



USAID
FROM THE AMERICAN PEOPLE

ENTRA 21 ALLIANCE

PREPARING YOUTH TO ENTER THE MODERN WORKPLACE

THE CHALLENGE

More than half the population of Latin America and the Caribbean is under the age of 24, with youth unemployment rates on the rise in most countries in the region. Existing educational systems are failing to equip youth with the knowledge and skills necessary to succeed in a fast-changing marketplace. At the same time that more and more youth are unprepared for the workforce, businesses have an urgent and growing need for workers equipped with the technical skills to contribute to the region's growing information-based economy. Demand for IT skills is expected to rise sharply in the region as more organizations migrate toward the Internet and automate their businesses with application software.



THE APPROACH

In response to this heightened demand for IT skills, *entra 21* was created to help young people in the region enter the 21st century workplace by capitalizing on the dramatic impact of information technology on the world economy. *Entra 21* is a workforce development program now operating in 18 countries throughout Latin America and the Caribbean. The alliance was established by IYF, in partnership with the Multilateral Investment Fund (MIF) of the Inter-American Development Bank. USAID has supported the alliance with \$3 million in funding. In February of 2007, at a ceremony at the National Press Club in Washington, USAID honored IYF as the recipient of the 2006 Global Development Alliance Excellence Award for their leadership of the *entra 21* Alliance.

PARTNERS

International Youth Foundation, Cisco Systems, Lucent Technologies, Merrill Lynch, Microsoft, Nokia, Inter-American Development Bank

RESULTS

- In five years, *entra 21* has provided information technology training to more than 19,000 disadvantaged young people aged 16-29
- The employment rate for *entra 21* graduates is 50 percent. This compares with global employment averages of 40 percent.
- The majority of *entra 21* graduates have jobs in the formal sector. These jobs not only pay minimum wage or more but also provide benefits
- 50 percent of *entra 21* projects provide incoming youth with an average of 80 hours of remedial education to compensate for deficiencies in their literacy and math skills

