Enhancing Educational and Employment Opportunities for Youth

In the world today, there are too many people lacking the necessary education and relevant training for good, productive jobs and there are too many unproductive jobs with poor remuneration.

It is time to break the vicious circle of poor education and training, poor jobs and poverty and to ensure access by the youth to appropriate education and training followed by adequate support during the transition to work.

In response to this challenge, The International Youth Foundation (IYF), an active member of the Youth Employment Network, has teamed up with the Multilateral Investment Fund (MIF) of the Inter-American Development Bank to help train up to 12,000 of the disadvantaged youth in Latin America and the Caribbean, and help them find jobs. 

entra 21, a US$25 million program, is co-financing youth employment projects in information technology (IT) through grants that support training and job placement. A premium is placed on capturing and distributing important lessons learned.

Lucent Technologies and Microsoft are among the first corporate partners of the program. The United States Agency for International Development (USAID) has invested $3 million over three years in the initiative.

The alliance is intended to build a bridge between labor market needs and youth whose interests and capabilities make them ideal candidates to fill the information technology skills gap.

Grants will be awarded to up to 35 locally conceived and executed projects, and 11 projects are already underway. For example, in Bolivia, 600 young people will be trained to help nonprofits in rural and urban communities link up with a new nationwide telecommunications network system. In Colombia, 500 young people will gain technical competencies that are in demand by local employers. In the Dominican Republic, entra 21 will help 360 disadvantaged youth gain the technical and personal skills they need to qualify for jobs being created in the city of Santiago.