

CHILDREN INTERNATIONAL®
YOUTH REPORT CARD



2011
PROGRESS OVER POVERTY

TABLE OF CONTENTS

3

Forward - A Letter from Jim Cook

5

Challenges for Today's Youth

6

Focused. Centered. Ready to Serve.

8

Better Prospects, Thanks to Better Health

10

Empowered by Education

12

Leveraging the Power of Leadership

14

A Hands-on Approach with Signature Programs

18

Partnerships that Foster Potential

20

Summing up Our Graduate Survey

21

Final Outcomes and Future Opportunities

Rich with Potential

There is something extremely exciting about seeing a young person begin to realize his or her potential. It's that pivotal point when the possibilities of a brighter future dawn on the individual – and it's wonderful to behold!

That's the feeling I had as I reviewed the results in this Youth Report Card. Children International youth have been leading up to a point where they possess the skills, traits and confidence to pursue a life unburdened by poverty.

Ninety percent of the world's youth live in developing countries, and those youth are more vulnerable to unemployment and poverty, according to the International Labour Organization. Impoverished youth too often lack the education or experience to obtain and keep a job, thereby compounding the cycle of poverty in their countries.

Our youth need all the preparation and training our programs provide in order to compete in the current job market, and I take tremendous pride in the fact that we offer them opportunities for personal enrichment, educational support, job-skills training and building exemplary leadership abilities.

It's my dream that each and every one of the youth we support will live a rich, fulfilling life. And that dream is shared by Children International's generous contributors, who make it possible for these youth to strive for a better way of life – one that can surely become a reality.

Thank you for taking an interest in these young men and women. With your guidance and support, they can certainly gain the skills and confidence to believe in themselves and break their way out of poverty.

Our youth are rich with potential, and I believe the results of the Youth Report Card confirm that. I hope you find the outcomes within as encouraging as I do!

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Jim Cook". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first letters of "Jim" and "Cook" being capitalized and prominent.

Jim Cook
President



Challenges for Today's Youth

There are 1.2 billion adolescents between the ages of 10 and 19 in the world today. Of those, 9 out of 10 live in the developing world.

A closer look reveals that the overwhelming majority of young people are growing up in communities that fail to provide many essential services, let alone opportunities for security and success. Too many youth are being deprived of quality education, adequate health care and safe, constructive environments in which they can thrive and excel.

Growing up in unstable communities with few prospects for the future, youth are more susceptible to substance abuse, gang participation, absenteeism from school, and early pregnancy and marriage. What hope does that spell for the future of our world?

The challenges today's youth face have been further compounded by economic strains on the global economy, making it increasingly difficult for young men and women in developing countries to break free from dire poverty. Judging by key indicators in UNICEF's 2011 State of the World's Children report, the odds don't look promising:

- **Half of all young people in the world do not attend secondary school at the appropriate age.**
- **A quarter of the world's working poor is aged 15 to 24. Meanwhile, 81 million older youth who are eligible and willing to work remain unemployed.**
- **One-third of all new HIV cases worldwide involve youth aged 15 to 24.**
- **One in every three girls in the developing world gets married before the age of 18.**

"Adopting a life-cycle approach to child development, with greater attention given to care, empowerment and protection of adolescents...is the soundest way to break the intergenerational transmission of poverty," UNICEF recommends.

Children International's Youth Program is designed to do precisely that. It builds on the personal progress young men and women have achieved as a result of medical, educational and material support and equips them with the additional life skills they need to rise above poverty and make successful transitions into adulthood.

As the global population of impoverished youth continues to grow and encounters unforeseen challenges, increased support of Children International's Youth Program will ensure that both current and future generations can avail of life-changing opportunities no matter how dire their circumstances. Because youth who are capable, confident and productive not only strengthen their communities, they enrich the world as well.

Children International Youth: Focused. Centered. Ready to Serve.

At the end of 2010, a total of **149,231 youth ages 12 to 19 were receiving support from Children International**. Those young men and women represent 11 countries, including Chile, Colombia, the Dominican Republic, Ecuador, Guatemala, Honduras, India, Mexico, the Philippines, Zambia and the United States. We believe each youth has a valuable role to play in society.

As soon as boys and girls reach the age of 12, they are invited to join our Youth Program and begin acquiring essential life skills. The program is designed to enhance their self-awareness, social and leadership skills, project-management abilities, community involvement and more. The programs they can take advantage of are wide-ranging:

Youth Health Corps

Utilizes peer-to-peer health training to educate youth and members of their community about preventable diseases, sexual and reproductive health, substance abuse and early pregnancies. (See p. 9)

The HOPE Scholarship Fund

Awards scholarships to qualified youth who need help covering costs for secondary school, vocational training or higher education. (See p.11)

Youth Leadership Training

Offers hands-on training to help youth develop skills such as interpersonal communication, decision making, conflict resolution, critical thinking, problem solving and civic participation. (See p. 12)

Youth Councils and the Youth Empowerment Fund

Youth have a chance to democratically elect their own representatives to better address issues that affect them and grants them the authority to use resources in ways that directly improve their lives and communities. (See p. 12)

Game On! and Into Employment

Game On! Youth Sports™ fosters better health and team-building and conflict-resolution skills through organized sports leagues; while Into Employment equips youth with networking and job skills in areas such as information technology, hospitality services and more. (See pp. 14-17)

Each year, as our youth participants near graduation, we ask them to fill out a survey to measure the effectiveness of our programs as well as the overall impact of the benefits they've received. We're proud to report that **12,394 graduating youth completed our latest Graduate Survey** – the largest number of participants to date.

The pages that follow highlight data from that survey and illustrate the many ways our Youth Program is significantly improving the lives of impoverished youth worldwide.

“My Dream...to Improve Our Society”

Edwin Armijos – Ecuador



“My name is Edwin Hernan Armijos, and I am 18 years old. I have been part of the Children International program since I was 3 years old, so I have had the chance to participate in different activities developed by the organization.

I live with my parents, and like many families in my community, we have to face many dangers...for example, the violence that threatens my neighborhood. My father works as a messenger and my mother as a maid. They have always reminded me about the importance of education and to be ready for the future.

I have been part of the leadership group for three years and that has helped me become an individual who generates change in the community. I work with other youth to do many activities – youth who participate in the Youth Health Corps and others who have a vision for the future.

The Youth Health Corps has helped me and hundreds of youth understand the responsibility of being parents at an early age. We have learned about the importance of preventing sexually transmitted diseases – that is to say, we have learned to live responsibly.

Nowadays, I am in the third level of computer engineering, and I work as a community teacher at night. I help the elderly finish their primary school studies. Training to be a teacher was one of the many valuable things I learned from Children International.

Thanks to the organization, I have learned the importance of being an agent of change in my community. I am aware that finishing my career is a big step in my life. I am working hard to get good grades, and I hope to have a good future in order to have my own business fixing computers. I want to give jobs and help other families with that.

In the future, I want to make sure that more youth get involved in the activities of Children International to take advantage of them the same way I did. My dream is that other children and youth will recognize the opportunities provided by the organization in order to improve our society in the future.”

Better Prospects, Thanks to Better Health

In the developing world, a young person's prospects for success depend largely upon his or her ability to stay healthy. One untreated injury or illness could be all it takes to impair physical and cognitive development, interrupt or halt school attendance, and cause long-term financial distress.

The unfortunate reality, though, is that most impoverished youth reside in communities that lack adequate medical facilities. Public health clinics are few and far between, and those that do exist are typically underfunded, overcrowded and understaffed.

Then there's the issue of medicine. Even if a youth manages to see a doctor, those who live in extreme poverty (currently defined by the World Bank as \$1.25 a day or less) seldom can afford to pay for the medicine required for recovery.

As a result, young people tend to avoid health care services. Many fail to receive preventive care, potentially compounding health risks later in life. According to the World Health Organization, "Nearly two-thirds of premature deaths and one-third of the total disease burden in adults are associated with conditions or behaviors that began in their youth."

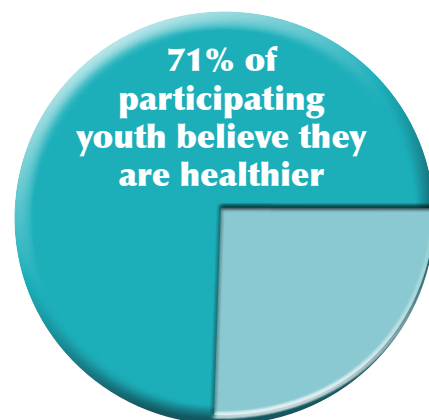
Care They Can Count On

Children International provides free basic medical care and medicine so youth can maintain and improve their health. Our medical clinics are situated in or near their communities, allowing us to offer timely access to treatment, while partnerships with public and private health providers make it possible to arrange specialized and emergency care as necessary.

Beyond that, we offer health-education workshops and training to participants and their parents on an array of health topics, ranging from good nutrition, safe hygiene and sanitary practices, to the prevention and control of communicable diseases.

Youth who want to share their knowledge and training throughout their communities are invited to join our **Youth Health Corps** and become peer educators. They're equipped with the skills they need to educate other adolescents on topics such as sexual and reproductive health, HIV/AIDS, substance abuse and early pregnancy.

By the time youth graduate from our program, all indicators suggest they are capable of leading healthier, more productive lives. Among those youth who took our 2010 Graduate Survey, **71 percent believe they are healthier as a result of the program.** And nearly as many believe they have the ability to stay healthier than youth who were not part of the program.



A Closer Look at the Youth Health Corps

Last year, we trained 2,037 youth as peer educators. Those youth then shared valuable health messages with 139,740 peer contacts during classroom presentations, one-to-one chats and community theater skits.

Spreading awareness and clarifying misconceptions about major health topics is crucial to curtailing devastating diseases like HIV. The World Health Organization (WHO) estimates that **2,500 youth worldwide get infected with HIV every day.**

The WHO further reports that only 30 percent of young men and 19 percent of young women have the knowledge they need to protect themselves against the virus. By comparison, youth who

participated in our Youth Health Corps (YHC) developed a much better understanding of HIV through peer education.

At the start of 2010, only 43.5 percent of program participants could identify at least two ways of preventing the sexual transmission of HIV while rejecting at least two misconceptions about the virus. **However by the end of the program, 91.4 percent could do so.** That's a substantial achievement in communities where the stigma of HIV has the power to silence any and all discussion.

Peer Perspective

"Being an adolescent girl in a village, I had to be very careful in the way that I behaved so that I would not be considered promiscuous by others in the village. Around this time, I heard of the YHC training and felt that it was needed by everyone, so I joined....

Once I became a peer educator and started learning about sexual and reproductive health, I would visit libraries and learn more about the topics, then I would disseminate this knowledge among my friends.

As a peer educator...I have now become a more patient person and can listen to someone else more patiently than I could earlier. Also, my confidence has

increased very much after this training. I feel that I will need these qualities in the future, too, when I move forward on life's path. More so because it is my aim to spread all that I have learnt among people living around me. This, I believe, will lead people to becoming more aware of health issues and bring about a positive change in the environment."



Mina Khamaru, India
Career Goal: Doctor

Empowered by Education

Global access to primary education has steadily improved over the years, and yet, enrollment sharply declines as children get older. UNICEF reports that **nearly half the world's youth don't attend secondary school at the appropriate age**. Current estimates put the number of out-of-school youth as high as 70 million, and over half of those are girls.

Educational outcomes in Honduras, as reported by our agency there, offer a glimpse at academic challenges in the developing

world. Only six years of schooling are mandatory for children ages 7 and up, but **less than half of all children actually complete the full six years and less than one-third advance to secondary school**.

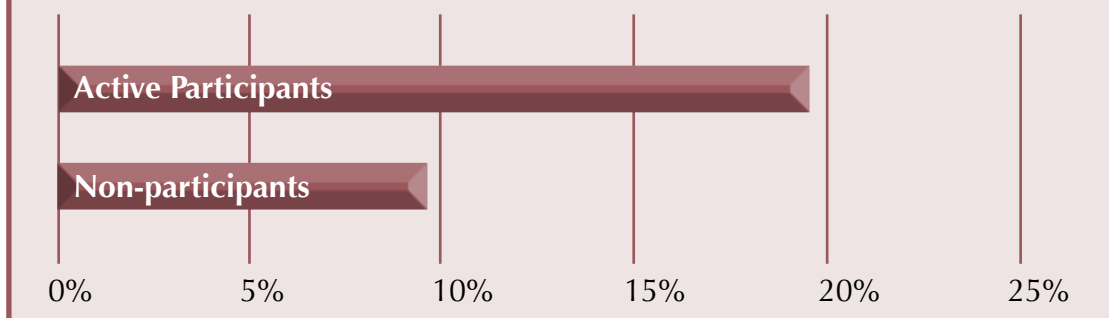
Many of those young people leave school to work and help their families earn an income. The need for food and other necessities simply supersedes school, which doesn't necessarily yield better job prospects in impoverished communities.

A Study in Progress

Our educational programs help alleviate the burdens impoverished families face and promote school completion by providing school supplies, fees and other support. As youth near graduation, our HOPE Fund provides scholarships to qualified youth so they can advance their studies or get vocational training.

In fact, **over 95 percent of all participating children and youth reported that they had enrolled and passed the previous school year**. Likewise, our Graduate Survey suggests that active participation in our Youth Program promotes higher education.

Active participation increased the likelihood that youth attended a 1- to 4-year college or technical course



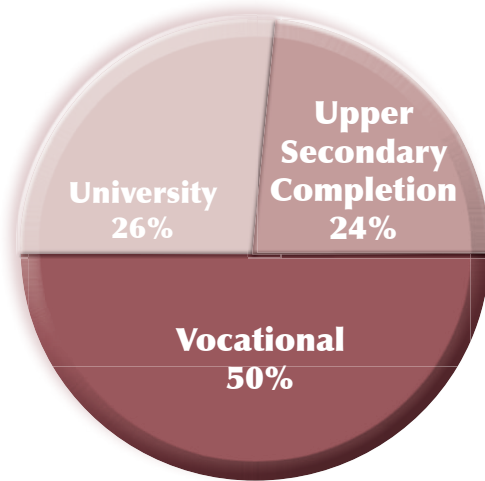
- **89%** rated the education support they received as good or excellent.
- **69%** claim to have more schooling as a result of our programs.
- **77%** of those who frequently participate in programs state they are more likely to complete high school.

Lessons Learned from HOPE

Since we launched our HOPE Fund in 2005, **we've awarded nearly 8,500 scholarships to help disadvantaged youth** complete high school, attend universities or pursue vocational training.

HOPE stands for Helping Overcome Poverty through Education. Scholarships are awarded to qualified youth at the highest level of need who also demonstrate personal initiative and a dedication to community service. Special priority is given to youth who belong to marginalized groups, including females and indigenous applicants. Recipients can use their scholarship funds to cover tuition, fees, transportation, supplies and other related costs.

At the time this report was compiled, **1,777 HOPE scholarships had been awarded for the 2009-2010** academic year. Here's a look at how those scholarships were applied:



HOPE in Action



Sulmy Fuentes Ramírez
Guatemala

"I am 18 years old, and at present, I am doing professional training in expert bookkeeping. I graduate this year and will continue at the university...."

The most difficult thing in all these years of studying was always the cost. It is assumed that education is free, but it's not like that. The uniforms, school supplies, and additional requirements schools ask for are expenses that parents can hardly ever cover. If we do not pay, the school may not let us continue the school year. In my case, the most difficult thing is the cost of transportation, because I live in a very distant village, which is far from everything.

Thank goodness I have a HOPE scholarship. With the scholarship, I can study without the pressure or insecurity of not knowing if I will be able to continue studying the next month. For me, the scholarship means calmness, stability and safety."

Leveraging the Power of Leadership

Youth who actively participate in our programs report they are more likely to have confidence in their leadership skills compared to those who never participate. They, in turn, utilize those skills in their communities during civic-minded activities which they organize and implement.

The three main programs which help instill leadership abilities in our youth are:

Youth Leadership Training

Participants learn critical skills like communication, problem solving and decision-making, with the goal of sharing their knowledge and improving community organization and development. Training culminates in service projects like community clean-up initiatives and awareness campaigns.

Last year, youth participants conducted 674 community-service projects.

Youth Councils

In 2010, 3,388 youth participated in Youth Councils at our 16 agencies around the world.

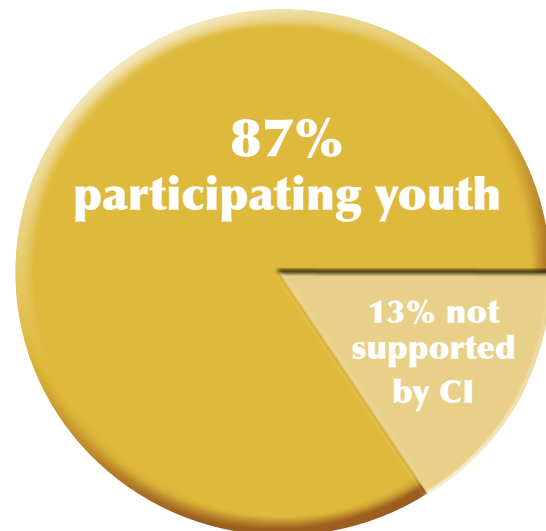
The youth elect representatives to advocate on their behalf within the agency, while council members gain valuable life skills and conduct volunteer efforts and community outreach. They're also tasked with managing the Youth Empowerment Fund.

Youth Empowerment Fund

Children International allocates annual funds which Youth Councils use to alleviate problems in their communities. Under the guidance of agency staff, participants identify projects, create project proposals, then plan and implement the projects.

Last year, **68,792 youth joined in activities** affiliated with the Youth Councils and the Youth Empowerment Fund. They carried out **89 projects at a total cost of \$277,231, or an average of \$3,115 per project.**

Participating youth have more confidence in terms of leadership, goal setting, problem solving and supporting themselves



Empowerment by Example

One of the most notable Youth Empowerment Fund projects was carried out by 100 youth in Kanyama, Zambia, who used \$5,000 to construct six waterborne toilets at the public health clinic in their community.

The public clinic had closed its only two outpatient pit latrines after a cholera outbreak in 2009, leaving an estimated 3,000 patients a day without on-site access to a sanitary facility.

"This is the first time the community has come together to build a structure at the clinic to assist patients," said the clinic's director, Sister Njovu. "If this is the type of thinking the youth will bring when they become leaders, then we are assured a bright future."

A Leader at Work



“My name is LaKimmy, and I’m the current president of the 2010-2011 Children International–UALR Youth Council. I’ve been a member of Children International for several years and have learned a great deal from leadership training.

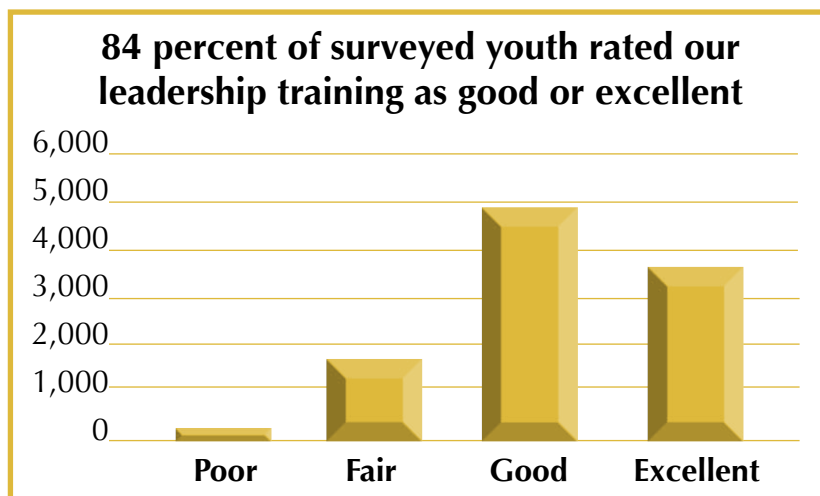
My leadership work with Children International has inspired me to branch out and serve my community in many ways. For example, I am raising money to help children suffering from cleft palates.

I have also helped raise \$1,500 for Rice Depot (an organization that alleviates

hunger in Arkansas) with the North Little Rock Youth Council. We did this by having a rock concert and a silent auction, where we sold paintings, a jacket autographed by *American Idol* winner Kris Allen, dinner tickets, hotel accommodations and other items. And I helped a single mom who is working full-time and going to school full-time. She’s going to school at the University of Arkansas at Little Rock and majoring in social work.

The most exciting project to date is the Our House Youth Kitchen Makeover. (Youth identify a disadvantaged family struggling with poor nutrition and use proceeds from the Youth Empowerment Fund to furnish them with an adequate kitchen.) It’s been exciting because I have always wanted to help someone redo their kitchen – and this is for a great cause!

I think that my leadership experiences will guide me through the journeys to come. I know it will be difficult once I graduate from high school and I am on my own. I will need to lead myself and continue to be a leader for others in order to prosper in the future.”



A Hands-on Approach with Signature Programs

All the ambition in the world won't help a young woman achieve success if she's unable to negotiate threats to her health and safety in her destitute community. Neither will a perfect grade-point average ensure there will be food on the table of a young man who must work to help feed his family.

In addition to intellectual and psychological development, impoverished youth require physical skills and training in order to improve their opportunities for success. That's why we helped implement **Game On! Youth Sports™** – in partnership with the International Alliance for Youth Sports (IAYS) – and **Into Employment**. The two programs equip youth with physical, social and job skills to help them confront their challenges and better compete for limited job openings or academic admissions.

.....

Among the youth who participate in six or more program activities, 71 percent believe they have more ability to reach their goals than youth who are not supported by Children International.

.....

Getting into the Game

“Game On! is about more than sports. It's about teaching skills and values that can help give children and young people the edge they need to get ahead in life,” says Dan Phelan, the campaign chairman who helped launch the community sports program.

Game On! provides a tried-and-true method of motivating young people, including those who typically shun educational programs and may be drawn to drug abuse, gang influence, early marriage and pregnancy. Organized sports leagues and activities teach youth the value of teamwork, conflict resolution, respect for authority, performance under pressure and other qualities that promote personal and social responsibility.

Participatory athletics help strengthen communities, as well, by building social networks and unifying members of the community to strive toward common goals. Parents, teachers and youth volunteers alike receive specialized training and become reliable role models in neighborhoods where positive influences are sometimes few and far between.

Our goal is to expand the program to include over 7,500 youth in nine countries by 2015.



Like a True Pro

A hot, dusty barrio outside Guadalajara, Mexico, is the last place you might expect to find a U.S. snowboarding champion, but that's precisely where **two-time Olympic medalist Hannah Teter** went this past year to check out our programs.

Hannah is the perfect example of how athletics can help mold a young person into a dedicated, driven and conscientious individual who gives back to society. Besides sponsoring children since 2007, **she donates a percentage of the proceeds from her clothing line to help feed malnourished children** through our nutrition program.

While visiting our agency in Mexico, Hannah also had the chance to try out her soccer skills during a Game On! event and then give participants a pep talk about training hard to achieve success. Alongside Hannah, pitching in some extra advice, were her good friends and fellow Children International supporters, **snowboarding teammate Gabi Viteri** and Nike-endorsed **surfer Monyca Byrne-Wickey**.

We're honored to have Hannah, Gabi and Monyca as role models for our youth. All three are proof that, with the right support, any child can rise to the top.

Opened Doors, Into Employment



“No poor child dreams of growing up to become a street vendor, a field hand or a maid,” Gordon Bailey, the chairman of our Into Employment program, points out. “They don’t work hard to get good grades in school – and their families don’t make enormous sacrifices to keep them there – just so they end up washing clothes for pennies a day.”

Gordon’s sentiments echo a growing concern in the developing world: young people, even those who are educated, lack the specialized skills to obtain jobs in the modern global economy. As a result, it’s estimated that 81 million youth who are seeking work remain unemployed.

We started offering Into Employment, in conjunction with a group called Aide et Action International, to give impoverished youth employable skills for trades that are

highly demanded in their communities. They develop skills in areas such as information technology, hospitality services, welding and automotive repair. Youth also learn soft skills like interpersonal and written communication, computer literacy, customer service, time management and financial literacy to fully prepare them for the workplace.

“Pointed in the right direction and given a few important tools, smart, capable youth can ignite their potential and make something of themselves,” Gordon concludes.

Increased financial support for Into Employment would enable us to train at least 10,500 youth of legal working age by 2015. That could lead to thousands of open doors to gainful employment for disadvantaged youth... and many more opportunities to shut the door on poverty for future generations.

72% of the graduating youth we surveyed said they are interested in jobs which require further training or education.

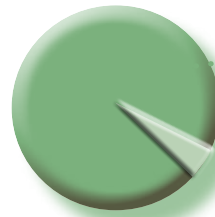
99% said they know what they have to do to get the job they want.

The Odds of Employment

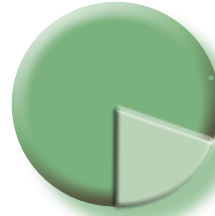
In countries like the Philippines, which is home to almost 20 million adolescents between the ages of 10 and 19, higher education is often unobtainable. Admission to universities is very competitive, as well, forcing even the brightest, most studious youth to seek out jobs before they possess adequate skills and training.

Youth who do find jobs are likely to become underemployed and therefore unable to improve their circumstances. Or they simply remain unemployed. The International Labour Organization reports that **youth are three times more likely to be unemployed than adults.**

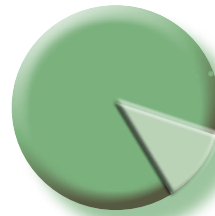
By contrast, youth who participate in Into Employment and our other enrichment programs gain skills they can immediately put to their advantage.



95%
have one or more job skills upon graduation



78%
rated our job skills training as good or excellent



89%
believe they have an increased likelihood of a better future

“The First Step Toward My Dreams”



“Hi, I’m Patrick Borbe, a youth from San Miguel Island in the Philippines. I come from a poor family, and my parents cannot afford to send me to school. That is why Children International’s Into Employment program is a big blessing for me.

Every day I wake up at 3:00 or 4:00 in the morning so that I will make it in time for training on the mainland. I choose not to stay at a boarding house so I can still help out when I come home at night. As one of the older children, I help with household chores and also mat weaving. To do this, I make

sure that I manage my time wisely. Studying comes first, then helping out at home.

I chose a course in consumer electronics because I want to learn how to repair household appliances and other electronic gadgets. I find it very interesting, and it is a step toward realizing my dream of having a repair shop someday. From our trainings, I have learned how to make a power supply and radio, repair cellular phones and more.

What I like about this training is that they also assist us in finding a job. Getting a job is important to me because, through it, I can help my parents. That is one of my goals in life. Once I have a job, I could also send myself to school so that I can earn a bachelor’s degree.

Into Employment is the first step toward my dreams. That’s why I am so thankful that I’m part of it.”

Partnerships that Foster Potential

Several of the targeted programs we offer to youth are the result of generous support from private foundations, charitable trusts and corporations. When we **partner with organizations that share our humanitarian outlook and endeavors**, we have a greater ability to deliver a wide array of programs, benefits and services that alleviate poverty and empower youth and their communities in very direct, lasting ways.

Partners like **Microsoft, Citi Foundation, the Monsanto Fund, the Kellogg Foundation, the West Foundation, and Barclays Bank** have funded programs to equip youth with job skills, financial literacy and much more.

At the end of 2010, **HSBC Global Financial Services** awarded a grant to fund the Into

Employment program in Honduras for another 14 months. The program was originally launched with contributions from the Kellogg Foundation and the Monsanto Fund.

“We value that teens are benefiting from this program and want to improve their lives and their communities,” said Jonathan Hartley, President of HSBC Honduras. “By continuing to fund this program, we know more teens will benefit and more communities will be improved.”

For youth in Honduras – the second poorest country in Latin America, with an unemployment rate of nearly 60 percent for youth ages 15 to 24 – the continuation of the program means they’ll have the skills they need to compete in an uncertain economy.

Children International and the United Nations: A Joint Mission

Over the years, several of our youth have been recognized by the United Nations for both their outstanding personal achievements and commitment to improving their communities. In particular, they were invited to attend international conferences, where they were asked to contribute their input on pressing issues that affect youth around the world. That special recognition has even helped them win additional scholarships, fellowships and job prospects.

Our history of supporting youth in developing countries has earned us recognition as well.

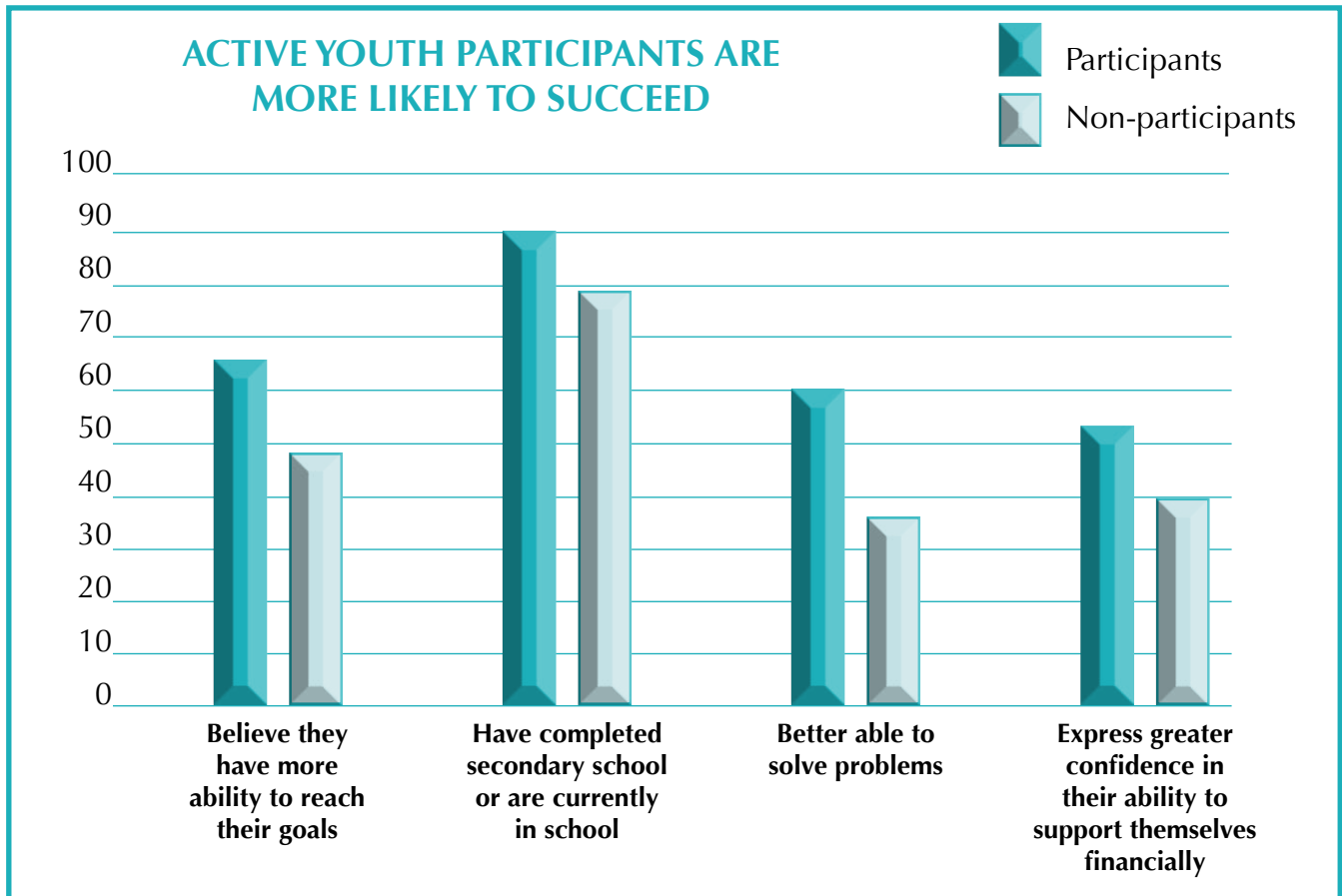
Children International has Special Consultative Status with the Economic and Social Council of the United Nations and is associated with the UN’s Department of Public Information.

Most importantly, though, our programs directly support and further the UN’s goals to end extreme poverty by 2015, goals that include: ensuring all boys and girls complete a full course of primary education, and working to promote full and productive employment and decent work for all, including women and young people.



Summing up Our Graduate Survey

After analyzing the results, it's clear that **active participation among youth leads to positive outcomes**. The survey suggests that youth who frequently take part in our programs are using opportunities to their advantage, while those who don't participate are less sure of themselves and their abilities.



Even among the youth who participated in **only one or two activities** in the last year, **60 percent believe they have more ability to reach their goals** than youth who are not supported by Children International.

The survey also reflects positive increases over 2009 outcomes in several categories which are critical to long-term development and self-sufficiency:

- 69 percent of active participants believed they had a greater ability to stay healthy in 2010 versus 60 percent the year before.
- 91 percent were enrolled in or completed school in 2010 over 76 percent the year before.
- 60 percent in 2010 versus 47.5 percent in 2009 professed a better ability to support themselves financially in the future.

Gains like that reveal the power of participation and, in the developing world, they represent progress over poverty.

Final Outcomes and Future Opportunities



Participation in the Children International Youth Program not only helps youth better understand themselves, it helps them realize what they must do to break free from poverty and achieve their goals in life.

In the 2010 Youth Report Card, we set a goal of increasing the percentage of youth who participate in our Youth Program from what was 15 percent to 85 percent by 2015. Over the course of last year alone, we observed a substantial increase in participation, thanks mostly to growing support for our Game On! and Into Employment programs.

Like any major enterprise, there is always room for improvement, and we intend to ramp up participation and the ensuing positive outcomes by pursuing the following goals in the years ahead:

- **Create more mentorship opportunities between graduating youth and new members of the Youth Program to encourage involvement**
- **Invest more resources in our Youth Councils to expand their outreach and foster greater participation across communities**

- **Enhance community partnerships to better fund and facilitate Youth Empowerment Fund proposals**
- **Extend the Into Employment program into every country where Children International works and establish a system of monitoring their progress.**

If we want youth to become self-sufficient, contributing members of society, we must first help them acquire the specialized skills they need to get the jobs demanded in their communities. To do so requires a long-term investment in their potential, and by extension, overall global progress in our increasingly interconnected world.

Children International has the infrastructure and network of support in place to affect positive changes in the world's most vulnerable youth. Our latest Graduate Survey suggests as much. But it will require increased funding to grow programs like our HOPE Scholarship Fund, Into Employment and Youth Leadership Training and empower youth with the knowledge and abilities required to succeed in today's turbulent global economy.

Ending on a Positive Note

"This is Debashis Acharye. A little here about my past...an only child in the family, my grandparents, an aunt and I were totally dependent on my parents' meager resources, which they pooled together by working as a daily worker (that's my father) and a maid (my mother). Quite expected, our six-member family saw a lot of economic hardships and deficiencies in our everyday lives.

Despite their poverty, however, my parents held on to their one and only dream of raising me well so that I would manage to move on to greener pastures in life. To fulfill this dream, my parents would have to make a lot of sacrifices, which they did. For obvious reasons, their little savings would always fall short of what was needed to raise me; yet, they continued working hard and zealously and spent every rupee they could to ensure my smooth future.

Grinding poverty and daily hardships were taking a toll on my family and me, and when things seemed really bleak, there was a sudden turnaround in my life. I became a part of Children International, and my family breathed a sigh of relief. For my parents, it meant that all their sacrifices would not go in vain. All this happened a decade ago. I was only 9 years old then.

Through the years, the program not only bore the major expenses toward my education but also ensured that I could avail of health checkups and related medical treatments the year-round. Besides, there were other clothing and family benefits.

The leadership trainings and other valuable learning experiences I picked up while in the Youth Program also went hand in hand in opening a new horizon full of opportunities



for me. My family believed strongly that my participation had actually flung open the door to my success in life and urged me to make the best use of this opportunity.

The program extended the HOPE scholarship to me for continuing my education, and in 2010, I completed my university education. I received a job interview for retail sales, and facing tough competition, I actually bagged the job.

I am in my second year now as an employed person and am a self-sufficient and economically independent person, just as my parents had hoped. I am now studying for an MBA degree to further my career.

I shall always remain grateful to Children International for extending all kinds of support – educational, medical, economic and moral – that instilled courage, determination and self-confidence in me and helped me achieve self-sufficiency."



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