

LAUNCHING CHILDFUND'S FIVE-YEAR GLOBAL YOUTH INITIATIVE



\$10,000 will allow 10 young adults to participate in the Youth Employment Initiative to help them successfully transition into the workforce

CHILDFUND INTERNATIONAL PROPOSAL

Background:

For over 70 years, ChildFund International has been working to help children, youth, and families find a way out of debilitating poverty.

As a young person's transition into adulthood, the start of a productive working life is considered by many social scientists as the most important benchmark of independence.

Without relevant skills or experience, finding that first job is often extremely hard. Providing youth with employable skills is, therefore, the key intervention driving ChildFund's unprecedented new core program that contributes to the outcome of skilled and involved youth.

The reasons for investing in youth are compelling:

- The current population of young people in developing countries is the largest the world has ever seen: around 1.3 billion and it is not expected to reach its maximum until 2035.
- History shows that when there are a large number of young adults (aged 15-25) relative to older workers, the younger workers are paid lower wages and are subject to higher unemployment.
- In 1999, the unemployment rate for the 15-25 age group was 13%, more than double the figure for adults. The figure today is surely higher, given the current global economic crisis.
- Unemployment often leads to low self-esteem, despair, and productivity losses that slow economic progress.
- Even more alarming, studies show a strong correlation between countries prone to violent conflict, along with a burgeoning youth population.

Through academic studies, it has been consistently proven that the promotion of job growth and training for young people, as one of the primary interventions, greatly improves the opportunities for employment and reduces the risk of instability.

Although youth unemployment is a problem universally identified by the communities where ChildFund works, there is little evidence of which interventions are most effective in creating jobs. In part, this is because only recently has youth enterprise development become a recognized field of study.



TAILORING IS IN DEMAND ChildFund will train youth to develop a tailoring business. Sewing machines will be provided along with lessons to develop skills. We will also identify a major buyer – for example, a primary school – and obtain a contract to provide the school uniforms.

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Meeting this challenge:

ChildFund proposes to launch a Youth Employment Initiative – the first of its kind – that will provide an opportunity to create model programs that can guide the design and improve the quality of youth employment interventions in all the countries where ChildFund works. This will be a truly global initiative.

The proposed initiative will provide an opportunity to create a learning environment that moves beyond country-specific implementation and seeks to identify and share lessons learned. The standard of success is the sustained employment of youth participants. While this short-term outcome is important, the ultimate value of the Youth Employment Initiative is the transfer of this success to all the ChildFund communities.

Once the interventions are established, all youth living in ChildFund-supported communities will have the opportunity for a livelihood upon which they can build their economic future.

ChildFund's program goal:

ChildFund's goal is to test the effectiveness of model youth employment programs in a variety of environments. To achieve this purpose, a new focus country will be identified each year of the five-year period. The first country chosen is Sri Lanka, where a highly successful intervention was undertaken last year in the Kegalle District.

Sri Lanka has been chosen because of its severe youth unemployment, especially for young women, as a result of the civil conflict in the East. In addition, the staff in the Kegalle District has gained significant experience in youth economic development, which can be incorporated in ChildFund's new core programming model. This provides the opportunity to quickly replicate the new model throughout Sri Lanka, thereby leveraging grant resources.

In addition to helping youth find that first job or establish a start-up micro-enterprise, the design will address the support mechanisms that will be needed to keep youth employed during their first five years in the workplace. If they survive those critical entry years, their chances of remaining employed dramatically improve.

Principles of the Youth Employment Initiative:

The design of each focus-country program will be unique, responding to the specific challenges young people are facing. Following are the guiding principles of the Youth Employment Initiative.

- Where there is a developed economy, the effort will be made to link youth with employers. However, formal job opportunities are typically limited in developing



HONEY IS IN DEMAND Beekeeping can lead to a profitable business. Youth will be shown how to make beehives, how to care for the hives, where to purchase bees, and how to collect the honey. We will help the youth bee keepers organize the collection of honey and its storage, so that a buyer from a profitable market, like the capital city, can come and collect the honey.

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countries, and self-employment will be a more universally applicable option.

- It is understood that to start a new business without experience is very risky. Therefore, youth will be closely guided through the essential steps of starting a micro-enterprise.
- Risks for new entrepreneurs will be mitigated by careful selection of a micro-enterprise activity that is based on a market assessment and careful profitability analysis.
- Experience has shown that it is desirable to focus on a limited number of products or services for which there is a strong market. In addition, providing marketing assistance in selecting an enterprise for inexperienced youth is very important.
- Among the possible enterprises will be those which have been successfully implemented in the Kegalle District: raising dairy cows, goat and poultry farming, banana cultivation, horticulture, home crops and gardening, beekeeping, tailoring, retail businesses, construction, and carpentry.
- Limiting start-up options to a few that can generate a reliable source of income not only enables the youth to see the immediate rewards of their work, but also allows for efficient delivery of technical assistance by the support organization.
- Youth will be able to take advantage of economies of scale through coordinated or collective sale of their products to a major outlet.
- Cost-effective interventions that can be replicated elsewhere.
- Holistic needs of youth must be considered, such as reproductive health services or HIV/AIDS prevention.



RAISING DAIRY COWS FOR LIVELIHOOD
Youth will be trained in livestock management including selecting, feeding and milking cows, and building an appropriate shed. In addition, ChildFund will establish a community milk collection center, where the milk the youth entrepreneurs can produce will be sold at a good price through a major milk distributor.

Key program activities will include:

- Market-based technical and business skills training for youth
- Employment preparation and life skills training
- Marketing services
- Workplace behavior, business ethics, communication skills
- Literacy education
- Job placement services; career mentoring
- Employer needs assessments
- Start-up grants/tool kits
- Follow-up support service

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ChildFund program benefits:

It is expected that young people targeted will be employed under non-exploitative conditions, and they will remain employed for five years at a rate equal to or above the national unemployment rate. In years two through five of the programs, 100 youth will become employed each year in the Americas or Africa. Monitoring activities will be conducted throughout, with the goal of replicating the successful employment of youth in all new program areas.

Brazil is currently piloting the youth employment model. As funding permits, another 10 countries are expected to be added over a period of 10 years.

**Your generosity will provide the resources
necessary to help young people find
employment and hope for a better life.**

**Your gift of \$10,000 will allow 10
young adults to benefit from the
Youth Employment Initiative**

**Thank you for your consideration of the
needs of the youth in our care.**

