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**BRAZIL**

# SUCCESS STORY

## Youth Gain Skills and Find Jobs

### At-risk Brazilian youth find their first job



Photo: John Daniel

Jamile Ferreira describes her experience finding work at an Enter Jovem conference.

***“During the course, I learned a lot that I hadn’t known – basic information technology, how to present myself during an interview, how to make a personal presentation, prepare my resume and become less inhibited,” said Jamile Ferreira.***

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Half of all unemployed people in Brazil are under 25. Youth unemployment is over 40 percent in northeastern Brazil and even higher among young women and the poor. With many Brazilians living in precarious social and economic conditions, it will be difficult to break the cycle of poverty without investing in youth.

In 2003, USAID teamed up with international partners and community-based organizations to provide youth with the professional training and skills they need to find gainful employment. The result, *Enter Jovem*, is a program that engages students at all levels — from technical training to interviewing skills, from civic education to math classes. Courses include information technology, historic site restoration, civil construction, clothing design and cosmetology, audiovisual production, renewable energy generation, and sales.

Jamile Ferreira, 21, is a testament to Enter Jovem’s impact. She had been looking for work since finishing high school in 2003, but employers always gave the same response: no work experience, no job. In 2004, Jamile signed up for an Enter Jovem course in information and communication technology. After completing basic and intermediate training, Jamile applied for a job as a telephone representative with a credit card company. She passed a selection process that included an interview and writing test and got the job.

“During the course, I learned a lot that I hadn’t known – basic information technology, how to present myself during an interview, how to make a personal presentation and prepare my resume, and how to become less inhibited,” she said. Jamile sees her job as just the first step toward a bright future: “This job has changed everything in my life. Now I can help my family with their expenses and take a course that will help me to pass the college entrance examination.”

Less than two years into the program, 50 employers had offered participants from some of Brazil’s poorest communities internships or their first jobs. By 2007, some 4200 youth will have received Enter Jovem training. Young women like Jamile show that with a little bit of help, and a lot of persistence, youth can change the course of their lives and their country’s future.