

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**

Focus Areas

Leadership and Trade

- **Leadership Links** - Connect young entrepreneurs and business leaders for networking, development of business opportunities, and leadership training.
 - International Congress of Entrepreneurship. Monterrey, Mexico, April 2005
 - "Successful Practices, Through a Regional Development," Mexico, May, 2005
 - GDLN Annual Meeting. Lima, Peru, July 2005
 - YABT Leadership Link, Panama, August 2005
 - OAS Summit of the Americas, November 2005
- **Trade** – Technology-based trade education program linking businesses in the Latin America and the Caribbean and overseas nationals in US and Europe.
 - In Partnership with GDLN, SBA and other organizations to launch a series of events like:
 - **On Site:** Using OAS installations and other locations across the US to train immigrant populations.
 - **On-Line:** In partnership with the SBA, YABT and other business network websites will promote trade, bringing awareness, information and contacts for trade and business opportunities.
 - **GDLN:** Create a series of Global Dialogues, linking one or more countries at a time to share best practices contacts and business information.
- **Business / Community Action** – Offer WBI on-line course and videoconferences to young entrepreneurs and small businesses on ethics and social involvement.
 - Launch On-Line courses via the OAS Educational Portal
 - Target all the Business Labs participants.
 - Promote to all the network members.
 - Promote to universities students and young professionals.
 - Promote the results from the CSR course launched in Spanish last year and promote the course in English and in future Portuguese
- **National Associations of Young Entrepreneurs** – Participate in and partner with national associations (AJE's)
- **Y2Y, Young Connections** and **Youth Network of the America (YNA)** – Support the activities of networks of young professionals at the World Bank (Y2Y) and the Inter-American Development Bank, Organization of American States
 - YABT Staff already linked other OAS consultants and staff members and develop some activities like seminars and visits. These activities will continue in 2005.
- **Connections** – Continue to develop the technology mentoring program to link young entrepreneurs in the Americas with international technology and business mentors.

Training and Practical Experience for Young Entrepreneurs

- **Business Labs** – Conduct regional and national training of trainers workshops in participating countries, giving priority to Grenada, Caribbean, and rural areas
- **Electronic and Videoconference Curriculum** – Continue to develop the integrated technology curriculum with World Bank Institute and five universities (Feb. 22)
- **Internet and Entrepreneur Education** – Work with MIT and University of Delft in the Netherlands to research and use Internet for entrepreneur education.
- **Business Incubators** – Promote exchange of best practices for business incubators and development of linkages with training and trade programs.
- **Young Indigenous Circle** – Collaborate with Indigenous peoples; communities to create a culturally appropriate model entrepreneur development and business labs.
- **Work Study Program** – Offer opportunities for practical training for young entrepreneurs and professionals at YABT and through other partner organizations.

Technology

- **InfoBiz** – A business portal that will aid these businesses in this process by consolidating essential business related information from all OAS Member States in a one-stop on-line resource center.
- **Directories** – Collaborating with the IDB Youth, to continue to develop the online directories of contacts, organizations and government officials by country basis that can provide support to young entrepreneurs and their programs.
- **The Americas Technology Innovation Competition** – Plan to organize an international competition and award program for enterprising college students and graduates centered on the preparation of business plans and projects through the prototype stage.
- **AmericasB2B** - B2B creates financial transaction transparency and access to e-commerce to businesses in South America and the Caribbean through a Software platform that will create a system that is easier to make transactions and follow current regulations.
- **Ybiz.net** – The YABT Website is constantly being updated and new information is always being added. It is a Business Information Portal, a Business Resource Center and a Training Center with online courses to consolidate essential business related information from all countries of the Americas in a one-stop on-line resource center and to help young entrepreneurs by providing new skills, contacts and knowledge to improve their businesses.
- **Caribbean Electronic Entrepreneurship Center** – This program will offer educational trainings via GDLN videoconferences including the exchanges of experiences, ideas and programs. The World Bank and other organizations are offering a program for the WB GDLN new Caribbean Knowledge Learning Network that will be launched early 2005. The program will link with this new resource
- **Global Development Learning Network (GDLN) Video Conferencing** - YABT will continue to develop video conferences on e-business, agribusiness, trade, Corporate Social Responsibility, business incubators, and business skills training and other issues important for young entrepreneurs in the Latin America Region. These video conferences enable the exchange of best practices, experiences and information between the participants and their programs locally and regionally.

Partnerships and Resources

- **Disaster Preparation and Risk Reduction** - seeks to provide materials and tools to small businesses in order to help them prepare for, and reduce the effects of Natural Disasters. A tool kit has been developed which can effectively prepare small businesses for how they react after suffering from the devastation of natural disaster events.

The materials will be:

- A basic desk-top folder to be stored in a safe place with key information needed in the event a disaster occurs;
 - A 45-55 page toolkit on vulnerability reduction and business continuity called Open for Business: A Disaster Planning Toolkit for the Small to Mid-Sized Business Owner - an upgraded version of the 1998 edition, to be published by April 1, 2005
 - Web portal which contains an online version of the 45-55 page toolkit on vulnerability reduction and business continuity. Hosted online to offer easy access and quick reference.
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- **Venture Capital for Starting Companies** - Working with Agora Partnerships, a group compound by MBA students from Columbia University Business School, we will try to develop young people projects in order to get them ready to receive some start up funds. Agora Partnerships will give them not only the support to develop a better project but also with its fund will give them the monetary support also needed.
 - **Linkages with Micro and Small Business Finance Groups** – Finance groups are a growing trend in Latin America and the Caribbean. Finding these resources and connecting entrepreneurs to them is an important goal to achieve.
 - **National Chapters of the YABT** – Currently YABT has official area headquarters in only three countries: Brazil, Ecuador, and Panama. It is a goal to begin expanding the network and creating headquarters in more countries throughout Latin America and the Caribbean.
 - **Grenada Recovery Program** - YABT will assist with small business development and training for the Grenadian population affected by the tragedies of the past hurricanes in 2004.