

PROGRAM IN FOCUS: *ENTRA21*

Entra21 is a regional program, launched by the International Youth Foundation (IYF) in collaboration with the Multilateral Investment Fund of the Inter-American Development Bank, to provide disadvantaged youth in Latin America and the Caribbean with market-relevant training or to create decent work opportunities. The word *entra* [or enter in Spanish] refers to the “enter” key on a computer keyboard to represent the program’s emphasis on providing youth with computer and other IT skills needed for success in the 21st century workplace.

Officially launched in 2001, Phase I of the Program, which ended in 2007, benefited 19,649 youth in 15 countries through a comprehensive set of training and job placement activities. Some 32 local organizations partnered with businesses, community groups, training institutes and schools to implement the initiative

The *entra21* model consists of the following elements:

- **Clear targeting and selection mechanisms** to ensure youth have the skills and motivation to succeed in short-term training
- **Training content designed to meet the employment needs of the labor market**
- **Integrated comprehensive training** that includes technical and non-technical skills and business planning for youth entrepreneurs
- **Internships** for youth entrepreneurs
- **Job placement services** for youth, and access to business advice and financing for entrepreneurs

Based on data collected from an independent evaluator six or more months after youth graduated, the *entra21* program was a success. Not only did it exceed the target number of youth, but employment rates were 14 points higher than expected.

INDICATORS	RESULTS
Graduation Rate	87%
Employment Rate	54%
Job Quality	78% with formal contracts; 76% with 1 or more benefits; 74% earned minimum wage or more
Youth Satisfaction	High (80% youth liked their jobs a lot)
Employer Satisfaction	High (100% satisfied with interns; rated youth employed as 4.1 out of total score of 5)

RENEWING *ENTRA21* – LAUNCH OF PHASE II

Due to the success of *entra21*, a second phase was launched in 2007, to benefit an additional 50,000 youth from low-income households through projects that would:

- Reach youth at higher risk of being un- or under-employed due to factors such as being rural based, disabled, with lower human capital (e.g. less than 10 years of formal education, etc.) or gang-involved; and
- Scale up best practices validated in Phase I so youth employment training and services could be available to more youth.

As of early 2011, with 11 months remaining in Phase II, 51,507 youth have enrolled and more than 85% successfully (over)

completed the training. The majority of youth participants are under 21 years of age and come from low-income households. Approximately 34% of those enrolled are considered at higher risk due in large part to the fact they are rural-based and/or without a high school education. In Mexico, for example, SEPICJ, based in the state of Puebla, is helping 500 indigenous youth develop the skills and secure the resources necessary to launch micro-businesses. Paraguayan youth, supported by CIRD and several other organizations that specialize in training people with disabilities, gained skills in areas of market demand such as tele-marketing, massage therapy and clerical skills. Thus far only a handful of the projects targeting harder to hire youth have been evaluated by an external specialist. These evaluations, however, which compare youths' employment situation before training and a 6-month follow up reveal promising results. For example, youth enrolled in a Peruvian project had a significantly better employment rate than youth in a control group. In Paraguay, the percentage of youth working climbed from none working at baseline to 50% at follow up.

To reach greater scale, partners in Argentina, Brazil Colombia, Chile, and Peru are collaborating with their governments to transfer elements of best practices developed through *entra21* to local employment offices, public schools, networks of training institutions and municipal programs. In Argentina, for example, IYF's partner, Fundación SES, has trained staff from 86 municipal employment offices across the country on how to do intake, provide job counseling and conduct employability workshops with youth. Training institutes contracted by Chile's National Training Service (SENCE) learned how to integrate an innovative methodology developed by IYF's partner, Fundación Chile, to assess youths' aptitudes and interests. The organization also developed a personalized plan using Web-based tools to create on-line dossiers to facilitate the matching of job seekers (youth) with job opportunities.

For more information on the *entra21* Program please contact entra21@iyfnet.org or visit IYF's website at www.iyfnet.org

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