



### **Priorities from the Presidential Summits of the Americas**

In the Declaration of the Second Summit of the Americas, the Presidents acknowledged “overcoming poverty continues to be the greatest challenge confronted by our Hemisphere.” The Member States of Organization of American States (OAS), in the Plan of Action from the Summit, pledged to strengthen preparation and training for the world of work, including the development of entrepreneur skills.”

These priorities set for the OAS by the Presidential Summits of the Americas and other high level meetings led to the creation of the Young Americas Business Trust, as a mechanism to further the goals of the Summit. The Young Americas Business Trust (YABT) has as its mission to address critical issues of poverty and unemployment among young people – issues that affect the development potential and progress as well as the social stability of all the nations of the Americas and the Caribbean and remain high priorities of all OAS Member States.

During the Third Summit of the Americas the Presidents recognized that, “increasing access to opportunities for sustainable entrepreneurship, productivity and employment among young people” are essential in solving the dilemma of persistent poverty and lack of congruity between formal education and the market.

### **The Young Americas Business Trust**

A non-profit corporation affiliated with the General Secretariat of the OAS, its work with the OAS Member States fulfills the priorities of the Summits. The Young Americas Business Trust (YABT) works to promote social and economic development, focusing on helping to create and advance efforts to improve the quality of life of youth and young adults, especially those living in or near poverty.

The purposes of the Young Americas Business Trust are to:

- Serve as an on-going high-level policy dialogue and work with the Member States and public and private sector institutions in developing entrepreneurship as a public policy priority.
- Foster exchanges of experience so countries can learn from and benefit from each other’s expertise and best practices through seminars, conferences, internships, and study tours.
- Work with Member States to design, document and evaluate innovative approaches and mobilize resources for expansion of successful programs that are based on proven methodologies.

*As Ambassador of the United States in Barbados and the Eastern Caribbean from 1994 to 1998, every day I saw the faces of energetic and enterprising young people who could benefit from opportunities for self-employment and entrepreneurship. I know their talents will benefit the nations of the Caribbean. That is why I have worked to help establish the Young Americas Business Trust as a partner with the General Secretariat of the Organization of American States.*

**Jeanette W. Hyde, Chair, Board of Directors  
Young Americas Business Trust**

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## Summary Work Program Plan 2004

**The Young Americas Business Trust (YABT)** continues to grow both in its regional network and in the establishment of national initiatives. The organization draws on extensive support from the Inter-American young entrepreneur community that forms its regional network. At the national level, there is also increasing enthusiasm and interest for adopting and adapting YABT programs locally and in creating national bases that will bring together both resources and people to advance this work. The Young Americas Business Trust works principally in four program priority areas for the development of young entrepreneur programs and networking of young entrepreneurs in the Americas.

### What We Do ...

#### **I. Young Entrepreneur Leadership Network**

The YABT will continue to develop the Young Entrepreneur Leadership Network, linking young entrepreneurs and national associations of young entrepreneurs in a regional communications and collaboration effort, supporting both national initiatives and the regional programs of the YABT.

Four region-wide young entrepreneur leadership events with other national and international institutions are proposed:

- ✓ The first meeting in 2004 will be in conjunction with the IDB Conference,
  - ✓ The second: a proposed international donors meeting in the Galapagos in Ecuador in June,
  - ✓ The third in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil (date to be determined) and
  - ✓ The fourth during the third quarter of 2004 in Washington, DC, possibly in conjunction with the Annual Conference of the International Leadership Association.
- Co-sponsorship of the IDB Conference on Young Entrepreneurs to be held in conjunction with the Board of Governors of the Inter-American Development Bank in Peru in March, 2004. The YABT is collaborating with IDB Youth to organize the research, identify organizations working in the field, plan an electronic showcase of young entrepreneurs, and strengthen YABT's network.
  - Development of the Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) Program specially tailored to young entrepreneurs and small / medium sized businesses (SMEs) in the Americas. Translation of the World Bank Institute curriculum, organizing a series of training exercises for business leaders, young entrepreneur associations, and SMEs. The further development of CSR resources and activities on the YABT's web portal will also be a priority.

#### **II. Young Entrepreneur Skills Training**

- Working with OAS Member States, through universities and organizations, the YABT Business Labs project emphasizes integrated practical skills curricula at the secondary / technical school and university levels. The OAS Inter-American Agency for Cooperation and Development (IACD), at the request of the government of Grenada, provided funding for regional training of trainers seminars in the Caribbean (Grenada) and in Latin America (Ecuador). During 2003, the project held three regional training of trainers seminars: two in Ecuador where the programs trained 1,000 teachers and community leaders and one in the Grenada for the Caribbean. In addition, at the end of the year, YABT organized a "Lessons Learned" regional workshop in Barbados, involving Brazil, Guatemala, Ecuador, Grenada, Barbados, Antigua-Barbuda, The Bahamas, St Lucia, Canada, and Trinidad and Tobago.
  - In 2004, the project will extend this approach to additional countries and work with national institutions in conducting national training of trainers exercises. Two regional seminars will be conducted one in the Caribbean in English using the Business Labs methodology, developed in 2003 with the Mount Carmel international Training Center of Israel and the second in Guatemala, a lessons learned workshop that includes a new focus on "next steps", i.e. extending the projects approach by developing the incubator component.
  - Because of its unique position and range of partners, YABT has the potential to research and initiate new programs, drawing on its own extensive expertise. In this, YABT will give high priority in 2004 to two areas: first, the further development of its concept paper for the Young Indigenous
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Circle to identify appropriate and successful models and create a hemispheric technical cooperation network as a first step in the expansion of programs to young Indigenous people, including a similar approach to Afro-Latin youth; and second, to increase the inclusion. It will also continue to work with the Permanent Mission of Costa Rica in the development of the Abangares Tourism Project to create employment opportunities in an area where a gold mine closed.

- Continue to build the regional technical cooperation network through on-line, videoconferencing through the World Bank Global Development Learning Network, and on-site events that enable participating organizations to share experiences and expertise using proven methodologies for integrating skills training and experiential learning.

### **III. Technology to Benefit Entrepreneurs and Organizations**

- The ybiz.net Internet Platform will continue to be developed as a communications network and electronic resource center for young entrepreneurs. This will include information about doing business in the OAS Member States and with Observers, as well as a listserv, intranet, and Internet radio network.
- The resource section will compile electronic and printed materials for young entrepreneurs and organizations working with startups and SMEs, i.e. training curricula, case studies, and information on best practices. The ybiz.net electronic network and learning platform will expand on-line curricula for business skills training for young people in OAS Member States and around the world.
- YABT's Young Entrepreneur Technology Mentoring Project in Brazil will be expanded to include technology businesses from OAS Member States and Observers, include additional countries in Latin America and the Caribbean, and identify small businesses and young entrepreneurs who can participate as recipients of the mentoring and tutoring.

### **IV. Resources for Young Entrepreneurs and Programs**

- The Young Americas Business Trust works with a range of financial institutions to increase resources to young entrepreneurs and programs. These include national and regional microcredit funds and venture capital-related programs to enable young entrepreneurs to have access to financial resources as they grow. In 2004, the YABT will continue its collaboration with the Latin America Venture Capital Association that is offering training and support for the creation of venture funds in the region, as well as with organizations and individuals interested in creating such funds.
- Over the past several years, YABT has proven its value as a unique public / private sector partnership for and with young entrepreneurs, development organizations, governments, and the business community. It has mobilized a network of young entrepreneurs and established a framework for the expansion of skills training, emphasizing practical, "hands-on" methodologies. YABT will continue to build its organizational structure to service the network, support national training initiatives, and continue to create and scale up innovative programs that address key issues. In 2004, YABT will strengthen its organizational capacity to respond to the requests for its services. To do this, the organization needs financial partners for both short and long-term growth.

### **How We Work ...**

#### **National Chapters and Strategic Alliances**

- National chapters and partnerships with international and national organizations form the base for program operations and provide avenues to collaborate on locally identified and initiated projects as well as mobilize additional technical and financial resources for programs for young entrepreneurs.
  - Strategic alliances including national institutions in Permanent Observer countries of the OAS to enable the Young Americas Business Trust to strengthen national programs and build capacity for management and the delivery of services.
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