Full-Scale Approach to Youth Employment

by Luis Alberto Moreno, President of the Inter-American Development Bank



Latin America and the Caribbean face formidable challenges in ensuring economic inclusion of its growing youth population. Some 32 million young people ages 15 to 29 are neither working nor studying. Over half of those who do work are in the unregulated informal sector earning less than minimum wage. Moreover, most schools are not prepared to train youth for 21<sup>st</sup> Century jobs. Only about half of high school students graduate, and of those who do, up to 50 percent lack the basic competencies that jobs require.

Addressing this complex challenge has been a major priority for the Inter-American Development Bank Group (IDB). Through our Multilateral Investment Fund (MIF), we have funded over 120 youth employment and entrepreneurship projects since 1994, training approximately 235,000 poor and low-income youth in 24 countries. That's a total investment of over US\$77 million, plus an additional US\$125 million leveraged through our partners.

The IDB is a longstanding partner of the International Youth Foundation (IYF). For example, with the flagship *entra21* youth employability program, the Bank and IYF developed a comprehensive youth job training model that combines ICT skills training, life skills, sector-specific technical training, internships, job placement services, and counseling. This model has been adapted and replicated by over 50 organizations across the region, reaching 136,000 youth. But, in order to reach youth in the numbers needed to really make a difference, we need to dramatically scale up successful models with public-private efforts.

To illustrate how scale can be achieved through multi-sector collaborations, let's look to Brazil. The *entra21* program, with its partner *Instituto Aliança* and additional funding support from the Walmart Institute, has focused on incorporating their life skills methodology, which combines technology with the development of life plans and hands-on team activities, into state public education systems. The model has been integrated into the curricula of 31 public schools in the states of Pernambuco and Ceará with the potential to be incorporated throughout their respective public school systems. Based on this experience, the Walmart Institute has also integrated this life skills methodology into

its *Escola Social do Varejo* (Social School for Retail) program, which trains poor and low-income youth for jobs in the country's growing retail industry. Walmart is expanding the program within Brazil, looking to train 14,500 youth by 2016.

Experiences like this have led to the next logical step in our scale efforts: the *New Employment Opportunities for Youth* (NEO) initiative, which seeks to build a network of multi-sector partnerships throughout the region, with the goal of providing high-impact job training and placement programs to at least one million youth over the next ten years. Executives from five companies with significant presence in the region—Arcos Dorados-McDonalds, Caterpillar, CEMEX, Microsoft, and Walmart—joined me during last year's Summit of the Americas in Cartagena to launch this innovative partnership, in which Manpower Group has joined as an advisor. What is unique about NEO is that these companies are playing a leading role in both defining the problem and the solutions needed to address serious labor market challenges. They do this not only to address their own hiring needs, but also to contribute to solving this collective problem that threatens the region's economic growth and security.

One of the first NEO public-private partnerships is currently taking shape in Nuevo Leon, Mexico, where there is a great need for solutions to tackle the youth employment challenge. In August 2012, representatives from the IDB and IYF went to Monterrey and Mexico City to meet with key public, private, and civil society actors to begin defining the critical path for NEO development. Stakeholders are now working to determine the partnership's structure, target youth populations, goals, and financing and scale strategy. The planning phase will be completed in the first quarter of 2013 and the NEO-Mexico partnership will get underway soon thereafter.

We're looking forward to sharing more about NEO's progress in Mexico and other countries and welcome others to contribute to its success, especially employers or service providers that could provide jobs, internships, training models or job placement services in the region. If we can train one million young people in this decade, at least half of whom get jobs, and we believe we can, NEO will serve as a model for other regions and contexts to reach even greater scale. **Y**

# US Foreign Policy's Youth Agenda

by Maria Otero, Former Under Secretary for Civilian Security, Democracy, and Human Rights,  
US Department of State



Early on in her tenure, Secretary of State Hillary Clinton identified youth issues as an urgent priority. Before the Arab Spring, she recognized the importance of empowering today's young people as drivers of social and economic progress and understood how quickly the volatile mix of rising expectations and unmet needs can shift the balance of power across entire regions.

That early vision has led to far reaching changes within the State Department that have sparked innovative strategies to place the concerns and aspirations of youth at the top of the global agenda. I participated in early discussions around how to shape the State Department's first ever youth policy, and am pleased to see the many ways in which this framework is guiding our efforts. For the first time, we are directly and intentionally engaging young people in a meaningful dialogue to ensure their creativity and entrepreneurial mindset can inform our policies and programs. We are finding new ways to bring the much-needed assets of young people to the table, while also building the capacity of our embassies to expand their youth outreach.

For example, in December of 2012, I joined Secretary Clinton in Dublin, Ireland to mark the establishment of our 50th youth council. These youth councils, supported by our embassies and consulates, are concrete demonstrations of how young people are being engaged as we shape our efforts in each country. The State Department acknowledges that young people must help solve the challenges they and their communities face. Through the honest dialogue they foster, these youth councils are one way to help them do so.

We are also placing far greater emphasis on improving the economic prospects of today's youth. The Arab Spring revolutions underscored the urgent need for governments—including our own—to better respond to the enormous pent up frustrations of those who simply want to earn a decent living. This is an issue close to my heart, as much of my career was in microfinance. I have seen how young people can become disillusioned and inactive when they lack the skills, opportunities and networks to find success in the marketplace. USAID, our partner in expanding employment and

civic engagement opportunities, recently issued its own youth in development policy that further strengthens this focus on economic opportunity as a critical element of holistic, integrated youth empowerment.

Providing greater protection and security for young people is another significant priority. We've learned that when security issues do arise—be it counter-terrorism, human trafficking, ethnic or religious violence, human rights abuses—young people are very often at the very center of those conflicts. Now, when we are helping countries to protect their citizens overall, we work to ensure they are incorporating youth-related concerns into those efforts. As countries engage in elections, for example, we need to ask: are young people being shut out of the electoral process? How can we make sure they have a voice in emerging democracies?

To sustain these new strategies, Secretary Clinton established the Office of Global Youth Issues to move this youth agenda forward and coordinate activities with our embassies. Zeenat Rahman, the Secretary's Special Adviser on Global Youth Issues, is adding new energy to our efforts.

This past October, for example, the State Department joined leading global companies and NGOs in launching the Youth Livelihoods Alliance (YLA), which seeks to identify, promote, and further develop innovative solutions to the youth unemployment crisis. We understand the power of multi-sector alliances to help extend our diplomatic reach beyond the traditional corridors of power. To have a real impact on any global challenge, we must mobilize the resources, knowledge and innovation that only the private sector and civil society can provide. YLA offers us such an opportunity.

With youth populations swelling and young people driving global events in unprecedented ways, we cannot afford to adapt slowly to this new landscape. At the State Department, we've launched an historic effort to elevate young people's issues on the world stage and implement policies that empower them as productive citizens and global change makers. This is no easy task. But if living in a more stable and peaceful world is a goal we all share—then there is surely no higher priority. **Y**

# Empowering Jordan's Seventy Percent

by Beth Paige, Jordan Mission Director,  
United States Agency for International Development (USAID)



**M**ore than half of the world's population is under the age of 30. With their vision and limitless passion, the world's young people represent a great asset and a potential force for change. Yet a sizable youth population can be both an opportunity and a challenge for any country. The ability of young people to contribute economically, socially and politically can accelerate development, improve economies, pull countries out of poverty, and lead to greater stability. If countries cannot meet the basic needs of their young people, however, they risk impeding peace, progress and prosperity.

USAID recently issued its first Youth in Development Policy to address these realities. USAID has been conducting programming focused on youth for more than two decades in forty countries, and has learned that youth issues are complex and cross cutting. The transition from childhood to adulthood spans ten to twenty years, and is not a linear process. Youth make transitions at different times and face different challenges depending on a variety of factors, including their age, gender, socioeconomic and political context, and culture. An effective policy must therefore treat young people as individuals in different stages of development yet also comprehensively address the different factors that impact their lives.

- The ability of young people to contribute economically, socially and politically can accelerate development, improve economies, pull countries out of poverty, and lead to greater stability.

In Jordan, where I am Mission Director, youth make up approximately 70 percent of the country's rapidly growing population and face high rates of unemployment. The success of this generation is critical to Jordan's future, and we have therefore developed policies that seek to improve young Jordanians' lives and their prospects comprehensively.

To help young people find jobs we are working with the government, private and nonprofit sectors. We partner with

Jordan's Department of Labor to create spaces throughout the country for youth to seek career counseling, search for jobs, meet private sector representatives and receive life skills and technical training. We work with the private sector to ensure that the training youth receive is relevant to the job market. For example, we coordinate with Jordan's tourism industry to teach youth hospitality skills and offer graduates employment in the tourism and hospitality field. USAID has worked with Jordan's community-based organizations to help expand their scope beyond the delivery of basic services to the poor to include income-generating activities like gyms, computer centers and cooperative kitchens that serve and employ youth. Now, young people have the opportunity to learn skills with these organizations that they can bring to the job market.

Helping young Jordanians find work is only part of the story, however. Equally important is helping them to develop leadership skills, critical thinking and an understanding of the world around them. Involvement with these community-based organizations can bring families together around issues or activities and open channels of communication between young people and their parents. As youth participate in volunteer opportunities and forums that promote civic engagement they also learn about issues that affect their communities. USAID provides opportunities like parliamentary fellowship programs, local election observation and on-campus discussion groups that provide space for student debates and interactive exercises on the principles of democracy and politics. In these programs, university students learn to effectively take part in the country's political development. As a result, community-based organizations and youth committees in universities have become natural advocates for youth at the grassroots and policy levels, while training a new generation of leaders for employment and civic activism.

Jordan's young people, like their peers around the world, are a great potential resource for the country's development. As we implement USAID's new policy, our biggest challenge will be to ensure that we see young people as the complex individuals that they are, and create opportunities that take into account their different experiences and needs so we can unleash this remarkable potential. **Y**



# It's Time for a 'New Deal' for America's Young People

by John Studzinski, who runs the Blackstone Advisory Partners and is a member of the IYF Board



Early in 2012, at the World Economic Forum in Davos, a group of influential figures concluded that youth unemployment, directly affecting 75 million youth worldwide, was “a social and economic time bomb.” In December, Klaus Schwab, the German economist, declared that “youth unemployment is a cancer at the heart of the European economy, stealing its future.” A few weeks earlier, from the other side of the Atlantic, former US Treasury Secretary Larry Summers, expressed his deep concern: “I’m not sure that there is a more important long-term issue than youth unemployment.”

So what should be done to address this critical problem? There is, of course, no universal cure. Voices at Davos praised Germany’s tradition of apprenticeships, but agreed no standard international template could be applied to create work for young people. Yet a radical local scheme could ultimately have a widespread impact.

In the United States, where more than four million young people can’t find work, it is time to give the next generation a New Deal. Eighty years after President Franklin Roosevelt first used the term, this new ‘New Deal’ would aim to accelerate the development of young people’s practical and life skills to render them more employable. In this new form of national service, they can serve their country while gaining a realistic but positive experience in working life.

All American citizens between 16 and 24 would have a mandatory one-year commitment, with an option to serve a second year. Young people would enter the scheme having completed (or dropped out of) high school and before commencing any higher education. Each would receive sufficient monthly income to cover living expenses, and comprehensive medical and dental care would be provided. Certain exceptions would apply: for instance, university students could fulfill their commitment during vacations. Work opportunities would be offered across sectors, and US corporations—currently sitting on US\$2 trillion in cash—would have a golden opportunity to help America’s young people and build the country’s future.

The US government could also offer targeted financial incentives to companies—for instance, by stepping in with

subsidy when a job is at risk of disappearing. Public money is better spent retaining a worker in a job than in cultivating low self-esteem in the form of unemployment benefits! Higher education institutions would dovetail their curricula with the scheme, and ‘national service,’ education and enterprise would converge through college campus programs fostering entrepreneurship in hard-hit communities. Placements would also be offered by established volunteer organizations while opportunities for working abroad would come through corresponding ‘national service’ efforts overseas.

How will this all be funded? In classic American capital-markets fashion with a bond, invested by the US government on the birth of each new citizen. Money will also be raised through corporate contributions and other mechanisms. Any young person opting out will pay a fee in addition to foregoing bond monies. Americans of all ages and backgrounds could take pride in such a program, and its principles would be applicable for comparable efforts in other countries.

The UK government, perhaps spurred by the 2011 riots, is now running a £1 billion Youth Contract, designed to provide nearly half-a-million new opportunities for 18- to 24-year-olds, including apprenticeships and voluntary work. This provides incentives to employers over three years with a total of 160,000 packages, worth up to £2,200 (US\$3600) each if an employer hires an 18- to 24-year-old for at least 26 weeks.

Government incentives are positive moves, but the responsibility for young people cannot lie with the public sector alone. There is much talk today of corporate social responsibility and of ‘giving something back’. By making a special effort to bring young people into work, well-regulated capitalism can prove its capacity to do more than engender profits for chief executives. Established businesses will not just be enhancing their reputation: they will be providing durable benefits to the economy and society.

Famously, in his inaugural address in January 1961, John F. Kennedy said: “And so, my fellow Americans: ask not what your country can do for you—ask what you can do for your country.” Now, in 2013, America needs to ask itself again what it can do for its young people—and so does the rest of the world. **Y**



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*To help close this*

# YOUTH OPPORTUNITY GAP

*and ensure a prosperous future*

— *we are launching a bold initiative to* —

**CONNECT HUNDREDS  
OF MILLIONS OF YOUTH**

— *with opportunities for* —

**EDUCATION,  
EMPLOYMENT &  
ENTREPRENEURSHIP**

”

*Steven A. Ballmer,*  
CEO, Microsoft Corporation





# A Call to Action for Business

by Jane Nelson, Director of the Corporate Social Responsibility Initiative at the Harvard Kennedy School of Government



**C**ompanies in sectors as diverse as hospitality, energy and mining are implementing their own youth-focused apprenticeship, recruitment, and mentoring programs. Global ICT corporations are supporting youth development and training, particularly in the area of technology and entrepreneurship skills. Manufacturers and retailers in apparel, food and beverages are developing partnerships to build their young workers' skills and provide them with access to finance and health care.

The business case for investment in youth is clear: the world's young people—more than 1 billion citizens—constitute a vast and growing pool of potential employees, customers, suppliers, and innovators for private-sector companies. However, in an era of greater competition, constrained public sector resources, high unemployment, growing inequality of opportunity, and a mismatch between the skills required to drive competitiveness and prosperity and those that are being developed through many education and training systems, the private sector must invest more directly and strategically to support youth development, employability and entrepreneurship. Companies can find new ways to create shared value by engaging youth as employees and entrepreneurs and by producing products and services that directly serve young people as consumers. Companies can also more effectively harness their philanthropic programs to support youth groups and youth-serving organizations.

There are growing business opportunities to engage with the youth agenda and increased acknowledgment of the rising risks for failing to do so. But what does this mean in practice? Although the specific risks, opportunities and needs will vary, all business leaders can and should ask themselves the following three sets of questions:

## How can we include youth in our core business operations and value chains?

What does the youth demographic mean for our core business strategy and operations? Does it create risks and opportunities that we are failing to address? Are there ways we can more effectively manage our risks and create shared value by including young people directly in our own value chains as suppliers, employees, distributors or customers? What business strategies do we need to achieve this?

## How can we support youth through philanthropy and community engagement?

Do our current philanthropic, community investment and employee engagement programs offer opportunities to initiate or expand our support for youth development, employment and enterprise? Are there ways that we can align these programs more strategically with our core business interests and capabilities? Can we use them to address the specific skills and workforce needs that our company faces, or to support greater youth entrepreneurship and leadership in communities where we operate?

## How can we advocate for youth through public policy dialogue?

How can our senior executives engage more broadly in public policy debates and advocacy to help address systemic obstacles and policy challenges related to improving skills, employability and innovation for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century? How can we give voice to youth and to the issues that matter to them on national and global public policy agendas? How can our companies offer platforms to youth leaders so their voices are part of the dialogue?

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More and more companies are asking these questions and implementing strategic initiatives to address them, either directly through their own business operations or working with youth-focused nonprofits or on a collective industry-wide basis.

Youth organizations around the world have made great progress over the past decade in raising awareness of the business case for involvement in youth development, employability and entrepreneurship initiatives. Leading companies have also demonstrated some of the practical ways they and others in the private sector can get engaged through core business operations and philanthropic and employee engagement programs. New multi-stakeholder and social media platforms, such as the World Economic Forum's Global Shapers program and G20's Youth Summits, are providing youth with a greater voice. Despite this progress, much more leadership is needed from the business community. Companies and corporate leaders must increase the scale and impact of their activities in all of these areas to put youth issues more firmly on global and corporate agendas and mobilize the necessary resources for addressing them. **Y**

# Learning Tailored to Africa's Future

by Reeta Roy, President and CEO of The MasterCard Foundation



Over the last few years, I have spent time with young people from across Africa. Their experiences and perspectives inspire our work at The MasterCard Foundation. Most of them are between the ages of 12 to 25. Their families live on less than US\$2 a day, and they face significant barriers to getting a decent education. When asked what they need, I heard: “An opportunity to learn;” “A network that gives me ideas and encourages me;” “Information about jobs;” “Skills that make me employable;” “Knowledge to handle money;” “A safe place to save;” “A mentor.”

Africa is the youngest continent, home to seven of the 10 fastest-growing economies, and a movement of entrepreneurs. Yet, it also has the lowest secondary and tertiary enrollment rates in the world, and the numbers are disproportionately lower for girls. For those in school, millions are graduating without employable skills. Young people represent more than half of the total unemployed population. Our Foundation saw a gap in funding and innovation aimed at helping young people access education and employment. This has become the focus of our Youth Learning work in Africa.

Let's begin by turning traditional concepts of education inside-out.

This past year, we posed a question to our Foundation's Youth Think Tank—an advisory group of young people participating in projects we support across the continent. How do we create opportunities for young people that move them towards more productive and secure futures?

Let's begin by turning traditional concepts of education inside-out. Let's refocus on learning that helps them gain confidence and knowledge to make decisions and contribute to society. We know that many young people need to be earning and learning at the same time, and hopefully, saving for their future. Education that engages young people in experiential opportunities in growth sectors will likely better prepare them for the workforce, even before they graduate.

The MasterCard Foundation has partnered with a number of organizations that illustrate these new approaches. For example, *Fundación Paraguaya* has developed a financially self-supporting secondary school model that is based on entrepreneurial education. Students create and operate agriculture-based enterprises. They earn an income, and learn how to manage and save money. We are working with *Fundación Paraguaya* on establishing this model in Tanzania, and expanding it to 20 public schools in the country.

Another novel approach is from Samasource, which uses technology and private sector partnerships to integrate unemployed youth from urban slums in Kenya into the formal economy. Samasource trains them on computer skills, and employs them in online-based work that is outsourced from organizations around the world. This work enables young people to participate in the global economy, gain market-relevant skills, and begin earning within weeks of entering the program.

Young people also tell us that acquiring skills is only the first step in their educational journey. Ongoing mentoring is important, particularly for young women. For example, in Kenya, the CAP Workforce Development Institute is retooling technical and vocational training centers to better respond to market needs. Young people are provided with a mentor network that consists of local business professionals who coach them as they transition to jobs or manage their own businesses. This support reduces the risk of them falling back into unemployment.

By their sheer numbers, Africa's 600 million youth will shape the future of the continent. We have an unprecedented opportunity to work with them to redefine education and create important linkages between education and work. Their perspectives can also help us create learning opportunities that truly connect young people to the continent's growth. **Y**

[Young people's] perspectives can help us create learning opportunities that truly connect them to the continent's growth.





# Hospitality Sector Opens Doors to Youth

by Christopher J. Nassetta, CEO of Hilton Worldwide and member of the IYF Board



Every day, as the father of six young women, I see the potential that every young person around the world has to offer. Our young people today are savvy, optimistic, creative and innovative. They are connected—digitally, emotionally and physically—to the people and world around them. But all too often, these youth don't get their chance to shine. All too often their bright, effervescent potential remains locked away because of the strain of life and lack of education or opportunity. Our youth deserve better. As the CEO of a global company that relies heavily on talent to deliver its value, I know first-hand that opening doors for young people can open doors to opportunity and prosperity for us all.


Yet today, according to the International Labour Organization, those doors of opportunity remain closed for some 75 million youth who are unable to find work. The results from this underutilization of such a dynamic segment of the world's population are dissatisfaction, demoralization, and ultimately, global unrest and instability. Like any industry, the travel and tourism sector depends on social and economic stability. But we recognize that achieving this goal requires us to do a better job of integrating young people into the workforce and giving them a real chance to act on their potential and make meaningful contributions to society.

At Hilton Worldwide, we understand that becoming part of the solution to youth challenges around the world is both our business imperative and responsibility.

Every day, I see new hotels rising up in communities around the world. These properties support local economies but increasingly lack the skilled workers required to run them. With this trend projected to escalate, we are at risk of a global "talent gap" that could seriously impact the world's economy. At Hilton Worldwide alone, we have a development pipeline of over 950 hotels. Our industry needs to turn this youth bulge into a youth bonus so that we can match the business needs ahead of us. Fortunately, in the hospitality sector, we are uniquely equipped to do so.

Even as the global economy falters, the travel and tourism sector is gaining strength. The World Travel and Tourism Council has found that our industry is the single largest employer in world, accounting for more than 260 million jobs—nearly 10 percent of global employment. My very first job was at the Capitol Holiday Inn, where I worked in the engineering department, learning the more delicate points of hotel operations while, what else, plunging toilets. My ascent from there was no accident. I aspired to greater things and the ladder of success that the hospitality industry offered me—and has offered so many others—was crucial to my development. I started from the bottom, acquiring new skills along the way that prepared me for new roles and added responsibilities. This is our industry's unique role—we are the purveyors of meaningful career paths.

At Hilton Worldwide, we not only recognize the role we play, but also understand that becoming part of the solution to youth challenges around the world is both our business imperative and responsibility. That is why we have come together with the International Youth Foundation to address the vulnerable situations of youth around the world. Together we will provide support and resources to Hilton Worldwide properties so that they can support young people in their communities. Hilton Hotels & Resorts, our flagship brand, has committed in-full to supporting this call to action. The brand's *Bright Blue Futures* program engages Team Members and the public to provide stability and hope to youth in their communities around the world through skills training and workforce development initiatives. We want to develop and enrich relationships with local youth organizations that touch the lives of youth every day. And we're committed to collaborating with experts in the field as well as our peers to develop a reliable mechanism to monitor and evaluate our progress.

But we cannot do it alone. By working together, the public and private sectors, the NGO community and our industry, can make a real and lasting difference for youth around the world. We need to create company-wide strategies for youth development, and educate our stakeholders about the challenges facing our youth and their wellbeing. Join us. Help us write a brighter future for young people—and then watch the world thrive. 

# Inspiring the Next Generation of Entrepreneurs

by Douglas L. Becker, Chairman and CEO of Laureate Education, Inc., and Chairman of the IYF Board



Ideas and a vision can come at any age. I was 17 years old when I had an idea to use optical storage technology to create a wallet card that could store hundreds of pages of a patient's medical records. With the help of my 21-year-old brother, two of our best friends, and the support of a great mentor, we created a system that we ultimately sold to Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Maryland. The experience kick-started my passion for entrepreneurship and provided a foundation for me to explore additional business interests.

My next stop was as CEO of Sylvan Learning Systems, which became the world's largest tutoring company with over 1,000 Sylvan Learning Centers. I always believed that a great business could also be great for society. Sylvan equipped young people with the skills and confidence to be successful in school and in some cases helped them overcome obstacles to college admission.

I was fortunate to come from a family where taking risks and choosing the less traveled path was both accepted and supported.

At the same time that Sylvan was focusing on K–12 education, I began to see opportunities to expand our work into higher education and ultimately helped to create what is now called Laureate Education. Our belief is that quality higher education should and can be much more accessible and affordable especially in developing countries.

I was fortunate to come from a family where taking risks and choosing the less traveled path was both accepted and supported. My parents demonstrated the importance of hard work and discipline, and always encouraged me to think differently. Not everyone has this level of family support, but successful entrepreneurship can still be achieved with perseverance and determination. That is why I believe so passionately in instilling these same entrepreneurial skills and values in today's young people—regardless of where they live, or what challenges they face.

I have long admired the work of the International Youth Foundation to support young entrepreneurs around the globe. The Foundation's international reach and focus on young people made them a natural partner for Laureate. So, for nearly a decade we have supported IYF and its *YouthActionNet*® program. To date, the Laureate-based *YouthActionNet*® programs have provided 250 young social entrepreneurs in Brazil, Chile, Costa Rica, Honduras, Mexico, Peru, Spain, and Turkey with funding, training, and networking support to promote positive social change in their local communities. These programs allow our institutions to expand well beyond their own walls to leverage the creative ideas and passion of young people who can invent new solutions to society's toughest challenges. Our hope is that by scaling up global efforts like *YouthActionNet*®—which by 2015 expects to support 1,500 young social entrepreneurs worldwide—we can make a deeper positive social impact on a greater scale.

In addition to the positive social change this generation of young entrepreneurs is delivering to society, they have the potential to create significant economic benefit for our world as well. Today's young people will need to create the future solutions to our social ills as well as our economic struggles. Their work is of great importance to us all. I am reminded of what Laureate's Honorary Chancellor, President Bill Clinton, once told a group of our students in Manaus, Brazil: "Many of the jobs in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century, even in developed countries, will not require a university degree. But almost all of the new jobs will be created by people who have a university degree."

One day soon, a young graduate from a university in the Laureate network or a participant in *YouthActionNet*® will create a product—or develop a solution—that will have a profound impact on our world and improve the lives of millions of people. I very much look forward to that day. **Y**

"Many of the jobs in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century, even in developed countries, will not require a university degree. But almost all of the new jobs will be created by people who have a university degree."  
— **BILL CLINTON**



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*In the Middle East, a*

# YOUNG PERSON'S

*best hope for survival and a brighter future*

*— hinges on their ability to —*

**FIND A JOB, EARN INCOME,  
& SAVE MONEY.**

*We hope to help thousands of people*

# FIND JOBS

*in an efficient way simply by  
using their cell phones.*

..... ” .....

*Mohammed Zaid Al-Kilany,*

YouthActionNet® Fellow and co-founder of Souktel, an innovative cell phone-based service connecting job seekers with employers in 15 countries worldwide.



# Growing a Greener Economy in Colombia

by Alejandro Zapata, Co-Founder and Executive Director of *Portafolio Verde* and 2009 YouthActionNet® Fellow



I am optimistic about Colombia's environmental future. Why? Because every day I am privileged to work with people and institutions that are implementing creative solutions to the sustainability challenges—environmental, economic, and social—that we face as a country and as a global society.

In 2005, inspired by our passion for nature and concern for the environment, myself and another young environmental engineer founded *Portafolio Verde*, a social enterprise based in Medellín that designs and implements innovative strategies for sustainable development. Over seven years, we have collaborated with hundreds of companies, governments, NGOs, universities, and grassroots groups to develop solutions to challenges such as air pollution, pesticide use, poverty, and resource depletion.

Often the answers are complex—requiring fundamental changes in how systems operate and how people conduct their lives. But it's that very complexity—and bringing people together—that makes our work all the more creative and rewarding.

With every passing year, we see more people and organizations becoming part of the solution. A growing environmental consciousness is contributing to collective action. Just last month, the World Economic Forum ranked Colombia sixth among nations worldwide in the transition to a sustainable energy model. We see our role within this growing movement as providing individuals and organizations with the tools and targeted expertise they need to achieve their goals in a fast-evolving field.

One area where we've made significant progress is in the corporate sector. To date, *Portafolio Verde* has worked with more than 300 companies to assess their sustainability needs and develop practical strategies. One of our recent clients—a kitchen appliance manufacturer—contracted us to help develop its first-ever sustainability strategy. Working closely with both the executive team and plant workers, we looked at the entire value chain—at the sourcing of raw materials, ways to reduce water consumption in the manufacturing process, and how the company's refrigerators and stoves could be made more energy efficient. The result; an inclusive process that addressed the company's impact on people and the environment.

The public sector, too, has emerged as a leading force for change—initiating a series of reforms and measures designed to decrease our collective impact on the environment. Over the years, *Portafolio Verde* has supported a number of these efforts—working with the Ministry of Environment to spur green business growth countrywide; collaborating with the environmental authority of Medellín to reduce the city's air pollution; and contracting with the State of Antioquia to design an environmental education strategy. Our role often involves engaging diverse stakeholders—business owners, parents, students, community leaders—in developing and implementing solutions.

We also strive to generate awareness and spark action at the grassroots level. Last year, when Disney announced the launch of its movie *Chimpanzee*, we offered to help promote the film's premier in Bogotá and Medellín via our social networks. Filmgoers wanting to attend entered a contest requiring they send us a painting of a chimp. Our alliance with Disney not only helped to reinforce *Portafolio Verde's* brand and expand our social media presence; it rallied people behind the preservation of endangered species. As with much of our work, the campaign was carried out with a spirit of fun and community building.

Much has changed since *Portafolio Verde* began its work. We recognize that we're not alone in working to build a greener economy and are proud to have gained international certification alongside 650 other companies that are using the power of business to solve social and environmental problems. We've also grown as an organization with a team now of 40, the majority of whom are 20 to 35 years of age. Every day, our youthful staff demonstrates their concern, commitment, and creativity in pursuit of our shared mission.

As importantly, *Portafolio Verde* has adhered to its own core principles and remained financially sustainable. All my life, my passion has been the environment and the community. I've always looked to build a more responsible and inclusive society. Being recognized—and supported—for the quality of our work, and the spirit that drives it, is affirmation enough that we're on the right path. While it would be easy to succumb to all the negative news about the state of our global environment, it's far more empowering to be on the side of making positive change—community by community. **Y**





# A Youth Movement Comes of Age in Australia

by Jan Owen, CEO of the Foundation for Young Australians



Over the past ten years, Australia has experienced more social activism by young people than in the previous twenty. Young people's way of thinking, organising and collaborating is leading to a new global conversation. Our young people are creating a new narrative about not only the kind of world in which they want to survive, but one in which they can live, love and thrive.

There have been movements for change throughout history, but never has there been the vast range of tools (offline and online) now available: the ability to mobilise millions of people around global causes and the capacity to raise significant funds through crowdsourcing platforms. Add to this the vast range of talented people from diverse backgrounds—lawyers, indigenous youth, artists, scientists—all collaborating to solve problems in magnificent and innovative ways.

Armed with these tools and resources, young social entrepreneurs are competing for the hearts, minds and wallets of their peers and the general public. They are challenging our notions of centralised, hierarchical leadership. They are also hungry to learn, ready to get their hands dirty and willing to fully immerse themselves in new ways of working with, and leading, others. Yet few organisations are preparing them with the skills to do so.

Promoting organisational and financial sustainability while achieving real and systemic change, for example, remains a challenge. Such efforts may take another set of skills altogether. Stanford University's work on Collective Impact—the commitment from different sectors to a common social problem-solving agenda—has shown the profound importance of 'backbone' organisations that provide operational capacity and support to society's change makers. The fundamental premise here is that we can all better leverage our resources, time and talent by collaborating with others.

At the Foundation for Young Australians (FYA), we see ourselves as one of these 'backbone' organisations, supporting young people in two ways. Firstly, we build platforms to enable organisations and sectors to collaborate around common objectives. Secondly, we directly support groups of young people through skills, investment and leadership development. To do this, we are deepening our expertise in finance, communications, corporate and philanthropic partnerships, government relations and youth marketing and engagement.

For example, this year we established the National Indigenous Youth Leadership Academy to identify and develop Australia's next generation of indigenous leaders while they are still at school. The founding partners are FYA and the National Centre of Indigenous Excellence and the Stronger Smarter Institute.

Change It Up supports teams of young people to generate ideas to improve their local communities. Diverse members of the community—from youth workers to business leaders to local government officials—come together to 'host' a Change It Up in their community and then invest (both financially and in-kind) in young people's ideas for change.

Our Young Social Pioneers initiative is part of the International Youth Foundation's global youth entrepreneurs program *YouthActionNet*®, where young people from across Australia participate in a 12-month intensive program to accelerate their venture and enhance their personal leadership skills.

This year we partnered with global investment bank UBS in a mentoring program for our Pioneers with the firm's senior executives. In the past three years, the Pioneers have, among other ventures, engaged 55,000 people in tackling Australia's binge drinking culture; transformed volunteering through leading-edge technology; started new democracy movements; and spearheaded ventures in sustainable fashion, architecture and design in developing countries.

I am fortunate to be surrounded by under-30-year-olds and constantly seek their support, advice and know-how. They challenge and enrich my life, my thinking and my worldview. Any senior executive, manager, politician or leader without a group of young mentors may well be missing out on critically important personal, professional and business growth opportunities.

We have an opportunity right now to invest in young people and their ideas. With half the world's population under 30, we have a profound responsibility to ensure they are fully equipped with the courage, imagination and will to take on the challenges that lie ahead in an ever-changing world. **Y**

# Wanted: Women Engineers for South Africa's Future

by Naadiya Moosajee, Co-Founder of SAWomEng and member of the IYF Board



South Africa may still be a young democracy, but it is a shining example of how a repressive regime can be changed peacefully. It has also continued to play a leading role in shaping the economic development of the African continent. Yet while we are part of the BRICS (Brazil, Russia, India, China & South Africa) emerging economies, we also have to deal with the inequalities of the apartheid legacy. Our challenge as a country has been to curb rising unemployment and an economic divide that has replaced the racial divide in South Africa. We face a double-edged sword. While we have high jobless rates—especially among our youth—we also face a skills shortage. Our economy, based on mining, manufacturing and agricultural processing, is struggling to find top talent to meet the growing demand within those sectors. Women have largely been marginalised and excluded within these environments. So how do we change it? How do we create a talent pipeline that meets our growing demands for scarce skills, and creates areas of new growth and job opportunities? The answer is simply to utilise the most underutilised resource in South Africa—our women.

People ask me why it is important to have more girls in engineering. For starters, it's one of the oldest professions in the world, yet still has very limited female participation. Reflecting back, I see the challenges facing South Africa today—like the strikes by miners and farm workers and the ongoing trouble in those sectors—are partially symptomatic of a single-gendered environment. Women in any situation bring a different way of thinking, no better or worse than their male counterparts, just different. Our approaches tend to be more collaborative, and I believe that is what this country needs: a more collaborative approach to problem solving. Another strong reason for incorporating women in the engineering sector is that we hold 80 percent of the country's buying power, so creating products with the end user in mind adds value to a company. Moreover, studies show that educating women and ensuring they actively participate in the economy boosts a country's GDP by 9 percent.

My own journey starts as an “accidental engineer.” I grew up in a time of euphoria and opportunity within South Africa when barriers were removed for people of colour. Being a young woman from a conservative society, I found engineering was not a popular choice. The truth is, I did not


know much about engineering or the opportunities it held to change the world. I applied for engineering because I wanted to work in the sciences. Fast forward a few years. With a better understanding of engineering and its role in society, I realised many women in my class were also “accidental engineers.”

For all these reasons, I decided to co-found South African Women in Engineering (SAWomEng) and have spent the last seven years of my life creating awareness for young girls around engineering and developing the next generation of engineering leaders.

Each year, we reach over 1500 girls on our high school program, called GirlEng, which provides trained university mentors to act as big sisters to our GirlEngers. Our industry partnerships help young engineering graduates find jobs, with one of our biggest partners, Unilever, recruiting 20 percent of our delegates to work in their African operations.

How do we create a talent pipeline that meets our growing demands for scarce skills, and creates areas of new growth and job opportunities? The answer is simply to utilise the most underutilised resource—our women.

SAWomEng has also created a platform to increase awareness around engineering careers, and through our partnerships with the largest industries, we have provided scholarships for those deciding to enter the field. Furthermore, we provide opportunities for the top female engineering students in South Africa to help develop creative solutions to our country's toughest challenges.

I'm pleased that through our efforts, we have found enthusiastic young women who want to change the world and realize that engineering could be that vehicle to reach their goals. As we increase the number of women within this sector, we will be able to grow it—thus creating more job opportunities for the 70 percent of South African youth who are unemployed. These are difficult times. Our country is at an economic and political crossroads. But with more young women taking up the mantle of leadership, we can create a collaborative space to engineer a more prosperous South Africa. 



# Bridging the Educational Divide in India

by Jithin Nedumala, CoFounder of Make a Difference (MAD) and 2010 YouthActionNet® Fellow



Often the solutions to some of our most intractable social problems are relatively straightforward, but it takes a mix of the right people, the right vision, and an irrational sense of possibility for that solution to emerge. What I'm about to share with you is a proven strategy for equipping my country's most marginalized children with the knowledge and skills they need to succeed. By marshaling the compassion and drive of college students, our work also builds critical leadership skills. Sounds like a win-win solution? See for yourself.

Six years ago, I walked with four friends into a shelter for homeless children in India's coastal city of Kerala. In just minutes, our lives changed forever. We were young, still in college, and did not get along so well with our teachers, but we wanted to make a difference. We realized that the education system in India created a large disparity in how the rich and poor learned. We saw a huge untapped resource among us as young adults, who if provided the right platform, were capable of bridging that gap.

Fast forward to 2012. Make a Difference (MAD) today is more than a teaching organization; it is a platform that empowers youth to become change leaders who make positive, self-sustaining social impact in their communities. Nearly 1,800 MAD volunteers now reach over 4,000 children in 23 cities across the country.

The average MAD teacher is 19 to 20 years old, attends college, and balances work, studies, and a social life like any other young person. But they are not like every other young person. Every weekend, for three hours, they put everything aside to teach English to a group of local children. Why English? Research demonstrates that a young person's chances of landing a job in India increases by 400 percent if they can communicate in English. With support from our knowledge partner, Cambridge University Press, MAD volunteers teach English language skills that are critical for communication, confidence, and success in today's world.

• MAD's common sense approach of linking college educated youth with students in need has resulted in a low-cost, easily scalable model for advancing the educations and life prospects of thousands of disadvantaged children.

After spending one year as a teacher, the volunteers can apply to MAD's leadership development program, Leadership x Design (LxD). MAD Fellows in the LxD program run MAD chapters within individual cities and are given tools and resources to become high-impact leaders whose skills are in high demand. MAD Fellows have gone on to study at some of the world's most prestigious educational institutions, including the London School of Economics, Princeton, and the Indian School of Business. Others have been hired by an impressive array of employers, including Oracle, Google, Yahoo, and Goldman Sachs.

As for our students, the short-term win has been a visible boost in confidence—and skills for the future—as a result of the training and attention they receive from their MAD mentors who also serve as powerful role models. As impressive, less than 1 percent of the children have dropped out of school since the inception of the MAD program at their local center. One of these youth is Jobish Matthew, who attended our first-ever MAD class in 2006 at a YMCA Boys' Home for orphaned children. Recently, Jobish was accepted into the US State Department's 'Community College Initiative Program,' where participants receive scholarships to attend college in the US for a year in any discipline of their choice. His MAD teachers had helped prepare him for the exam, for which English is a primary competency.

As you can see, MAD's common sense approach of linking college-educated youth with students in need has resulted in a low-cost (roughly US\$100 a child per year), easily scalable model for advancing the educations and life prospects of thousands of disadvantaged children.

More than two million vulnerable children in India could benefit from these programs. Over the next five years, we hope to reach at least 15,000 more, while enhancing the quality of our current programming.

When we first started there were those who thought we were crazy (aka MAD) to even consider transforming the educational outlook for our country's largely overlooked children. Now, we recognize that the very same solution that works here could be made to work almost anywhere where the same essential ingredients exist.

Are we mad to think we can change the world? Maybe. But thinking the impossible is often where real change begins. **Y**

# A GLOBAL COMMUNITY OF ACTION



We salute these organizations who have joined us in the effort  
to close the opportunity gap for the millions of young people  
who can't find a job—and are running out of hope.

**WILL YOU JOIN US?**

[www.iyfnet.org](http://www.iyfnet.org)

