

## THE CHALLENGE

The world's youth cohort today—more than one billion ranging in ages from 15 to 24—is the largest in history. Each year, millions of these young people leave school and begin to look for work to support themselves and their families. Unfortunately, far too many face significant challenges as they seek to make this critical life transition. In many communities, there simply are not enough jobs in the formal sector to employ this large influx of young people. In addition, young people are often ill-prepared to enter the workforce because they lack the skills in demand by local businesses. According to the ILO, 81 million youth were unemployed in 2009, with many experts estimating as many as 100 million today can't find jobs. Millions more youth are underemployed and live below the poverty line. The consequences of this global youth unemployment crisis are severe, both for the young people themselves and for the social and economic life of their countries. However, when proper investments are made, young people have the potential to lead productive and independent lives and contribute positively to society.

## THE INITIATIVE

To address the challenges facing youth seeking to enter the labor force or start up businesses, the International Youth Foundation (IYF) and the Caterpillar Foundation have joined forces to create **EquipYouth**, a program that will provide 8,000 young people in 11 countries with market-relevant life and skills training along with job placement support and services. The US\$10 million initiative will be implemented over three years (January 2012–December 2014) by IYF partners in each country. Employee engagement is viewed as an integral part of this global initiative. The EquipYouth program seeks to increase employability among disadvantaged youth through improved life and technical skills, internships and on-the-job training, increased job placement support, capacity building for local partners and trainers, and entrepreneurship development (where applicable). The program will also implement strategic monitoring and evaluation systems. Youth in the following countries will be reached through this initiative: Brazil, China, India, Indonesia, Jordan, Mexico, Panama, Peru, Russia, Singapore, and South Africa.

## ANTICIPATED OUTCOMES

Among its projected goals, **EquipYouth** will enable more than 50 percent of youth who complete training to obtain decent jobs within six months of graduation. Additionally, the program expects that 15 to 25 percent of youth who do not obtain employment will continue training or formal schooling, thereby increasing their employability for the future. **EquipYouth** will work with training partners in each location to develop or adapt curriculum to ensure it meets the demands of local employers, as part of IYF's "dual customer approach." The program will also be customized to address youth needs in each area.

Among the anticipated skills to be offered as part of **EquipYouth**: problem solving, conflict management, healthy behaviors, career assessment, teamwork, job interview techniques, time management and workers' rights.

(continued)

## DONOR

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## LOCAL PARTNERS

Instituto Alianza (Brazil); China Youth Development Foundation/Bai Nian Vocational Schools (China); QUEST (India); Indonesia Business Links (Indonesia); Youth:Work Jordan (Jordan); Tec Milenio University (Mexico); Conalep Nuevo Leon (Mexico); Cospae (Panama); TECSUP (Peru); New Perspectives Foundation (Russia); Talentpreneur Hub/Youth Academy Enterprise Academy (Singapore); and St. Anthony's Education Centre (South Africa).

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