The Youth Community of Practice (YCoP) global listserv links professionals and practitioners at USAID and its partner organizations to effective youth development ideas, information and best practices to help:

- Design more effective, sustainable youth programs, and
- Better integrate youth participation in USAID development projects

In this Links: Youth Employment and Entrepreneurship in Latin America and the Caribbean:
The global economic crisis has increased the challenge of obtaining employment for youth in developing countries, who make up 89% of the global youth population. As investments in job creation declined, youth were hit the hardest in terms of job losses, and the unemployment gap widened between youth and adults; this gap is likely to remain after the global economy has rebounded. Youth can, however, be a great asset to the growth of their communities and countries when given the opportunity to employ their energy, skills, and creativity. This edition of YCoP Links profiles projects and initiatives that seek to prepare youth in Latin America for employment and self-employment.

Announcements:

Young Entrepreneurs Talent and Innovation Competition
http://www.ticamericas.net/index.php?w2p=n3no78v7cd
Young people from the Organization of American States (OAS) are invited to submit business plans to compete in the fourth Talent and Innovation Competition of the Americas (TIC), hosted by the Young Americas Business Trust (YABT). Teams, which may submit proposals until the April 1, 2010 deadline, are encouraged to submit project proposals in the fields of the environment, tourism, agribusiness, and technology. Awards are given for achievement in the areas of E-Business, Creative Design, Tradition and Culture, Spirit of Entrepreneurship. Prizes include funding and internships, as well as promotional and networking opportunities. Finals will be held in Lima, Peru, in June 2010.

Projects and Initiatives:

Caribbean Youth Empowerment Program (CYEP)
CYEP, a two-year initiative that began in late 2008, aims to empower 700 young people in the Caribbean as part of the well-known Entra 21 program. CYEP focuses on youth who are generally “harder to hire,” because of their particular circumstances, such as being located in a rural area or previously being involved in gangs, crime, or drug activity. Youth will learn technical, life, and job-seeking skills, designed to help them successfully initiate and sustain small business enterprises. By the end of the project, CYEP plans to bring at least 50% of youth participants without high school diplomas into educational programs, secure jobs for at least 40% of the 700 participants, and ensure a 90% satisfaction rate with those employers who do
hire CYEP participants. The program also includes a rigorous evaluation, learning and dissemination component that will contribute to the growing body of knowledge on youth education for employment.

**InnovAction**
http://www.myybiz.net/yabt/main/innovaction/

In 2010, Young Americas Business Trust (YABT) will continue to hold week-long workshops focusing on building innovation management skills among aspiring youth entrepreneurs in Paraguay, Uruguay, and Argentina. Young entrepreneurs who participate in the workshops address such issues as how to develop creative ideas and turn them into business plans, and how to turn that plan into action. Participants will build a network of fellow participants through the workshops and will create an Innovation Community of Practice that will continue to meet after the workshops end. By increasing their capacity for managing new and creative business ideas, participants can build and expand their operations, creating new opportunities for themselves while bettering their communities in the process.

**Youth Business Trust Belize**
http://www.youthbusiness.bz/about/about-youth-business-trust/about-us

Youth Business Trust Belize (YBTB) takes an asset-based approach to youth in the context of employment, entrepreneurship, and economic development. As a part of the broader Youth Business Trust organization, YBTB links youth to business mentors through the Belize Chamber of Commerce and Belize Rotary Club. These mentors advise youth on business plan development, marketing, law, finance, and product promotion. Interacting with business leaders also provides a valuable networking opportunity for youth interested in starting their own business or working with other, more established entrepreneurs. This initiative is just one of a dozen similar initiatives managed by the Youth Business Trust throughout Latin America and the Caribbean.

**Resources for Practitioners:**

**Latin American Youth in Transition: A Policy Paper on Youth Unemployment in Latin America and the Caribbean**

Realizing that the school-to-work transition is a lengthy process in which youth move between unemployment, schooling, unpaid employment, and low-wage unskilled employment, this report looks at the relationship between the formal and informal sectors of the labor market in explaining the nature of this difficult transition. The author isolates various factors affecting youth unemployment, including shifts in demand to new sectors, growth in informal and temporary work, demand for more high-skilled labor, and fluctuations in wages. Various projects are then examined for their ability to help youth overcome these obstacles, yielding helpful recommendations for policy makers and youth education practitioners.

**ILO Report: Decent Work and Youth: Latin America**
http://white.oit.org.pe/tdj/informes/pdfs/tdj_informe_regional%5Bingles%5D.pdf

First published in 2008, this extensive report published by the International Labour Organization (ILO) discusses in detail the challenges that youth face obtaining employment in Latin America, and the ways in which the problem may be addressed. Beginning with a discussion of the scope and extent of the youth unemployment problem in Latin America, the report moves to an examination of the dimensions of the youth labor market in the region, and the challenges to obtaining employment for Latin American youth. The second half of the
report offers potential solutions to the problem, including appropriate labor regulatory frameworks, better social protections, education and vocational training for work, business training, and entrepreneurial development. Special attention is given to young women, rural youth, and indigenous youth.

**Youth Entrepreneurship: Recommendations for Action**
http://www.youblisher.com/p/5078-Youth-entrepreneurship-recommendations-for-action/
Predictions for a sustained rise in youth unemployment as young people comprise an ever-larger share of the global population makes finding solutions to youth unemployment an increasingly urgent need for the world. Produced by Youth Business International, this brief report provides suggestions for how businesses, governments, and civil society organizations can help young people get started in business. Specifically, the report draws on best practices from multiple different organizations to “make cross-sectoral recommendations for creating a culture of youth enterprise.” Recommendations are broken down in categories for businesses, governments, and civil society organizations. Suggestions for NGOs include engaging in community outreach and mobilization, identifying synergies with other organizations to deliver more effective support to youth entrepreneurs, and catering vocational and life skills training according to local community needs.

**Unpacking Youth Unemployment in Latin America**
Authored by the World Bank and published in August of 2009, this academic study sheds light on what traditional education for employment programs may be missing. The paper finds that, especially for youth between the ages of 19-24, a high level of “churning” occurs, in which this segment of the youth cohort moves frequently between informal wage employment, unemployment, and occasionally moving out of the labor market entirely. Many “first employment” programs are, therefore, not addressing the key constraints on attaining gainful employment for Latin American youth. After answering such questions as where unemployed youth come from and which youth are most likely to encounter difficulties finding and keeping jobs, the author suggests that programs focus on helping youth make informed decisions during the “shopping” period when they are hunting for jobs and are likely to “churn” between various types of employment.

**List of Youth Organizations in Latin America:**
http://www.iadb.org/topics/youth/idbyouth/resources/Organizations.pdf
This PDF provides a list of youth organizations active in Latin America.

**Looking for YOUR input:** We would like to hear from you! YCoP welcomes ideas, resources, and best practices on effective youth programs and youth participation. We would also like to encourage nominations of other youth practitioners or youth leaders to participate in the YCoP Links listserv. Hit “reply” to send information and feedback to YCoP Links.

To unsubscribe from the list, users should send an e-mail to listserv@info.usaid.gov with only “unsubscribe youthcop” in the body of the e-mail. (No signatures please).

**Mission of YCoP:** The Youth Community of Practice provides a forum for professionals and practitioners at USAID and its partner organizations to gather, consolidate, archive, disseminate and exchange information, knowledge, ideas and best practices, particularly related to the incorporation of youth participation in USAID development projects. The Youth Community of Practice is an informal body of volunteer members, reached through a global list serve and Washington-based chapter. Both the list serve and DC chapter forums include USAID staff, youth
practitioners outside of the Agency, and youth themselves. It is jointly sponsored by the office of education in the bureau of Economic Growth, Agriculture and Trade (EGAT) at USAID and the Education Quality Improvement Program3 (EQUIP3), and implemented by the Education Development Center, Inc. (EDC).

**Disclaimer:** The information and opinions expressed in the materials provided through YCoP Links or posted by listserv participants is not official U.S. Government information and does not necessarily represent the views or positions of the U.S. Agency for International Development, the U.S. Government or EQUIP3. For a copy of the guidelines and/or charter, put the request in the subject line of the email and send to: youthcop@lists.info.usaid.gov. Participants should be aware that the list is public and not private communication. When participants voluntarily disclose personal information on a list serve, that information can be collected and used by others and may result in unsolicited messages from other people.