

(Re)Connecting Youth

Exchanging Global Lessons

REDE CIDADÃ

Belo Horizonte, Brazil

THE CHALLENGE

Brazil is a country of rich diversity and stark divides. Despite achievements in poverty reduction over the last decade, income inequality remains at high levels, and the nation continues to struggle with improving educational quality and outcomes. One of the nation's greatest assets is its relatively young population; yet nearly one in five Brazilian youth are not in education, employment, or training, with the rate twice as high for young women as young men.

THE INITIATIVE

Since 2002, Rede Cidadã (the Citizen's Network), a national civil society organization, has sought to bridge the divides in Brazilian society through uniting business, government, and civil society to generate employment and income for those left behind—especially young people. “We decided to prepare youth for the world of work so they could be owners of their own citizenship,” says Rede Cidadã Founder and Executive Director Fernando Alves. The organization also seeks to shift how employers and employees view work, emphasizing the integration of life and work as a single value.

Rede Cidadã now delivers employability programming in 47 cities across 9 states in Brazil. The organization benefits from a national policy requiring medium and large companies to offer apprenticeships to youth equal to five percent of their overall employee base. Through its Apprenticeship Program, carried out in partnership with companies, Rede Cidadã trains youth in life and technical skills and supports them in identifying their career goals and gaining valuable on-the-job experience.

In 2015, the organization started integrating movement, breath-work, and mindfulness practices into its training model to further develop young people's self-awareness and ability to manage their emotions. It credits this new approach with increasing job retention among program graduates. The organization also pursues strategies to ensure that youth who are often excluded from mainstream jobs—including juvenile offenders, LGBTQ youth, those with disabilities, and homeless youth—can benefit from its programs.

IMPACT

Through partnering with more than 2,600 companies, 685 nongovernmental organizations (NGOs), and various government agencies, Rede Cidadã has trained and supported more than 60,000 youth in securing decent work and/or apprenticeships.

To learn more, visit: www.iyfreconnectingyouth.org

“In Brazil, young people don't believe in education. They started to not believe in the value of work. We needed to show them that when they go to work, they're taking their life with them.”

—**Fernando Alves**
Executive Director
Rede Cidadã



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