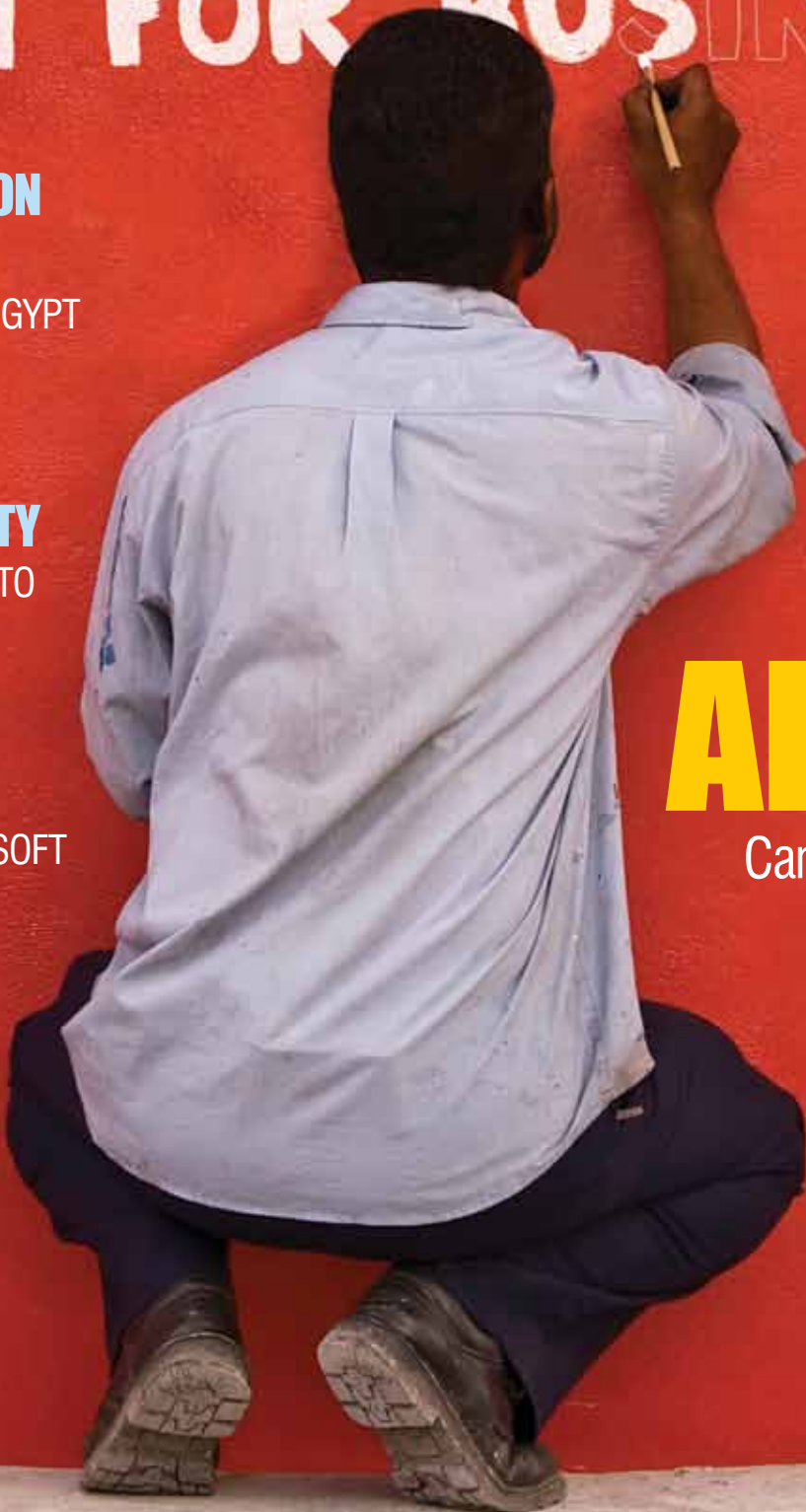


# YOUTH

OPEN FOR BUSINESS



**“THE REVOLUTION IS NOT OVER”**

NEXT STEPS FOR EGYPT

**HOW TO DEFEAT POVERTY**

HERNANDO DE SOTO

**DOING THE GLOBAL GOOD**

Q&A WITH MICROSOFT

## AFRICA:

Can Young Entrepreneurs Boost the Continent's Economic Growth?



# CONTENTS

AUTUMN  
2011  
ISSUE NO. 5



## IYF SPOTLIGHT

### 6 AFRICA UNEMPLOYED

#### Can Young Business Owners Help Africa's Job Market—and Themselves?

By Christy Macy

Africa's young people are emerging as the greatest hope for renewed economic and social progress across the region. Often struggling themselves, a growing number of determined and innovative entrepreneurs are demonstrating they can have a positive impact on their communities. But are governments and the private sector willing to make the investments necessary to ensure more of them succeed?

## FEATURES

PHOTOGRAPH COURTESY NNAEMEKA IKEGWUONU

### 13 IN GOOD COMPANY

#### Q&A

A conversation with Pamela Passman, Corporate Vice President, Global Corporate and Regulatory Affairs, Microsoft

### 16 CITIZEN YOUTH

#### Reaching New Heights: Young Change Makers Spread Their Wings

By Sheila Kinkade

Meet three dynamic *YouthActionNet*® alumni and learn how far they have come to achieving their visions for social change.

Above: In Nigeria, *YouthActionNet*® Fellow Nnaemeka Ikegwuonu uses radio as a tool to increase farm incomes and productivity.

### 20 PARTNERS IN PROGRESS

#### United in Purpose: IYF's Partners Advance "Year of Youth" Goals

By Lisa Jones

NGOs in Kenya, China and Palestine make youth empowerment a priority in their communities.

### 23 POLICY MATTERS

#### Going for Scale Across Latin America: How IYF Initiatives are Impacting the Region's Youth Agenda

By Sheila Kinkade

Governments around the world are seeking solutions to reverse climbing youth jobless rates. Two IYF programs—*entra21* and *Obra*—demonstrate ways it can be done.



*“A lot of politicians say they want to put youth on the nation’s agenda, but once they get elected, they lose their focus, they lose their will.”*

Maxsalia Salmon, 23  
Youth leader, Jamaica



PHOTOGRAPH BY SHEILA KINKADE

## DEPARTMENTS

### 2 CEO'S MESSAGE

### 3 GUEST COMMENTARY

*By Hernando de Soto*

“If legal institutions are not reformed to allow for economic growth from the bottom up, then people’s hopes for a better life will remain unrealized.”

### 12 FYI FROM IYF

Selected resources on youth entrepreneurship.

### IN MY OWN WORDS

#### 5 The Revolution is Not Over

*By Raghda El-Ebrashi*

Is the youth-led “Arab Spring” over in Egypt? A young activist in Cairo joins the national debate around the future of her country.

#### 19 Collaboration is the Key to the Future

*By Simón Menéndez Sadornil*

A young social entrepreneur shares his perspective on the causes, and possible solutions, of Spain’s current immigration crisis.

### 26 IYF AROUND THE WORLD

#### At Work Improving Young Lives

A glimpse of where we’ve been and what we’ve been up to.

### 28 PARTING THOUGHTS

*By Sir David Bell*

### 29 THROUGH OUR LENS

*By Jean-Pierre Isbendjian*

# YOU<sup>th</sup>

AUTUMN 2011 | ISSUE NO. 5

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## VISION

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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Currently, half the population of Sub-Saharan Africa is less than 18 years old—making it the youngest region in the world. Like their peers to the north who are helping to sustain the “Arab Spring”, these young people are

demanding a greater voice in their communities and deploying their unique talents and innovative ideas to address their nations’ challenges.

So it should be no surprise that in this issue of YOUth magazine, we chose to highlight young people from across the African continent who—often against the odds—are realizing their own hopes for a better life and helping to rebuild their societies.

You will meet two such young entrepreneurs from Nairobi’s slums whose businesses, albeit small and new, are nonetheless helping to support their families and creating jobs in the community. You will hear the passionate voices of two activists from Egypt and Spain who argue that revolutionary change does not come easily, but indeed through collaboration based on democratic principles. And you will learn how a few *YouthActionNet*® Fellows are working tirelessly toward the goal of a more productive and prosperous Africa.

Framing the economic argument behind youth-led change is a world renowned economist who has pioneered new thinking about building capital to defeat poverty. We also interviewed a corporate leader at Microsoft who underscores that even as today’s youth can inspire and lead the struggle for positive change, government policies and corporate investments are needed to support and sustain those efforts.

Help spread our message that investing in young people can change the world. Share this issue of YOUth with your friends and colleagues.

William S. Reese  
President and CEO  
International Youth Foundation





## Interview:

# Hernando de Soto

Leading economist Hernando de Soto comments on recent events in the Arab world and explains why legal reform is essential to improving the lives of the world's poor and vulnerable. He spoke to YOUth magazine from his office in Lima, Peru.

**You have spent your life committed to improving the economic prospects of the poor and vulnerable. What inspired you to follow this path?**

This came very naturally to me, as I come from a country where there are so many class differences and disparities. My father was a diplomat, so I lived most of my early life outside Peru, mostly in Europe. My brother and I returned home for summer vacations. My parents called these visits the "Peruvitization of the boys." I could not help but see the enormous differences between European countries and Peru, and somehow I felt an obligation to do something. When I returned to my country to attend university, I began to learn how important the rule of law was, and how giving people the tools of enterprise and property was a way to empower them. It was intellectually exciting to find something I could do beyond charity. To me, this path was simply irresistible.

**What can we learn from the tumultuous events of the "Arab Spring"?**

This revolution was sparked by 26-year-old Mohamed Bouazizi, a young man in Tunisia who was reduced to making US\$10 a day selling fruits and vegetables on the street, and could no longer afford to pay the bribes of a corrupt system or the required government fees. One day, a government official took away the scales he needed to weigh his produce. He struggled to get them back, and when he failed, he poured paint thinner over his body and set himself on fire. But the story begins even earlier, when

Mohamed was a young boy and his father died. Local laws and customs made it impossible for his widow to keep legal ownership of the property. As a result Mohamed's mother could not leverage that land to help support her family or grow a business, leaving her son increasingly frustrated and desperate.

Many of the young people out in the streets in the Arab world are trying to create or grow a business but don't have the legal rights or protections to do that. In addition to democracy, they want entry into business. So yes, citizens need to fight for their identity and their dignity, but they also need to fight for the right to make a living.

Leaders and governments may change and more democracy may come to this region of the world. But if the existing legal institutions are not reformed to allow for economic growth from the bottom up, then people's hopes for a better life will simply remain unrealized.

**Why have you made property rights and legal reform the cornerstone of your plan to lift up those at the bottom of the economic ladder?**

Empowering the poor begins with property rights. Unfortunately, most developing countries fail to give the majority of people these basic rights, so it's impossible for them to legalize their property and their businesses, no matter how well-intentioned they are. The poor remain poor when their assets in land or housing or a small business are not legally integrated into the formal economy. As a result, they



When introducing Mr. de Soto at the 2004 World Economic Forum in Davos, President Bill Clinton described him as “the world’s most important living economist.”

end up owning what I call “dead capital”—assets they can’t benefit from economically.

If, for example, you want to sell your home but don’t have a title, the value of the property goes down substantially. But if you do have legal ownership, the value of your home can go up 20% or 30%. By formally registering ownership of a farm, a poor farmer can more easily secure a loan to expand his livelihood. So property rights are the “root” of reforming the system so that the poor can improve their lives.

#### **What has been the impact of your consultations with governments around the world on how to implement legal and economic reforms?**

There are plenty of success stories, starting with our work in Peru, where the economy has grown and where there are more legal tools available to poor people to create their own wealth. We’ve worked in five continents—in places like El Salvador, Tanzania, Egypt, Albania, Ethiopia, and the Philippines. Some countries who see the value of these reforms don’t work with us directly. Leaders from Russia and South Africa, for example, have visited the Institute for Liberty and Democracy (ILD) headquarters in Peru, and then return to their countries and implement ILD-inspired legal and economic reforms on their own.

#### **What has been the role of government and business leaders in enabling reform?**

Governments manage and control property. The only way to change the existing order is by getting the government to make those changes. But this whole process is like dismantling an eagle’s nest: you need to do it one branch at a time, so that the eagle won’t wake up and get angry. That’s why we so often work

directly with heads of state. If we don’t have their support and authority to make these reforms, it won’t work.

We’ve seen that after these legal changes and reforms have been made in a particular country that a lot of private firms come in after us, such as banks and construction firms. We clear the territory for them. Before we go in, many companies often aren’t even considering investing in these countries.

#### **The vast majority of young people work in the informal sector. How would these reforms change their lives?**

There’s very high unemployment among youth today—not just in the developing world but in places like Spain—where unemployment among youth

is up to 40%. We need to think about more than employment to address this problem; we need to think about entrepreneurship. There are so many opportunities in these countries for young people to start their own businesses. But they face so many barriers. It should not take 500 days to open a small bakery, or ten years of dealing with red tape to get legal title to a vacant piece of land, as was true in Egypt. The easier we can make these business transactions, the better it is for young entrepreneurs and everyone else. So all the reforms and the work that we do will help young entrepreneurs to be successful, no matter where they live.

#### **What advice would you give to young entrepreneurs just starting out on their own?**

They can be such a positive and driving force in the economy. My advice to young entrepreneurs would be to specialize their business so they can take it to scale. Too many young people have two or three little businesses that they are running. That means they are not doing any one of them very well. They need to specialize to increase their productivity. If you have a small shirt factory and cultivate a small vegetable garden on the side, you will not be producing a great shirt, or great buttons, or productive gardens. You need to do one thing and do it well. 📌

*Hernando de Soto is President of the Institute for Liberty and Democracy (ILD), a Peruvian-based NGO and one of the world’s leading economic think tanks. Among other leadership positions, Mr. de Soto served as an economist for the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade and as CEO of Universal Engineering Corporation (Europe’s largest consulting engineering firm). Among other works, he is the author of “The Mystery of Capital”, which has sold over 2 million copies worldwide.*



# The Revolution is **NOT** Over.

By Dr. Raghda El-Ebrashi, 28



The January 25th revolution in Egypt was just a start to our call for democracy. Egypt is not democratic yet, although many people are celebrating the 'victory' of the revolution. There

are many challenges that we need to shed the light on which are hindering the path to democracy in my country. Young people like me are still living with hope as we had been for more than 25 years, but still, hope alone is not enough.

The most basic thing to do first is to define the meaning of democracy, freedom, and the civil state. We still don't have a national or state agreement on the meaning of those critical elements, which means every person or group in Egypt can exercise citizenship from a subjective point of view. People who are calling for a civil state like me are in a real struggle—not only in debates—with those who believe in a religious state, or even with those who misinterpret secularism. Everyone has the right to offer his or her opinion, but I don't think the concept of human rights, freedom of speech, citizenship, religious freedom, women's representation, and respect for the law should be voted on under the 'call for democracy'!

Before we talk about the next elections, and who would be the next Egyptian president, we should first talk about the problem of how to address poverty and unemployment in this country. I know we have been discussing these problems for decades, but I am now not only talking



about them as issues of human rights and human dignity, but also as real challenges standing in the way of democracy and national security. According to the latest numbers announced by the Egyptian state, the unemployment rate in Egypt is 20% and poverty is 44%, with youth making up 90% of those who don't have jobs. My message to the Facebook community and to every-

one raising awareness through the Internet is that we need to talk to the poor rather than investing time talking to ourselves! There are groups out there who are raising awareness among the poor with concepts that are 'anti-democratic', and the poor listen to them because those groups provide them with much needed shelter, food, and resources. If we want Egypt to be democratic, the following issues have to be not only discussed but addressed before we hold elections: social and medical insurance, minimum wage levels, affordable housing, and employment opportunities.

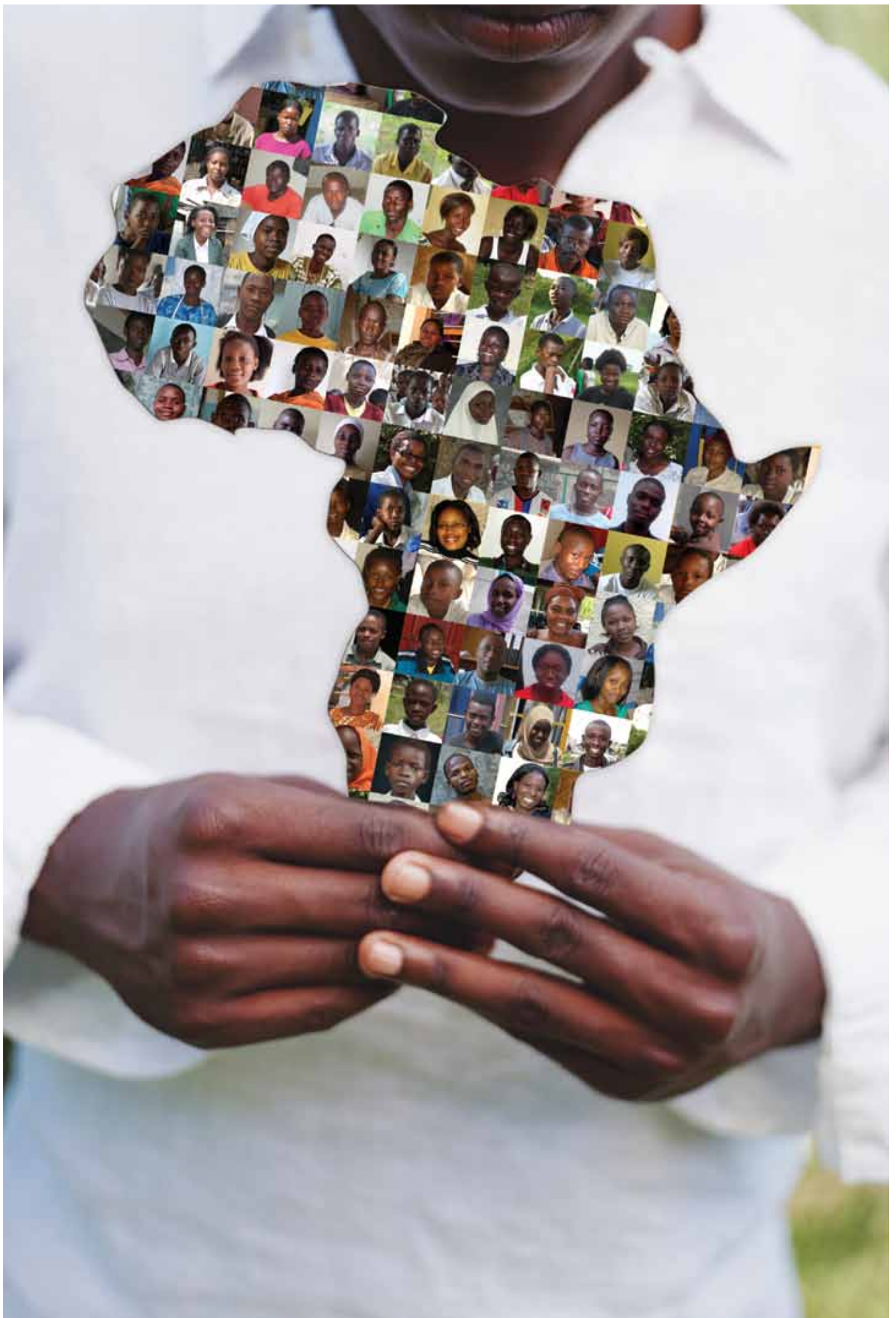
Then, political awareness follows! And with political awareness, I don't mean spelling out to people whom or what they should vote for, because this is the 'anti-democracy' message I am talking about. I don't think there had been a chance since the times of the Pharos when Egyptians were able to select their government. It had always been those people who 'know more' who are controlling the selection process.

**"Before we talk about the next elections, we should first talk about the problem of how to address poverty and unemployment."**

The control is not only over the process, but also over what citizens should believe in as 'the best selection'! This is happening now, both intentionally and unintentionally. I don't want to dictate to people what is best for them; I want people to know all the options and then select what they believe is the best for them. This is what I call real democracy. Accordingly, political awareness efforts should tackle important issues like the difference between the parliamentary and presidential system, the role of civil society, and the differences in political thoughts and practices among political parties. Again, these serious discussions won't be digested before we address the urgent and basic needs of Egypt or of any society.

Right now, I am working—and will be working for a long time—on the immediate needs of Egyptians in the areas of poverty and unemployment. I believe community development has to play a significant role in the democratization of Egypt. In fact, I don't believe democracy will ever be achieved if we don't pay attention to these important issues. **Y**

*Dr. Raghda El-Ebrashi, who lives in Cairo, is the founder of Alashanek ya Balady Association for Sustainable Development (AYB-SD) in Egypt and is an Ashoka Fellow. She was selected as a YouthActionNet Fellow in 2009 and is currently a member of the IYF Board of Directors.*





# AFRICA UNEMPLOYED

## *Can Young Business Owners Help Africa's Job Market—and Themselves?*

BY CHRISTY MACY

**T**he car turned off the main road out of Nairobi and drove down an unpaved street past a lone vegetable stand and small hairdresser shop blaring pop music. Monica Njau, a young Kenyan woman, was waiting for her visitors at the next corner outside a small restaurant. She immediately welcomed the group inside, proudly showing off the large popcorn stand that she owns and operates located at the back of the “New Happy Shop” café. But when she plugged in the machine to demonstrate how it worked, her bright smile wilted. As was the case on many afternoons, the electricity for the restaurant—and for the entire neighborhood—was shut off. No popcorn sales today.

Monica, 23, is one of a growing number of young Kenyans who are struggling every day to support themselves and their families by starting their own business. Her personal story and the experiences of other aspiring young entrepreneurs offer an inside look at how skyrocketing unemployment is impacting the lives of young people and their communities across Africa—and what alternatives exist to help address the crisis.

In Kenya, for example, the rate of joblessness, particularly among urban youth, continues to rise, with young people comprising 72% of the country's total unemployed—reflecting a 12% rise in the last decade. According to Constantine Obuya, Executive Director of the African Centre for Women, Information and Communications Technology (ACWICT), 500,000 Kenyans seek to join the labor market every year, but only 25% are able to secure jobs in the formal sector. “What happens to the other 75%?” she laments. “That is the real challenge for this country.” Lack of relevant education and training is a significant factor in this widening problem. “The school system here doesn't stimulate creative thinking or questioning,” says Anne Ikiara, Executive Director of NairoBits, a Kenyan NGO specializing in IT and web design training. “We should be developing thinkers and people who create solutions,” she adds, “but we don't.”

The sheer number of youth looking for a better way of life, combined with the paucity of jobs in Kenya's private sector, has caused a shift in thinking in Kenya and across Africa:

that getting more young people to start their own businesses is an increasingly viable option to address rising youth unemployment. According to Alex Nyingi, Microsoft's Academic Programs Manager for East and South Africa based in Nairobi, this new trend simply reflects reality. “Most young people here don't have the requisite education, practical skills or experience to get jobs; that's why they need to start a business and create their own.” Thus for many young Kenyans today, trying to launch their own enterprise is not a choice—it's a necessity.

Entrepreneurship is seen by many in the development community as a promising—and underutilized—strategy to help address soaring youth joblessness. Yet even as the ranks of young entrepreneurs continue to grow, success, particularly among disadvantaged youth, is far from guaranteed. For some, the obstacles are simply too great. Others, like Monica, simply refuse to give up.

### MONICA'S ROUGH BEGINNING

She had to overcome her own personal tragedies growing up in Kasarani, one of the many slums or “informal settlements” that encircle Nairobi. Her father was unable to keep a steady job due to his heavy drinking. “He brought violence into the home,” she says. Monica's mother on the other hand has battled cancer for the past 15 years and still faces medical bills that often go unpaid. Her family's inability to pay the school fees dashed Monica's hopes to continue her education. After graduating from high school, she went to live in a village far outside of Nairobi to take care of an aging grandmother. “I felt I did nothing for a year; the whole experience really lowered my self-esteem.”

During this difficult period of her life, Monica admits she had few positive role models to inspire her or lift her spirits. “Most of my friends were living on the margins and many just wanted quick money and turned to prostitution,” she says. “Their lives have already come to an end.” Not so for Monica. She has other plans for her life.



**Changing Faces of Monica:**  
Monica Njau, 23, is one of nearly 10,000 graduates of the Youth Empowerment Program (YEP), an IYF/Microsoft-supported IT and entrepreneurship initiative in Kenya, Nigeria, Senegal, and Tanzania. [See box at bottom of page 11 for details.]

*“The program opened up my mind, and I learned you don’t have to have a lot of money to start a business, just a lot of skills.”*



### **Opportunity Knocks: New Skills Lead To Bigger Dreams**

In 2008, Monica felt discouraged—unable to move beyond seasonal low-paying and dead end jobs. One day, as she went about her daily routine of selling fruit and vegetables on the street, she saw a flyer advertising an IT skills and business development program being offered to young women living in Nairobi’s settlement communities. Her spirits raised, she immediately enrolled in the *Youth Empowerment Program (YEP)*, an initiative supported by the International Youth Foundation (IYF) and Microsoft and implemented by local NGOs including ACWICT and NairoBits.

“I was most interested in the entrepreneurship program,” she says, “because it tackles the problem of unemployment that we face here.” As an ACWICT trainee, Monica learned to write up a business plan, promote products and services, and manage the finances of a new enterprise. The program also helped participants gain access to banks and other lending institutions, and after completing the course, fledgling entrepreneurs could take advantage of “incubator” support for their businesses to print up business cards, labels, and posters to advance their enterprise. Those who needed advice could turn to a network of mentors and advisors that ACWICT had formed within the local business community.

Looking back on her classes, Monica reports a real change in her outlook. “This experience opened up my mind; and I learned you don’t have to have a lot of money to start a business, just a lot of skills.” She also learned that her passion is to work in the fashion industry. “This fashion thing was in me, in my blood; at this place, I discovered myself.”

**“I’VE BEEN ABLE TO PROVIDE FOR MY SISTERS AND MY FAMILY, AND I’VE CREATED JOBS FOR MY FELLOW YOUTH... BUT WE CAN NEVER DO IT ALONE; WE MUST HAVE A HELPING HAND.”**

— Monica Njau

As part of her training, Monica crafted a business plan to open a fashion and design business. After graduation, she immediately put it into action—hiring an assistant tailor to work out of her home. She also attended a number of ACWICT-sponsored “business” fairs where she was able to show off her new clothing line and meet potential clients. It quickly became clear, however, that the quality of her clothing was not yet ready for market, and she would need more specialized training in the design field—and more experience sewing her own clothes. So, back to





the drawing board. Monica had to let her assistant go, and figure out a way to finance the next steps in her plan. She had no other choice but to jump headfirst into a series of small start-ups.

### Unfinished Business: “Sometimes I Had To Start Over.”

With 300 shillings (less than US\$4) borrowed from friends, Monica bought and began selling bottles of perfume on the street. Eventually she was able to move her small perfume business into a local shopping center where she employed a part-time salesperson. But disaster struck when the owner of the establishment cheated her out of some of her profits, and six months later, a gang broke into the center and looted everything in sight, including Monica’s merchandise. “It was terrible,” she said. “I had to start over.” Drawing on her resilient spirit, which she says was strengthened through YEP’s life skills training, Monica got her perfume business back on track, but could still not earn enough to afford the design classes. With what little profits she had, she decided to launch a second small business—buying one and then another popcorn machine.

Two years after completing her training, Monica’s dream to establish her own fashion design businesses remains a work in progress. While she has launched two small start-ups, she still struggles to expand the client base needed to become sustainable. On the other hand, the small profit margins from her businesses have enabled her to move closer to her long-term goal. She’s now completed a project planning and management class, and has the money to enroll in a computer-based fashion design course in Nairobi. Meanwhile, she has grabbed on to one more opportunity—this time taking a job as a sales

representative with an insurance company to help make ends meet. Perhaps most importantly to Monica, she is helping one of her sisters to pursue her education—and through her businesses has created a few badly needed jobs in the community. Confounding the odds that have sidelined many of her peers, Monica has now gained at least a small foothold in the local economy, and she remains optimistic about the future.

### Unleashing Kenya’s Potential: A Shared Responsibility

Stories like Monica’s demonstrate the daily frustrations but also the small rewards of young entrepreneurs who are struggling to make their way in the world. Her story also underscores the critical importance of basic training opportunities needed to spark and sustain their efforts. The question remains: What is being done to help the other millions of Africa’s marginalized youth gain the skills and experience to participate in and benefit from the region’s growth?

In Kenya, the government is making some progress in this area. Responding to the need for start-up capital, for example, it has recently set up a fund where youth-led businesses can apply for loans. A Ministry in charge of youth affairs and sports was also established to promote youth issues within the public sector. “Vision 2030” is a government plan that commits far greater investments in education and job training programs. The country’s private sector is also becoming more engaged. “We are working with the government so they understand the needs of the private sector in order to scale up the job training and entrepreneurship programs that are effective and relevant,” says Mr. Nyingi at the Microsoft regional headquarters in

### Keys to Success:

*“To be a truly successful entrepreneur, you have to be able to identify opportunities and be determined to stay with it,”* says Constantine Obuya, Executive Director of ACWICT. *“Our program offers young people life skills so they can take control of their lives, learn to adapt different strategies, and access relevant information. We tell them, ‘don’t expect to find success immediately.’”*



***It's a Tough Business:***  
*Being a successful entrepreneur is especially challenging for young women. Says Veronica Malala: "There is an uneven playing field here; a lot of people think IT and entrepreneurship are for men only. We have to work twice as hard to be successful." Of the 25% of young people reportedly engaged in Kenya's formal sector, only 29% of them are women.*

Nairobi. "We can be a bridge between the government and the business community to do that." He also underscores the growing demand for more "soft" or life skills training that YEP and other programs offer to boost young people's employability. Being able to communicate, write a good résumé, and have a positive attitude, he says, can help job applicants "stand out" in a competitive field.

Numerous programs that do just that already exist in Kenya, but the NGO sector that often delivers the training struggles to meet the growing demand. Far too many youth are still left behind. Working with global companies and international development agencies, however, is helping to expand both the capacity and impact of these youth-serving NGOs, enabling them to reach more young people. "We grew as an organization, we expanded our network, and we improved our visibility in the community, thanks to our alliance with Microsoft," says Anne Ikiara of NairoBits. "We hadn't focused on youth before this program," adds Constantine Obuya of ACWICT. "IYF helped

**“IT'S ALL ABOUT FINDING SOLUTIONS AND TAKING RISKS.”**

— Veronica Malala

us build up our capacity to reach the unreached, and then helped us strengthen and scale up the program.”

Developing multi-sector alliances—particularly those devoted to youth development initiatives—is not yet a common practice in Kenya. But the advantages of such

collaborations to mobilize greater investments are becoming increasingly clear. "The YEP program," says Mr. Nyingi, "is an example of what I call the cascading benefits of such partnerships, where an initiative brings in new partners, new resources and new expertise to address a real need."

## **BUILDING A BUSINESS: VERONICA'S WAY**

Veronica Malala is married and the mother of three, living in a small but spotless row house in the Nairobi slum settlement of Kawangware. The eldest of fourteen children, she has a can-do attitude toward life and a sly sense of humor. She needs both. Her husband, Kenneth Baraza, is often forced to find work outside the country, placing additional stress on the young family and greater pressure on Veronica to meet daily household expenses. In 2008, dispirited after taking on secretarial and other low paying jobs, Veronica decided she lacked more marketable skills, and at the age of 30 enrolled in the YEP training at ACWICT.

Veronica admits she had no prior experience in either computers or business start-ups, but she excelled at her studies. After graduation, her new IT skills landed her a job at a local cyber café. One day at work, as she was assisting customers, an idea came to her in a flash. Instead of just being an employee, she realized she could do something different. "I can run my own cyber café; I know what I need to do; and I know how to do it!" A few weeks later, she acquired four computers from a relative and opened her own cyber café in her hometown of Mumias, a rural town far outside the city of Nairobi. All did not go smoothly. Incompetent staff and stolen merchandise raised warning flags about leaving her business in other people's hands. Instead, she became more personally involved—and through more aggressive outreach she started to add new IT-related services to her portfolio, including the design and reproduction of school exam packets and teaching materials for government and private schools, and marketing similar items to technical training centers. "It's all about finding solutions and taking risks," she says of her growing success.

Always wanting to do more, Veronica decided to expand her horizons by taking an unpaid internship at Nairobi's Ministry of Agriculture, working as a much sought-after trouble shooter within the IT services division. Says Whycliffe Kisoughdi, her boss at the Ministry: "I was looking for someone who had computer knowledge, someone who could fix problems, and organize the network. Veronica had the IT and soft skills we were looking for." Armed with additional confidence and a year's worth of hands-on experience, Veronica completed the internship and put her business acumen to work by leveraging the new professional contacts she has made along the way. Working as a sub-contractor for the Ministry, Veronica's business is providing IT advice at a series of Ministry-led conferences and helping to build IT networks at some of their 30 training centers. Through these projects, she's making an additional 5,000 shillings (US\$50) per day, and she's not stopping there. As a result of these experiences,



Veronica has now launched another service installing networks for private companies.

Veronica says her growing business is providing critical financial support for her family—enabling her to pay her children's school fees, support her sick mother, and buy groceries when her husband's pay from Uganda arrives late. In addition, over the past year and a half, her company has hired three employees. Veronica's long-term goal is to use her cyber café as a training center to improve the ICT skills of local youth. "Knowing internet and mobile technology is the basis for getting any job these days," she says. "I'm determined to help these young people gain those skills."

### The Youthful Pillars of Africa

At the 17th Summit of the African Union held in Equatorial Guinea in July 2011, UN Deputy Secretary General Asha-Rose Migiro sent a powerful message to government and business leaders that empowering youth is the key to lasting peace and sustainable development across the continent. "In spite of difficulties in many parts of Africa, young people are rising as agents of change... [demanding] more freedoms and opportunities," she said. "So let us respond to this call by investing in youth entrepreneurship programs and business start-ups ... and by providing incentives to firms to hire young people."

Will Africa's leaders respond to this call for action to empower the region's youth? Will the international community make the necessary investments to ensure far more of Africa's young people can access the opportunities to help them realize their potential and revitalize their communities? The enormity of the challenge—and the urgency for action—is clear. Nearly 45% of Sub-Saharan Africa's population is under the age of 15, and that youthful population will not even peak for another 15 years. And already, at least one in every five of those youth are unable to find a job, and many more who are working are unable to climb out of poverty. Some progress, however, is already being made.

Throughout the region, there is mounting evidence that investments in tested youth employability and entrepreneurship programs are demonstrating significant returns—not only to the young people themselves but to the local economy. There's also an ever-growing band of young entrepreneurs who are demonstrating that when given the chance, even those from the most marginalized communities can launch their own businesses, and in the process, create jobs, and help fuel growth and progress in their communities.

**“IN SPITE OF DIFFICULTIES IN MANY PARTS OF AFRICA, YOUNG PEOPLE ARE RISING AS AGENTS OF CHANGE... [DEMANDING] MORE FREEDOMS AND OPPORTUNITIES.”**

— UN Deputy Secretary General Asha-Rose Migiro

Even as Monica strives to reach her dream of starting her own fashion business, she recognizes that her generation, by the sheer force of its numbers, has the power to shape the future. But she also warns that inaction on these issues will squander the enormous potential for young people to be true partners in that future. "We have great talents, but many of us are dropping behind," she says. "When young people go down, the society goes down, because we are the pillars." **Y**

Christy Macy is IYF's Director of Publications

## BY THE NUMBERS: The Youth Empowerment Program

From 2007–2010, the **International Youth Foundation** and **Microsoft** worked with local partner organizations to improve the employability prospects and civic engagement of disadvantaged young people ages 16-35.

**4 COUNTRIES :** KENYA TANZANIA  
NIGERIA SENEGAL

**9,700**  
YOUTH PARTICIPANTS

**84%**  
UNEMPLOYED AT  
START OF PROGRAM

**60:40** Ratio of male to female participants

OUTCOMES

**1,067** CONTINUE  
EDUCATION

**YOUTH IN JOBS: 5,900**

**61%** 873 small  
EMPLOYMENT PLACEMENT RATE businesses

# BUILDING YOUR OWN BUSINESS?

In the face of soaring youth unemployment in many regions of the world, development experts are turning to entrepreneurship as one of a number of solutions to this global crisis. But what are the most practical approaches and strategies currently being used to support young entrepreneurs? What's the latest in terms of entrepreneurship training and curricula? We offer here a selection of the many resources now available devoted to this important topic.



## SHARING IYF's KNOWLEDGE

### 1 Build Your Business

The International Youth Foundation has released its "Build Your Business" (BYB) curriculum and facilitator's guide designed to help young people around the globe realize their full potential through starting and growing their own businesses. The curriculum, supported through Microsoft, consists of 14 modules contained on a DVD-Rom.

*"Build Your Business is an eye-opening comprehensive guide to doing business effectively."*

—Program participant  
Odeunaya Edun, Nigeria

### 2 Youth Entrepreneurship: Lessons from India

This colorful 8-page report offers insights and learnings from IYF's *Tsunami Reconstruction Initiative*—a Nokia-supported program designed to promote long-term recovery efforts in four countries affected by the 2004 tsunami. Published as part of IYF's *FieldNotes* series, *Youth Entrepreneurship: Lessons from India* identifies essential elements for success in its three-year entrepreneurship program, which

recognized that providing credit alone is not enough to support small local businesses.

### 3 YouthMap in Africa

*Youth Assessment: The Road Ahead* is the first in a series of reports that assess youth circumstances in eight Sub-Saharan countries. This cross-sector publication covers youth programs and practices in education, health and citizenship and includes key findings around the challenges and opportunities for Senegalese youth to either gain employment or create their own jobs—by starting their own businesses. Download this publication at [www.iyfnet.org/document/1820](http://www.iyfnet.org/document/1820).

*For more information on all of IYF's youth entrepreneurship programs worldwide, or to download these reports, please visit [www.iyfnet.org](http://www.iyfnet.org).*

## AROUND THE WORLD

### 4 Youth Entrepreneurship: Closing the Gap

Youth Business International (YBI), a UK-based global NGO focused on empowering emerging entrepreneurs, has published a "Making Entrepreneurship Work" policy series. Included in the series

is *Closing the Gap*, a report that compiles nine case studies to illustrate how the finance "gap" can be closed for underserved entrepreneurs through providing non-financial support.

To access this and related reports, please go to [www.youthbusiness.org/media/publications.aspx](http://www.youthbusiness.org/media/publications.aspx)

### 5 Educating the Next Wave of Entrepreneurs

Published by the World Economic Forum's Global Education Initiative, this report argues that "entrepreneurship is the engine fueling innovation, employment generation and economic growth." *Educating the Next Wave of Entrepreneurs: Unlocking entrepreneurial capabilities to meet the global challenges of the 21<sup>st</sup> Century* consolidates existing knowledge and good practices in entrepreneurship education, and emphasizes the need for governments, academic institutions, and the business community to work together to create an "entrepreneurial ecosystem."

For more information on this topic, or to download the report, visit [www.weforum.org](http://www.weforum.org)





A CONVERSATION WITH PAMELA PASSMAN, CORPORATE VICE PRESIDENT,  
GLOBAL CORPORATE AND REGULATORY AFFAIRS, MICROSOFT

**O**ver the past decade, IYF has collaborated with Microsoft to empower young people around the globe to be successful workers, learners, & citizens. YOUth magazine spoke with Ms. Passman to explore the company's collaborative approach to community investments and its vision for the future.

**How do your CSR programs support or complement the business side of Microsoft?**

The starting point for everything we do is our company mission, which is to enable people and businesses throughout the world to realize their full potential. Technology is an indispensable enabler of growth, development and human potential. So both as a business and through our Citizenship programs, we aim to contribute to innovation, skills and education, and to the role technology can play in addressing society's challenges.

We approach our Citizenship efforts in much the same way we approach our business—by partnering with other organizations which bring complementary skills and resources to take on big challenges. For example, as a business we work with nearly 700,000 partners and in our Citizenship programs we work in partnership with thousands of public entities and NGOs worldwide.

This alignment and focus on issues where we have expertise, together with our emphasis on partnership, is what enables us to make an impact locally and globally. The two elements reinforce each other, because when local communities and economies grow and succeed, so does Microsoft.

*Ms. Passman at the 2010 Clinton Global Initiative event in New York, with participants from the Global Give Back Circle program in Kenya.*

# Q&A

## **What is the role of the private sector in helping to prepare young people for the 21st century workforce?**

It's a government imperative, a societal imperative, and a sustainability imperative for business that we address the problem of large numbers of young people who are coming out of formal education with few job opportunities. What will happen to them? Every year, there's another incoming group of young people trying to enter the workforce, in the Middle East, in Africa, in Latin America. The sheer numbers are overwhelming, and the impact on social infrastructure is dramatic.

That's one of the reasons Microsoft has been investing in workforce skills initiatives and partnerships for more than 25 years, with a strong focus on youth education and entrepreneurship as well as lifelong learning. But we also know today's challenges call for a new generation of partnerships with the public sector as well as communities.

An example of this commitment is our Elevate America initiative, launched in 2009 in the U.S., where we've been working with state governments to promote greater access to certified technology skills training as part of the response to the recession.

I do think there will be further impetus for such partnerships on employability and entrepreneurship among business, governments and NGOs in the years ahead. The challenge of resetting economies on a

sustainable long-term growth path requires fresh thinking and complementary approaches. For its part, the private sector has a major stake in employability issues, to sustain the flow of skilled workers and customers for their products. But one of the key lessons of the economic crisis is that all of us—governments, businesses and communities—are in this together and need to work together. One of the things we try to do is to develop incentives for this kind of multi-sector collaboration to take place.

## **What do you look for when choosing your partners?**

We see working in partnership has a multiplier effect, with each sector bringing its resources and expertise to the table. This enables us to scale in a way that we can't do alone. Microsoft can be a catalyst to bring the various stakeholders together.

Among our potential nonprofit partners, we look for and work with organizations that have a record of successfully implementing programs, strong local knowledge and the passion and capability to connect with and empower their communities. It's how we can ensure that our contributions, whether cash or in-kind, can have the most significant impact.

For example, through our Community Technology Skills Program, we support community NGOs in providing digital and other essential skills training to local people including the unemployed. Since we launched the program in 2003, we have worked with more than 1,500 NGOs around the world, and been able to reach some 190 million people—including seniors, unemployed youth, refugees, and people with disabilities.

Our partnership with IYF is a great example of what we look for in NGO collaborations. First, IYF has a strong focus on building the capacity of local partners which mirrors our approach in many ways. Second, IYF has deep expertise in youth empowerment programs and a keen interest in using technology to improve program delivery and expand scale. Third, IYF is a thought leader, engaging public,

private and civil sectors, as well as youth themselves, in a dialogue about pressing issues such as education and job opportunities.

## **Why is investing in young people's entrepreneurial success part of your Citizenship agenda?**

Microsoft was founded 35 years ago by young entrepreneurs and that spirit remains as the company has grown. So one of our primary goals is to create economic opportunities for individuals around the world through the power and potential of technology. Although we know that information technology skills are only increasing in demand in the workplace, we also know that most economies are driven in large part by small businesses and entrepreneurs. By supporting these individuals with training and other resources we help to grow local economies. But we can't do it alone, and partnerships with civil society organizations provide the full range of services needed to support entrepreneurs and their businesses.

IYF's *Youth Empowerment Program* in Africa, which Microsoft is proud to support and be involved with, is one such example. In Sub-Saharan Africa, one in five young people is unemployed. This program provides training in technology skills, life skills and entrepreneurship, and access to employment services, to disadvantaged young people between the ages of 16 and 35. We're pleased that 10,000 African youth have undertaken these training and employment services programs; and at least 70% of



**“Young people are crucial to an ‘ecosystem of innovation’ that we need at all levels of our societies.”**





Pamela Passman [far left] joins IYF's Susan Pezzullo [center] and Souktel co-founder and YouthActionNet Fellow Jacob Korenblum [right] for a panel discussion at IYF's Youth Leadership & Livelihood Conference in Washington, DC.

them have benefited from internships, job placement, income-generating self-employment or community service opportunities.

In addition, the local NGO partners we work with have increased their capacity in project design, curriculum development and delivery, and measurement and evaluation. There has also been valuable regional and cross-organizational learning for the partners. This is a good example of the multiplier effect that we seek to generate through our partnerships with IYF and other organizations.

#### Why is building the capacity of NGOs a priority?

Community and civil society organizations play a vital role in reaching and assisting underserved people and communities. Supporting these organizations with technology to better achieve their missions enables us to help make a difference to the people and communities they serve. It also helps us to better understand the communities they serve, helping us see new applications of our technology. And by using our expertise and our resources, Microsoft can help these organizations operate more efficiently, build capacity, and deliver more services.



For example, Microsoft has a close partnership with NetHope, a global consortium of over 30 leading NGOs dedicated to finding and implementing the best use of available technology to improve NGO operations and efficiency. Our partnership focuses on the critical role of technology in development and humanitarian relief efforts around the world. Microsoft provides cash grants and software donations for strategic technology improvements, and hosts conferences to share expertise in the NGO technology leadership field.

#### Why does Microsoft place an emphasis on citizen empowerment?

I believe it is incredibly important to empower citizens, including today's young people, not only in terms of jobs but also in terms of their own role in society. The ability to reach out, to communicate, and to access and use information is critical to that process. We've seen an extraordinary movement across the Middle East and North Africa over the past few months where young people feel empowered and rise up to change their communities. It's very hard to stifle that sense of empowerment once it starts.

We know that in every community and country, the challenges people face need to be transformed into innovative approaches and opportunities. Whether it's in job creation, environmental sustainability, better healthcare or good governance, innovative solutions arise from people applying particular knowledge and skills, combined with entrepreneurship and collaboration. Young people are crucial to this "ecosystem of innovation" that we need at all levels of our societies.

#### While visiting Microsoft's CSR programs, did you meet one or two individuals whose stories were particularly memorable?

Every field visit that I make is inspiring—the amazing people who are benefiting from these programs and our partners and employees who are doing extraordinary things every day around the world.

One remarkable woman I've met is Rana Hada from Iraq, who participated in the State Department's Women in Technology (WIT) program in the Middle East, which Microsoft is proud to support. After surviving a traumatic bomb attack in April 2006 at the University of Baghdad, Rana spent a year recovering from serious injuries that confined her to a wheelchair. Despite Rana's horrific experience, she was determined to continue her education and enrolled in WIT courses at the Iraqi Al Amal Association. Upon graduating from the training in 2008, Rana was hired as a trainer for the Microsoft Unlimited Potential and Professional Development courses. Recently, Rana was selected to attend the Arab Women Technical Network Forum in Beirut. The life journey that she's taken, it is just breathtaking. **Y**

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*Editor's Note: Shortly after this interview, Ms. Passman announced her departure from Microsoft to establish and lead the Center for Responsible Enterprise and Trade-CREATe, as its founding President and CEO.*

# REACHING NEW HEIGHTS

## Young Change Makers Spread Their Wings

By Sheila Kinkade

**A decade after IYF launched *YouthActionNet*®—its global program for young social innovators—alumni reflect on its unique value add.**

Passion. Purpose. Perseverance. These are the hallmarks of today's young social innovators. Yet passion alone doesn't pay the bills or help a fledgling organization get recognized in a crowded marketplace; nor does it satisfy a young leader's need for essential skills and connections to people and institutions that can support his or her efforts.

Over the past decade, *YouthActionNet* has created an expansive network of 550 young change-makers in 60-plus countries—providing them with invaluable skill-building, networking, and advocacy opportunities. To honor the program's 10-year anniversary, we asked three alumni to share their successes—and how *YouthActionNet* played a part.

If their stories are any indication, imagine—in just a few short years—the difference we can make when we're reaching three times as many young visionaries. This is why we're as committed as ever to expanding *YouthActionNet* around the globe.

### NNAEMEKA IKEGWUONU

#### Recognition Results in Long-term Dividends

Twenty-nine-year-old Nnaemeka Ikegwuonu's CV reads like a *Who's Who* of social entrepreneurship prizes and awards. Over the past two years, Nnaemeka's work to boost the productivity and incomes of small farmers in Nigeria has earned him accolades and support from Rolex, the Clinton Global Initiative, the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), Ashoka, and others.

But it wasn't always that way.

Nnaemeka spent four years pitching the mission of the Smallholders Foundation, an organization he founded to accelerate agricultural development on small farms, to donors inside and outside the country. Over those four years, nearly all of his funding entreaties were rejected. For a young Nigerian working on issues of rural poverty, it was hard to get noticed—and gain the trust of donors.

In 2008, Nnaemeka was honored with a *YouthActionNet* Fellowship for his use of radio technology to help hard-to-reach farmers access vital information. "It was my first break into the consciousness of the global community," says Nnaemeka of his recognition through the program.

Looking back, Nnaemeka credits his *YouthActionNet* training with strengthening his ability to communicate his organization's work. With a revamped mission and set of objectives, he began to witness an upsurge in donor interest. While the Smallholders Foundation had only three donors when Nnaemeka was selected for his

Fellowship, today it boasts over 20 national and international funding partners, including The World Bank, UNDP, the Food and Agriculture Organization, and the African Women Development Fund.

With the Foundation's core operations covered, Nnaemeka was free to explore creative ideas for expanding its work. In 2010, he received a Starbucks grant through IYF to train 430 female students in sustainable agriculture and environmental management.

While in early 2011, Smallholders' rural radio broadcasts reached over 250,000 listeners, Nnaemeka expects to increase this number to 3.5 million by 2012, with the help of recent supporters.

### DINA BUCHBINDER

#### Going to Scale with Public Sector Support

For Dina Buchbinder Auron in Mexico, play isn't just about having fun. It's about teaching disadvantaged children about critical global issues and equipping them with essential life skills such as fairplay, teamwork, and respect for others.

Dina co-founded *Deportes para Compartir* (DpC), or Sports to Share, in 2007 to educate children and youth, ages 6 to 14, about the Millennium Development Goals through engaging them in sporting activities. Teaching children about serious health threats like malaria or HIV/AIDS, for example, might start with a health lesson,

Background:  
Nnaemeka Ikegwuonu  
interviews farmers  
in a crowded  
marketplace in  
Nigeria.





“With *YouthActionNet*,  
I realized I wasn't alone  
and continue to feel supported.”





followed by a game where the goal is for players to avoid being hit by a ball symbolizing the disease. Through such learning-through-play activities, DpC has provided more than 32,500 children in 18 Mexican states with a greater understanding of critical issues facing their local and global community—and their role in addressing them.

Since receiving her *YouthActionNet* Fellowship in 2009, Dina has built on the knowledge, networks, and exposure she gained through the program. A new partnership with the Ministry of Education and UNDP in Mexico is poised to dramatically increase DpC's reach

and impact. While currently DpC benefits up to 6,000 young people per semester, expanding through the school system will allow it to reach three times that many.

Dina credits DpC's success to its staff of 25 and focus on results. "We have high professional standards," she says. "The agencies we work with trust us and it shows." Recognition through *YouthActionNet* and the UVM Prize for Social Development—the local *YouthActionNet* initiative in Mexico—also contributed to DpC's good standing and media appeal.

Together, these factors played a critical role in DpC's growth, strengthening its legitimacy and revenue base. Also helpful was receiving a Starbucks grant through IYF, which allowed DpC to support youth-led volunteer activities and validated its approach in the eyes of other potential corporate sponsors.

Asked about *YouthActionNet*'s long-term significance to her life and work, Dina emphasizes the importance of time away from the pressures of running an organization. "The Fellowship gave me perspective and the chance to think about DpC's long-term strategy. It was a turning point," says Dina, who continues to benefit from her relationship with other Fellows. "This work is titanic. It can be very tiring and very fulfilling. With *YouthActionNet*, I realized I wasn't alone and continue to feel supported."

## TAL DEHTIAR

### Made in Africa: An Entrepreneur Reinvents Himself

"Business can do amazing things," has long served as Tal Dehtiar's mantra. Tal was awarded a *YouthActionNet* Fellowship in 2007 for his work in launching MBAs Without Borders (MWB). A business school graduate himself, Tal started MWB to link young business professionals to volunteer assignments in emerging markets.

"I wasn't craving a power suit or to climb a corporate ladder," says Tal of his decision to found MWB in 2004.

After leading the organization through a successful start-up phase, in 2008 Tal sold the rights and work of MWB to an international NGO well-positioned to take its work to the next level. With MWB's future secure, Tal was free to pursue his next entrepreneurial venture: Oliberté, a company he started with the goal of producing premium casual footwear for the global market—made in Africa.

"I was tired of everyone looking at Africa as a charity case," says Tal of his motivation for launching Oliberté. "Africa doesn't need people giving things to it—especially shoes—when it has all the resources needed to make its own products."

Starting with one Canadian customer in late 2009, Oliberté is now selling across North America, Europe, Oman, and Japan. Stores carrying its products include ALDO, Town Shoes, Urban Outfitters, and Step Japan. In addition to the 5,000 customers it attracted in 2010,

celebrities wearing Oliberté include Edward Norton, Snoop Dog, Kristen Stewart, and K'NAAN.

Being a *YouthActionNet* Fellow continues to offer a "stamp of approval," says Tal as he approaches potential investors and supporters. "When I mention that I'm a Fellow of the International Youth Foundation, it reinforces our credibility as a company and my own credibility as an entrepreneur."

Oliberté is now poised for a new chapter of growth as it expands its product line to include accessories and footwear for women and infants. In 2012, the company expects to open its first factory—a critical step in reaching its goal of creating one million jobs in Africa by 2035 and becoming the largest exporter of footwear made in Africa.

An ambitious goal? Not to Tal, a forward-thinking visionary whose feet, clad in Oliberté, remain firmly planted on the ground. **Y**



“Being a *YouthActionNet*® Fellow continues to offer a ‘stamp of approval.’”



## Collaboration is the **KEY** to the Future.

By Simón Menéndez Sadornil, 29



Africa is both one of my greatest passions and greatest concerns. Four years ago, I co-founded *Asociación Hechos* (“Do Something” in English) and we began

our work to provide education and employment opportunities for unaccompanied immigrant minors from Africa. These children and their families were fleeing from Africa to Spain on small boats called *cayucos*, risking their lives over hundreds of miles of ocean. Their hope was to “strike gold” in Europe. Their dream: to access greater economic opportunities. Yet for the thousands of these immigrants who come from Africa every year, their dream too often becomes a nightmare.

To understand and even stop this influx of immigrants from Africa, we need to understand the unique history of the continent, starting with those who are best able to tell that story. In the Igbo language there is a word, *Nkali*, which means in English “to be bigger than another”—in the sense of having more power. The history of Africa—following this meaning of ‘*Nkali*’—is a story that should be told by those who have the power to write it: Africans themselves. But all too often, we hear instead from the colonial establishment—which speaks only of the failures of African society. We hear too from Dambisa Moyo, an African economist and author of *Dead Aid* who writes that the aid from Western countries is killing Africa. She rejects the pleas of Western celebrities, such as Bono or Bob Geldof, to mobilize direct aid to Africa. She goes on to say that

the millions in aid sent to Africa every year have not only made the poor poorer, but in some cases have been used for military purposes, which only adds to the violence and suffering.

Yet despite all of the challenges, there is still a palpable feeling in Africa that possibilities for real change are on the horizon. Local activists and the business elite are pressuring their governments to lead in a positive direction. Some African leaders have responded with concrete, progressive strategies. I believe in the message being transmitted by many people and organizations about Africa’s new chapter of greater prosperity. Africa’s citizens have the right to create the future they want. And for this to happen, justice—not charity—needs to be the cornerstone of that change.

On this side of the Mediterranean, back here in Spain, a new movement has broken out that also promises positive change. Instead of choosing to engage in the usual anti-government and anti-immigrant riots, the intention of this movement is to be peaceful and civil, to talk and reflect on what constitutes a democracy. Law enforcement officials don’t know how to respond to us. They have been paralyzed. In just one week this past spring, the youth, the elderly, immigrants—everyone from across Spain and Europe—came together in the streets. They did not identify with the traditional roles that they’d been assigned in this game of democracy. United, they wanted to start a debate about broader issues like

**“...despite all of the challenges, there is still a palpable feeling in Africa that possibilities for real change are on the horizon.”**

unemployment, the unfair treatment of immigrants, inadequate housing, the lack of political involvement and the loss of dignity.

In Spain, as in most developed countries, the political agenda is democracy. Across the sea, in Africa, the political agenda is dictatorship. On the surface they have nothing in common, but underneath, they have everything in common. People everywhere are calling for greater democratic involvement and a more ethical future. They are pleading to change the rules of democracy—now controlled by economic interests.

What will be the final chapter of this story and our role in it? Will the “West,” which boasts civic and humanistic values, allow Africa to shine with its own light, while at the same time supporting its process of growth? Or will the African continent be devoured once again by our “precious” democracies and by our supposed “help?” I believe the key is collaboration—some call it “co-capitalism”—in which giving back to society is fundamental. To witness Africa’s growth is certainly encouraging. But, if we stand together, something even more wonderful will happen on the African continent. Collaboration is the key to the future—for all of us. **Y**

*Simón Menéndez Sadornil, a YouthActionNet Fellow from 2010 who lives in Castilla y Leon, Spain, co-founded Asociación Hechos (“Do Something”) in 2007 to provide housing, social services and job training opportunities for immigrant minors and other at-risk youth.*





# UNITED IN PURPOSE

## IYF's Partners Advance "Year Of Youth" Goals

By Lisa Jones

College student Maya Saoud may not have years of experience in the international development arena, but she is equipped with enough passion and enthusiasm to earn the hushed attention of some of the world's most influential diplomats and leaders. On August 12, 2010, her rallying words rang out into the crowd of government officials, distinguished speakers, NGO leaders, and youth ambassadors gathered at the UN Headquarters in New York City.

"We are asking you for your help, for your understanding and for your willingness to make available all that is necessary to ensure that young people are empowered. We are asking you to please understand the valuable natural resource that is the youth. Unlike other resources, we do not spark wars and conflicts. We do not create contempt between the haves and have-nots. We are the resource that does the very opposite. Utilize the youth for the sake of our collective future. Allow us to create a global environment where dialogue and mutual understanding are preferred over the destructiveness and terror of conflict."

Ms. Saoud knows first-hand the importance of mutual understanding among youth. She is a member of the UN advocacy team for *Pax Romana*, a worldwide organization of students working to bridge cultural, religious, economic, and generational divides. Her words were delivered at the 2010 UN Year of Youth Kick-Off event—marking the 25th anniversary of the first UN Youth Year held in 1985. As the youth of the new millennium face increasingly complex and daunting global challenges, it became more imperative than ever for young people to have the opportunity to come together and plan for the future under this year's theme: Dialogue & Mutual Understanding. Because societies often view youth as problems to be solved, the UN declared the 2010 Year of Youth to give this underrepresented population a platform to voice their ideas for sustainable solutions to global crises—and to galvanize support to address those challenges.





The goals of the UN's year-long campaign were to increase commitment and investment in the world's young people, boost youth participation and partnerships, and intensify intercultural understanding among youth. Member States of the UN were encouraged to host national events in celebration of the Year and to raise awareness about the contributions of youth to their country's development. Youth and youth-serving organizations were encouraged to plan events that demonstrated the passion and potential of youth and provide a space for young people to collaborate on ideas for effective change.

## RESPONDING TO THE UN'S CALL: A SPOTLIGHT ON IYF PARTNERS

The International Youth Foundation has spent 2010 following just such a course of action—working to improve the lives of some 2.8 million young people around the world through expanded opportunities to learn, work, and have a voice in their communities. At the heart of these efforts is IYF's global partner network of 200 highly respected and effective NGOs who help design and implement our programs in more than 70 countries

worldwide. IYF and its partners have been particularly active during this UN Year of Youth, implementing programs that support its goals—including efforts to reduce youth unemployment rates and encourage youth leadership and activism. IYF is also increasing its investments in the regions of the world where young people make up a huge proportion of the population and thus where they face the greatest barriers to becoming civically and economically engaged.

Today, 1.5 billion people are between the ages of 12 and 24, making this group of young people the largest ever to be entering adulthood and the largest underrepresented segment of the world's population. The "youth bulge" reaches its most critical levels in Africa, the Middle East, China and Southeast Asia, and central America—where unemployment and youth disenfranchisement are rising as well. IYF collaborates with partner organizations in each of these critical areas, investing in projects that support the UN's key areas of youth empowerment. We provide here a snapshot of three of these outstanding IYF partners who work with us in these particularly challenging regions of the world.

### REGION:

SUB-SAHARAN AFRICA

### PARTNER:

AFRICAN CENTRE FOR WOMEN, INFORMATION, & COMMUNICATIONS TECHNOLOGY: KENYA

### SOLUTION:

WOMEN'S EDUCATION AND CAREER TRAINING



In many African countries, including Mali, Niger and Uganda, average fertility rates exceed six children per woman. A recent study published by the Washington-based Globalist Research Center reveals that even if fertility rates across Africa were to fall immediately to replacement levels, the population would still continue to increase due to its young age structure—growing to 1.5 billion in 2050 and 1.8 billion in 2100. However, if birth rates can be decreased, goals of progress and development in Africa—and across the globe—would become more feasible. The African Centre for Women, Information, and Communications Technology (ACWICT) gives young African women the tools they need to become educated, independent members of society, ultimately reducing birth rates and elevating gender equality.

Founded in 1998, ACWICT is a Kenyan-based organization whose mission is to promote women's access to information and communication technologies as tools for social, economic and political advancement. In a country where as many as 75% of the young people are ill-equipped for jobs in the formal economy, ACWICT has demonstrated that ending the isolation of marginalized women

through digital communication and entrepreneurship training can positively affect female employability as well as other areas of development such as health education and political representation.

ACWICT is not alone in its vision. The United Nations Fund for International Partnership (UNFIP) has recognized ACWICT as a key contact in Africa for bridging the gender digital divide through strategic partnerships. IYF also believes in ACWICT's power to improve development efforts through the education of young women, and has partnered with the organization since 2007. One such collaboration is the *Youth Empowerment Program* (YEP), supported by Microsoft, which has trained 10,000 youth in three African countries in ICT and other marketable skills and assisted them with job placement services, internships, community service, and entrepreneurship opportunities. From all-girls technology summer camps to AgriTradeKenya, a community-based web portal designed to facilitate agricultural market networking in Eastern Africa, ACWICT is working to ensure young women have both the skills to be successful in their communities and the platform to be heard across the region.

*Young graduates of IYF's Youth Empowerment Program, implemented by ACWICT in Nairobi, Kenya, showcase their products and services at a "career fair" [left] and participate in an ICT training course [right] to equip them with marketable skills.*

## REGION:

ASIA

## PARTNER:

CHINA YOUTH DEVELOPMENT  
FOUNDATION: CHINA

## SOLUTION:

YOUTH CAPACITY BUILDING—  
LEADERSHIP AND ENGAGEMENT

*Students at a vocational school in Beijing learn the art of pastry making [left], as part of the Brilliant Futures program, supported through the Harry Winston Hope Foundation. A young Chinese journalist in training [right] acquires her skills as a participant in Nokia's Make a Connection program. CYDF is the implementing partner for both initiatives.*



**Y**outh capacity building is a critical step in combating the generational disenfranchisement often associated with large youth populations around the world. If young people feel empowered to make a difference and are productively engaged, they are more likely to become assets in society. In China, where each year an estimated 1.5 million new college graduates are unable to find a job, the China Youth Development Foundation (CYDF) is hard at work empowering youth to improve their access to the marketplace and become leaders in their communities.

As one of the longest-standing nonprofit organizations in China, CYDF has been building the capacity of Chinese youth through education, volunteerism, and engagement since 1989. Its mission is to improve the environment for the development of young people by providing them support services, giving voice to their interests and concerns

and carrying out social advocacy. As part of these efforts, CYDF every year presents China's Top 10 Outstanding Youth Award to recognize and commend admirable young people who have made prominent contributions to the country's development.

Partners since 2000, CYDF and IYF have teamed up again in 2011 for a youth development project sponsored by the Harry Winston Hope Foundation to merge life skills with employability training in secondary schools using *Passport to Success*—IYF's life skills curriculum. In addition to skills training, youth are provided with technical and financial support to implement community development projects that teach volunteerism, leadership, team work, and project design and implementation skills. By encouraging engagement and community activism, CYDF has shown its trust in youth to lead the way forward in China.

## REGION:

MIDDLE EAST

## PARTNER:

INJAZ-PALESTINE

## SOLUTION:

JOB TRAINING AND  
ENTREPRENEURSHIP SUPPORT

*High school students [left] enjoy an interactive "master class" for young entrepreneurs, provided through INJAZ-Palestine. A "youth host" [right] welcomes dignitaries to the launch ceremony of IYF's Youth Entrepreneurship Program in Palestine in March 2011.*



**T**ogether, Arab countries have the highest regional youth unemployment rate across the globe. With half of the population below age 25, over 500,000 young people enter an already bleak—and worsening—job market each year. *Injaz* has made its mission to incorporate youth into the economy before they are lost to the social isolation and conflict typical of large groups who are denied the opportunity to contribute economically or civically to their communities.

*Injaz* implements programs through local schools and universities that bridge the gap between scholastic knowledge and marketable job skills. Participants in these programs are able to acquire hands-on experience through job shadowing and experiential learning opportunities. *Injaz* makes it a priority to network with Palestinian businesses, educators and policymakers in order to tackle their shared goals of creating jobs, building a stable economy

and providing higher standards of living. While working to link youth to job opportunities, it also encourages entrepreneurial efforts and sponsors youth businesses.

*Injaz* is currently one of the partner organizations working with IYF to implement the *Youth Entrepreneurship Development (YED)* program in Palestine—a US\$15 million four-year initiative with USAID to improve employability and entrepreneurship opportunities for more than 2,000 young Palestinians. As part of the program's initial activities, *Injaz* held a Gaza Work for Youth summer camp for teenagers to prepare for future employment and consider the possibility of entrepreneurship. **Y**

*Lisa Jones, the 2011 recipient of the Sophie Kerr literary prize, has recently joined the IYF staff.*



# GOING FOR SCALE ACROSS LATIN AMERICA

## *How Two IYF Initiatives Are Impacting the Region's Youth Agenda*

By SHEILA KINKADE

AS ESCALATING YOUTH UNEMPLOYMENT MAKES HEADLINES around the globe, governments are struggling with how to address an issue that's grown increasingly volatile. With dour economic forecasts promising little in the way of short-term relief, two IYF programs operating across Latin America and the Caribbean offer hard-won lessons and practical strategies for tackling the youth unemployment crisis over the long-term.

Over 100 million young people in the region are neither working, nor in school. The “*ni ni* (neither nor) generation,” as these youth are commonly referred to, poses a long-term challenge, with their chances of becoming productive members of society diminishing with every year they remain out-of-school, unemployed, and unengaged.

How do nations begin to tackle a complex issue that reaches across diverse sectors of society, including local and national governments, civil society organizations, businesses, training centers, and educational institutions, to name only a few? Two IYF programs—*entra21* and *Obra*—have pursued separate, yet complementary, strategies to address youth employment needs, and ensure that young people have a voice at the table. While their approaches differ, both share a common emphasis on alliance building. The good news? Results from these programs are shedding useful light on a positive path forward.

### ***entra21*: Influencing Systems**

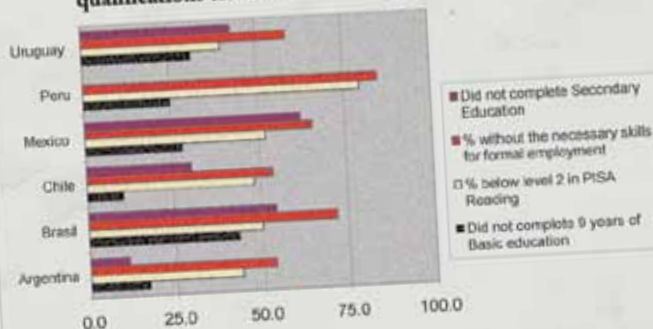
For decades, traditional approaches to addressing complex development challenges emphasized top-down strategies. National governments, through their policies and programs, sought to ameliorate pressing social problems, frequently with the help of international aid. This model often met with criticism over the impracticality of ‘one size fits all’ solutions, and issues related to efficiency and transparency. In response, bottom-up models, developed by nongovernmental organizations, emerged that sought to actively engage affected populations. These, too, were often criticized for their limited reach and uncertain future.

While both approaches are capable of producing impressive results, their limitations have fueled research and debate into how to ‘scale up’ effective practices to address the magnitude of today’s social challenges. It is within this context that *entra21*,



## LAC youth are ill equipped for formal jobs

Percentage of LAC youth without the necessary qualifications to obtain formal employment



Source: IDB, "Quality of Life: Beyond the Facts" (2008), page 131

a joint initiative of IYF and the Multilateral Investment Fund (MIF) of the Inter-American Development Bank, has evolved over the past decade. *Entra21* provides disadvantaged youth, ages 16 to 29, with employment training and job placement services. After a successful first phase (2001-2007), the program was extended through 2011 with the goal of scaling up those best practices it had developed.

Over the past decade, *entra21* has reached 80,000 youth in 22 countries, enabling over half to find decent work, with 25% returning to school. How did it achieve such results? The answer lies, in part, in the MIF's long-term commitment and the program's emphasis on alliance-building, evaluating and refining its approaches, and scaling up through government partnerships.

### Going to Scale in Chile and Argentina

A potent example of *entra21*'s efforts to achieve scale can be found in Argentina, where local governments—with the program's support—have opened 100 employment offices throughout the country to assist youth in pursuing jobs. Funding for the initiative came largely from the Ministry of Labor, the World Bank, and MIF. The program's local implementing partner, Fundación SES, strengthened the capacity of these facilities, which traditionally served adults, to provide youth-friendly employment services. Now, youth can talk to professionals specially trained to assist them in finding jobs, pursuing entrepreneurship opportunities, and accessing health services and volunteer activities. The initiative also offered youth two-month training workshops, which included life and IT skills instruction, and exposure to diverse career and continuing education options.

Similarly, in Chile, *entra21* introduced innovations at the local level that are now being considered for adaptation nationally. During Phase I, the program tested a model to address youth unemployment by incorporating vocational and job placement services. In Phase II, that model is being scaled up through a presidential mandate to improve young people's employability, with funding provided by the national government, the MIF, and Nokia. Activities are being carried out by Fundación Chile in collaboration with the National Training and Employment Service (SENSE), with special emphasis on using of technology to make services more easily accessible to youth.

Through the *Te Orienta* website [right], youth in Chile access tools and information for conducting a successful job search.

Now, young job seekers can access a virtual career counseling center, *Te Orienta* ([www.teorienta.cl](http://www.teorienta.cl)), in English "Orient Yourself," to obtain information about diverse occupations and determine whether they have the skills needed. The website features information on training/educational opportunities, and how to prepare a CV, look for work, conduct a successful job interview, and draft a business plan. In-person support is available through a *Te Orienta* center in Santiago.

Another technological innovation is the development of "virtual portfolios" that young job seekers can create to provide potential employers with an attractive online résumé documenting their educational and employment history, key skills, training courses completed, and references.

Also critical is building the capacity of local training organizations and youth workers to adequately support job seekers. Toward that end, *entra21* has developed an assessment tool to help training institutions determine young people's individual strengths and needs. More than 300 youth workers have also received instruction in how to provide 'youth friendly' job placement assistance. To date, more than 7,600 youth have benefitted from the program in Chile, with roughly half having secured jobs.

One company that has benefited from better trained workers is *Telepizza*, which operates branches throughout the country. The company has provided 100 *entra21* youth with internship opportunities, 35 of whom are now employed full-time performing duties related to logistics, transportation, production, and storage. "The program helped us take our service to a higher level by providing us with qualified employees," says Human Resource Manager Patricio Puga. "The youth take their work seriously. They have a plan and are pursuing a career path."

Chile's Ministry of Labor has also benefited from streamlining and improving its training and job placement services for youth. "*Entra21* has presented us with new challenges and opportunities—facilitating public-private partnerships and allowing us to adopt new methodologies and good practices," says Eduardo Cuevas, SENSE's Head of Training. "Exchanging ideas with other countries, including Peru, reaffirmed that we are not alone and are on the right track."





### **Obra: Making Youth a Policy Priority**

Raising awareness of key issues facing young people—and amplifying youth voices in public policy debates—are key aims of *Obra*, a two-year initiative of IYF and the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID). *Obra* was launched in response to U.S. President Obama's 2009 Summit of the Americas call for partnerships that promote greater opportunities among the region's youth. Its mission: to ensure that youth at risk in Latin America and the Caribbean have improved access to the programs and services needed to prepare them for citizenship, work, and life. As is the case with *entra21*, alliance building lies at the core of *Obra's* efforts to improve the prospects of the region's youth, with three regional partnerships established in the Caribbean, Central America, and South America.

In Peru, *Obra* partners are working with government leaders to improve coordination among youth-serving ministries, including the Education, Health, and Labor Ministries. The partnership, led by *El Centro de Información y Educación para la Prevención del Abuso de Drogas* (CEDRO), a national NGO, is collaborating with the National Secretariat for Youth to support the mapping of existing youth-related public services and increase communication among government agencies, with the aim of improving the quality and reach of youth services.

*Obra* is also working with the press—and utilizing diverse media—to spotlight youth issues and inform debate. In advance of the 2011 elections in Peru, CEDRO joined with *Transparencia*, an affiliate of Transparency International, to assess candidates' views on youth issues. Videos were created of all 11 presidential contenders and their plans for supporting youth. The video content was made public via the internet, effectively inviting discussion around government decisions, priority setting, budgeting, and youth.

Central to *Obra's* efforts is shifting how policy-makers and society at-large perceive youth: from a tendency to view youth as 'problems to be solved' to a focus on youth as assets. In Guatemala, *Obra* partners are working to create a National Agenda for Youth designed to change the perception, and self-image, of at-risk youth. Partners are using their collective political capital with ministry and business leaders to push for reforms—and have already influenced Guatemala's President to declare that his government will be taking steps to increase the sustainability of successful youth programs. The strength of this effort is in the deep consultation process partners have had with over 1,000 youth through 100 workshops in 50 municipalities. Youth can and do speak with a singular voice on issues such as the need for relevant education programs, quality job training, and the creation of safe spaces.



President of the Inter-American Development Bank Luis Alberto Moreno [center] visits *entra21* project and talks to youth participants about the benefits of the job and entrepreneurship training program.

### **Sustaining What Works**

In the final analysis, *entra21* and *Obra* underscore the importance of comprehensive, far-sighted, multi-sector approaches to youth unemployment. Such approaches emphasize what we have learned in recent years about how to engage, train, and prepare youth for the world of work, and how alliance-building can create an environment where youth can best take advantage of skill building, internships, and employment opportunities. The risks of not investing or investing poorly—in terms of rising youth alienation, poverty, crime, and gang violence—make well-designed programs far more cost-effective for societies, which benefit from an emerging generation of youth who are productive and engaged citizens.

With soaring youth unemployment threatening to reverse recent economic gains in Latin America, IYF seeks to build on the achievements of *entra21* and *Obra* through the creation of a new alliance that spans the Americas, with even greater cross-sector collaboration and the commitment of diverse institutions throughout the region. This new partnership would invest in cost-effective workforce training programs, while documenting and disseminating proven best practices in youth employment and job creation. Special attention would be placed on creating new jobs for youth through the support of young entrepreneurs and small businesses with the potential to grow and create employment.

The keys to success will be the full engagement of the private sector, strong government commitment to demand-driven workforce training, and the capacity of NGOs and training institutions to incorporate lessons learned to reach greater scale and sustainability.

To learn more about *entra21* and *Obra*, please visit: [www.iyfnet.org](http://www.iyfnet.org). 

Sheila Kinkade is IYF's Manager of Marketing & Communications

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# AT WORK IMPROVING YOUNG LIVES

## ASIA



### Bishkek, Kyrgyzstan

The President of Kyrgyzstan, Roza Otunbayeva, [center, front row above] attends opening of the Summer School of Democracy, an activity of IYF's *Youth:Work* program designed to engage a new generation of young people in Central Asia in building a stable and democratic society.

### Manila, Philippines

Through a worldwide campaign initiated by IYF in 1999, the *Children's Hour* of the Philippines announces an historic milestone: over the past decade it has raised funds to improve the lives of 600,000 children with basic education and health services and to protect them from the violence of child labor and sexual abuse.

### Koronadal City, Philippines

One of a series of learning and ceremonial events [see below] that marks the completion of the third phase of USAID-funded *Education and Livelihood Skills Alliance* (ELSA), an IYF initiative in Mindanao that has helped raise the test scores of more than 200,000 students in English, science and math; provided livelihood skills training to 30,000 out-of-school youth; improved teaching strategies for 19,100 teachers; and constructed and/or repaired more than 150 classrooms.



## NORTH AFRICA & MIDDLE EAST

### Zarqa, Jordan

U.S. Assistant Secretary of State for Democracy, Human Rights, and Labor Michael Posner visits with Jordanian youth who are working to improve their lives and their communities through IYF's *Youth:Work* Jordan initiative.

### Amman, Jordan

45 young social innovators in Jordan to benefit from a new three-year youth leadership initiative, supported by Starbucks Foundation, becoming the latest members of IYF's *YouthActionNet*® Global Network.

### Tunis and Sfax, Tunisia

250 instructors from the Ministry of Vocational Training and Employment receive life skills training as part of an IYF initiative funded by the World Bank, the EU, and the French development agency to improve job placement among Tunisian youth.

### Tripoli, Lebanon

IYF's Jack Boyson joins top Lebanese officials to launch *Youth For Work: Tripoli Alliance*, an initiative funded by the World Bank to expand youth employment in the city. Dignitaries [see below] include the Director of the Chamber of Commerce, Lebanon's Minister of Social Affairs, the Mayor of Tripoli and the Directors of MENA Child and Youth Initiative, Higher Council of Childhood, and the YMCA.





Every day, the International Youth Foundation offers young people new opportunities to gain a quality education, learn the skills needed to get a job, make informed and healthy decisions and become involved in their communities. What follows is a sample of what IYF is doing around the globe to make that happen.

### Washington, DC

Ashok Regmi, IYF's Director of Social Innovation and Citizenship [far right] joins Aaron Sherinian, Vice President of Communications and Public Relations, United Nations Foundation [center] and UN Youth Champion Monique Coleman [far left] for a panel discussion co-sponsored by the United Nations Foundation and USAID.

Dan Oliver, IYF's Director of Public Sector Business Development, moderates a panel at the USAID Global Workshop on Education that focuses on impact evaluation and includes experts from the World Bank and School-to-School International.



## NORTH AMERICA

### Salta, Argentina

President of the Inter-American Development Bank Luis Alberto Moreno visits *entra21* project and talks to youth participants about the benefits of the job and entrepreneurship training program.

### Ixtapa, Mexico

IYF's Ashok Regmi leads a session on "Multi-sector partnerships to foster innovation and scale" at the Opportunity Collaboration Conference, a four-day retreat for nonprofit leaders, social entrepreneurs and investors engaged in poverty alleviation and economic justice.

### Chile and Peru

Two new youth leadership programs in Chile and Peru join the *YouthActionNet* Global Network, the result of IYF's partnership with the Sylvan/Laureate Foundation. Similar Laureate-sponsored programs are active in Brazil, Mexico, Spain, and Turkey.

### Lima, Peru

The Executive Director of CEDRO [below left], IYF's longtime partner in Peru, is presented a Medal of Honor by the President of the Peruvian Congress for the organization's tireless work on behalf of young people over the past 25 years.



## LATIN AMERICA & CARIBBEAN

### Paris, France

IYF's Katherine Kinzer and Joel Adriance conduct a training workshop entitled "Youth Leadership in a Connected World" for delegates of UNESCO's Global Youth Forum, helping them explore their skills and passions and identify areas where they could help lead positive change.

### Helsinki, Finland

IYF CEO Bill Reese addresses the "Our Global Responsibility" symposium co-hosted by the Finnish Children and Youth Foundation to honor Pär Stenbäck, a founding board member of IYF, for his distinguished public service career.

## EUROPE

### Dakar, Senegal

IYF releases the first of eight country assessment reports of its *YouthMap* Africa initiative, a four-year USAID-supported program to assess youth circumstances and support promising programs and practices. The findings of the Senegal report will be used to initiate youth development programs supported by *YouthMap* Africa's Innovation Fund.

### Dar es Salaam, Tanzania

IYF launches *Tanzania Youth Scholars*, a five-year program supported by USAID to provide at least 1,800 orphans and other vulnerable children, ages 14-24, with educational scholarships and vocational and entrepreneurship training.

## AFRICA

# PARTING THOUGHTS

*By Sir David Bell*



I became interested in youth development through my children, who taught school in Africa and Brazil. When I visited them, I saw firsthand the enormous challenges facing youth in those communities. Even before that, as a graduate student in Philadelphia, I worked in an after-school program for inner city youth and became extremely interested in how to inspire young people and develop their potential. Then I met Rick Little at the World Economic Forum shortly after he founded IYF. Rick talked about how the world's children were making progress, but the older ones, those between 14 and 24, were getting lost. That was the segment of the population that IYF was focused on, and it's where I thought the emphasis should be.

Throughout my years on the IYF Board, I've learned a great deal more about youth development and how it works. First, that the thing kids respond to more than anything is the feeling that they are worth something. If you give them that, the sky is the limit. If you don't, they struggle all the way through their lives. The programs that IYF is implementing worldwide demonstrate that principle, and it has been great to watch as those programs have evolved and been taken to scale over the years to reach more young people in need. I've also learned that while each program is addressing different challenges, the underlying issues are very similar and the principles and strategies behind them can apply everywhere.

Why should we all care so much about youth development issues? It's in all of our self interests to do so. If massive numbers of young people have no realistic prospects for a job and have no stake in the future, then the world will continue to be hit with the consequences. These are some of the factors that sparked the London riots in August this year. Moreover, these young people are the customers, employees and parents of the future. To allow them to be ignored and sidelined is wrong from the start. As a world and as a community, we need to include and empower these young people. This is what businesses and governments have got to understand.

I remember this inscription on a rock that I once read in Tanzania's Serengeti Park: "Better to light a candle than to rail against the darkness." No matter how small, efforts to support today's young people are worth doing.

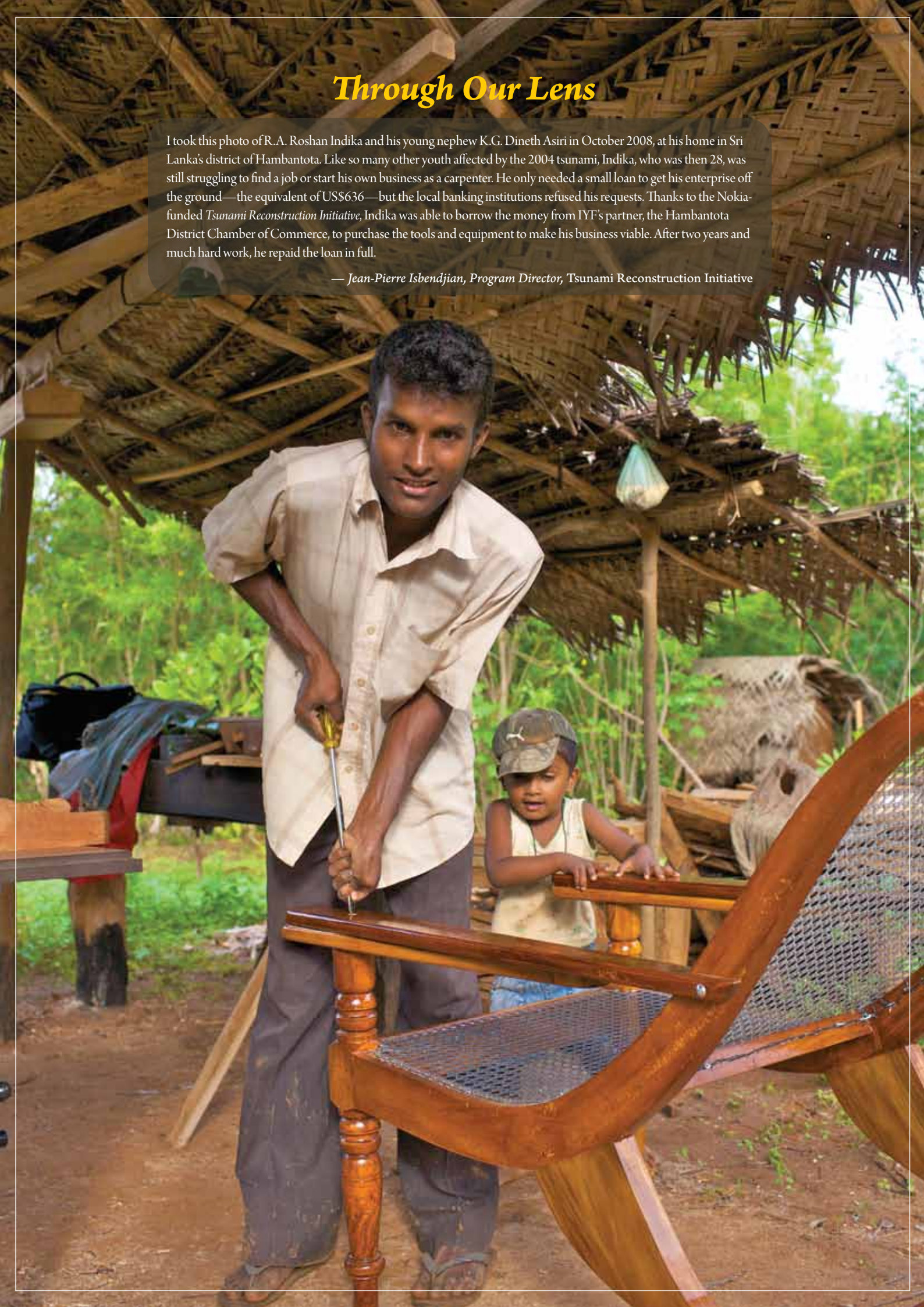
*Since 1995 when he joined the Board, David Bell has been a pillar of support and inspiration for all of us at the International Youth Foundation. Always generous with his advice and wisdom, he's been a passionate champion for young people around the world. As Sir David steps down as a member of the IYF Board and moves into his new role as Chair Emeritus, we take this opportunity to express our deep gratitude for his leadership and encouragement over the years.*



## Through Our Lens

I took this photo of R.A. Roshan Indika and his young nephew K.G. Dineth Asiri in October 2008, at his home in Sri Lanka's district of Hambantota. Like so many other youth affected by the 2004 tsunami, Indika, who was then 28, was still struggling to find a job or start his own business as a carpenter. He only needed a small loan to get his enterprise off the ground—the equivalent of US\$636—but the local banking institutions refused his requests. Thanks to the Nokia-funded *Tsunami Reconstruction Initiative*, Indika was able to borrow the money from IYF's partner, the Hambantota District Chamber of Commerce, to purchase the tools and equipment to make his business viable. After two years and much hard work, he repaid the loan in full.

— Jean-Pierre Isbendjian, Program Director, Tsunami Reconstruction Initiative





**“I can...**



Educated, employed, and engaged young people have the potential to solve the world’s toughest problems.

For over 20 years, the International Youth Foundation has been helping youth learn, work, and lead.

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