



Young Americas Business Trust



***Young Entrepreneurs of the Americas  
Forum for the participation of the Civil Society  
in the process of the Summit of the Americas***



### **Purpose**

The Young Americas Business Trust (YABT) will organize “**Young Entrepreneurs of the Americas Forum for the Participation of Civil Society in the Process of the Summits of the Americas**” (in Spanish - “*Jóvenes Emprendedores de las Américas: Foro para la Participación de la Sociedad Civil en el Proceso de las Cumbres de las Américas*”) in Buenos Aires. The *Foro* will bring together young entrepreneurs, civil society, the business community, and OAS Member States to consider how to make the theme of the IV Summit of the Americas relevant to young people.

YABT is working with the OAS Summits of the Americas Secretariat, the Office for Trade, Growth, and Competitiveness, YABT Argentina, and national organizations in Argentina to organize the event. The World Bank Global Development Learning Network, The Youth Development and Outreach Program of the Inter-American Development Bank, and OAS Member States are also major partners in the *Foro* to be in Buenos Aires, Argentina, August 10 – 12, 2005 in preparation for the IV Presidential Summit of the Americas that will be held in Mar del Plata, Argentina, November 4 – 5, 2005.

The event and the process involved in preparing for it will give young people the opportunity to contribute to civil society participation in the IV Summit of the Americas. It will enhance the Summit process by creating a space for young people in the civil society dialogs in the Summit process. In the longer term, it will widen national discussions and planning in an area of social and economic development following Summit priorities, raising the level of awareness of importance of young entrepreneurs as a public policy priority.

### **Goals**

- To create a forum where ideas and suggested actions can be discussed that follow the themes of the IV Summit of the Americas
- To prepare a report of the Forum that can be circulated to inform Summit participants and other High Level and civil society meetings about the ideas and suggested actions to translate the Summit goals into tangible plans
- To provide a platform for future technical and organizational collaboration as follow-up to the Forum and Summit Plans of Action.

### **Summary**

The Young Americas Business Trust (YABT) and its partners will organize this event to provide a multi-dimensional platform to make the themes of the Fourth Summit of the Americas relevant to young people. YABT, YABT Argentina, and their network of civil society partners, in cooperation with OAS Member States will follow a six-month work plan to solicit and assimilate input and information from young people, organizations, governments, and the private sector on issues, ideas, and recommendations to reinforce the themes of the Fourth Summit of the Americas. For the final three months of the year, the recommendations and report will be circulated to relevant governmental and civil society organizations and the website promoted as a resource and follow-up center.

Argentina, host for the Summit, assigns high importance to the theme “**Creating Employment to Confront Poverty and Strengthen Democratic Governance.**” YABT Argentina will coordinate with national institutions to engage the local and international community in supporting the initiative. Organizing the *Foro* in August 2005 in Buenos Aires two months prior to the Summit will provide sufficient time to prepare, edit, and produce a useful product with input from the Member States. A major objective will be to compile current research of each country’s ongoing policies and programs and incorporate this into the analysis and make this available on YABT’s website, [www.ybiz.net](http://www.ybiz.net).

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**Draft Foro Agenda**

**Day 1 – August 10, 2005:**

**Plenary Sessions**

**9 am – 12 noon**

**Official Opening Ceremony: Focus on Summit Themes**

- Remarks by Organization of American States
- Presentation by Argentina hosts (YABT Argentina)
- Presentation by Young Americas Business Trust
- Presentation of Major Thematic Overview – Introduction

**2 – 3:30 pm**

**Review of Events and Activities from May - August, 2005**

- Identify overriding discussion results from interventions by young people across region
- Plan/Brief description of two-day working workshop
- YABT / ProArgentina and workshop participants will discuss objectives and plan for the and goal for the final report to be presented at the Summit of the Americas

**4 – 5:30 pm**

**Brief Synopses and Introduction of Topics**

**7:30 pm**

**Opening Reception and Cultural Event**

**Day 2 – August 11, 2005**

**Workshops: “Creating Employment to Confront Poverty and Strengthen Democratic Governance”  
Making the Summit Theme a Reality for Young People and Entrepreneurs,**

Moderated working groups and dialogs with delegates and observers will examine the following topics.

(Preliminary and subject to further review with potential participants / sponsors)

- **Workshop:** Encouraging Leadership and Good Citizenship  
*“How can the leadership potential and social responsibility of young entrepreneurs advance the Summit Plan of Action?”*
- **Workshop:** Improving Competitiveness and the Entrepreneurs Environment  
*“How can governments, civil society, and the private sector collaborate to reduce barriers to business startup and create an improved environment and access to finance for young entrepreneurs?”*
- **Workshop:** Strengthening Education and Training  
*“What strategies are most effective in giving young entrepreneurs the skills they need to improve their living conditions and create employment in their communities?”*
- **Workshop:** Using Technology as a Platform for Entrepreneurs  
*“How can technology and the Internet be most effectively and widely used to create employment and business opportunities for young people and to increase their success and competitiveness?”*

**Brief Summary of the Day’s Discussion**

Preparations by each group to organize the answers and results from the various workshops. One representative will speak from each group to entire audience on the results of their *dialog*.

**Day 3 – August 12, 2005:**

**Plenary Session**

**Final presentations and Conclusions**

- Spokesperson for each workshop makes final presentation followed by closing discussion.
- Identify points of consensus between all participants regarding the inputs from the four months of work from across the region, including the conclusions from the workshops at the *Foro*.
- These conclusions, final recommendations, and the annexes of the report with input from the young entrepreneurs will go into the report for the Summit of the Americas in November 2005.

**1:00 pm – 3:00 pm**

**Luncheon and Closing Ceremony with High-level Officials**

**3:00 pm**

**Foro Concludes**

**Evening**

**Closing Reception**

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#### **Geographical Scope**

The Project will draw delegates and input from all OAS Member States. Permanent Observer countries of the OAS and other interested international participants will be invited to participate as Observers.

#### **Target Group**

The *Foro* is aimed principally at young entrepreneurs or potential entrepreneurs in OAS Member States. It is expected that each country will have three official delegates, i.e., young entrepreneurs under age thirty-five. Young entrepreneurs are defined as below age 35, with a business, an idea for a viable business, or an interest in starting a business in the future. Participants may also include agencies and non-governmental organizations that work with any phase of young entrepreneur's development and are registered with YABT. Delegates will come from national organizations that will be invited to organize consultation activities and videoconferences and to generate inputs for the final report. YABT national staff and volunteers will act as coordinators to provide a focal point for the planning and operations.

In addition, other participants target to attend the Forum or contribute to its work through national events and consultations are international organizations and financial institutions, civil society organizations, universities, business associations, and governmental agencies working in the field of youth development, small business, entrepreneurship, and related areas.

#### **Expected Results**

The results of the *Foro*, the activities leading up to it and the follow-up will be:

- A participatory process for young entrepreneurs, civil society organizations, and OAS Member States to present in the Summit process and related events.
- A comprehensive statement and suggested action plan for creating employment for young people through entrepreneurship and small business development.
- A series of national and international dialogs that draw on the ideas and experience of young people, organizations that work with young people in business, and small business development agencies, both public and private sector.
- A blueprint for continued international collaboration and technical cooperation in the area of job creation and entrepreneur development, following priorities and actions emanating from the IV Summit of the Americas.

A report and recommendations presented to OAS Member States, Summit Civil Society meetings and other national and international meetings in preparation for and as follow-up to the IV Summit of the Americas.

The draft concept / outline of the report of the *Foro* is as follows:

- Introduction - Preface
- Declaration of Buenos Aires
- Executive Summary and the Recommendations – Young entrepreneurs and the links to the IV Summit Theme “Creating Employment to Confront Poverty and Strengthen Democratic Governance”
- Overview – Macro picture of the importance and impact of young entrepreneurs in the Americas
- Sections on each of the sub-themes
  - Leadership and Citizenship
  - Competitiveness and the Business Environment
  - Education and Training
  - Technology
- Action Plan and Next Steps
- Review of National Inputs and Recommendations
- Annexes
  - References to source documents
  - List of participating organizations and individuals

## Young Entrepreneurs of the Americas Forum for the Participation of Civil Society in the Process of the Summits of the Americas

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### Project Components

The two-pronged approach of the Project is to

- 1) Prepare a set of recommendations, based on review and discussions with national and international participants, including at the *Foro* event. The long-term sustainability costs of this activity are minimal after the *Foro*, i.e. maintaining the information on the [www.ybiz.net](http://www.ybiz.net) website, the primary distribution point, along with printed copies. These are viewed as manageable within the current budgets and contexts of OAS and YABT programs.
- 2) Set in motion a follow-up plan of action, in cooperation with OAS Member States, civil society organizations, and other initial and international donors that will add value, as well as tangible technical and financial resources to the scope of entrepreneur development in the Americas.

The preliminary concept paper for the proposed *Foro* was recently presented at the GRIC Civil Society Dialog in Argentina on March 9, 2005 and drew strong support from OAS Member States. This gives the initiative significant momentum and a foundation to build a successful event and valuable contribution to the entire Summit process. The OAS Member States, including the Government of Argentina, in the identification of the theme for the IV Summit of the Americas and in policies and actions emanating from previous Summits and other High Level Meetings have identified employment creation as a high priority for economic and social development.

The *Foro* and the issues discussed and recommendations to be developed will closely follow draft priorities and Summit dialogs to give broader citizen participation among young people in this process. This will both educate them about the Summit process as well as gather their input, ideas, and talents to the overall Summit process. Through this Project, YABT and other participating organizations will aim to draw from a broad base on previous research, consultations held during the three months prior to the Summit, as well as the actual *Foro* itself.

The result will be a wider understanding among young people, and young entrepreneurs in particular, of the ideas leading up to and mandates set by the Summit. The goal, however, is to go beyond the actual Summit and forge a consensus and action plan that OAS Member States and other civil society organizations can use to put in motion concrete steps to implement the Summit Action Plan. Throughout this process, YABT and *Foro* organizers will work closely with the OAS Summits of the Americas Secretariat and the Civil Society section to maintain relevance to Summit preparatory events and related dialogues issues to both governmental and civil society in the Americas.

### Timeline

- March 29: Announcement at YABT trade conference in Washington and April 7 YABT / ProArgentina export event in Buenos Aires
- April 11 - 12: Participation of the YABT at the Forum with Civil Society in Washington.
- April 30: Launching of website, located in the YABT main webpage [www.ybiz.net](http://www.ybiz.net), which will provide webpage for each country in the Americas to post documents and comments.
- May: Catalog main contacts with links, documents and information regarding the realities in each country, related to the themes of the Summit of the Americas.
- June 5: Participation of the YABT and YABT Argentina (ProArgentina) to participate in person at the OAS General Assembly in Ft. Lauderdale, Florida in June.
- June – August: Exchange inputs and information via bulletin board and chats on the YABT website, [www.ybiz.net](http://www.ybiz.net), leading to an open, inclusive and multi-sector participation.
- Identify ongoing programs, events and conferences hosted by various local partners and participants in all the countries.
- YABT representatives work with partners and programs to retrieve input from the participants for the August *Foro* and final report.
- Videoconferences will bring together different groups of participants to discuss, learn from and present the best practices / case studies that can be scaled up and replicated in the region
- August 10 – 12: Young Entrepreneurs of the Americas Forum in Buenos Aires, Argentina. Discussions will focus on issues and practical steps: “What works, what doesn’t, and why?”

### Background

## **Young Entrepreneurs of the Americas**

### ***Forum for the Participation of Civil Society in the Process of the Summits of the Americas***

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Poverty remains the central challenge facing the Americas and its debilitating conditions – hopelessness, drug abuse, crime, and lack of skills - most severely affect young people under thirty. Because they comprise up to 60% of the population in some countries, their future holds the prospects for social and economic development of their countries. Governments and the private sector of the Americas now recognize that small businesses represent the principal engine for broad-based economic growth. Young people however, need entrepreneurship, technological, and self-employment skills.

Education and employment projects in Latin America and the Caribbean are typically based on market-oriented training and "general" education for national development and are perceived as a central mechanism for socio-economic achievement. However, despite the quantity of projects implemented over the last fifty years in Latin America and the Caribbean, the lack of academic preparation, specific job skills, and employment or self-employment prospects remain a barrier for significant proportions for the population. Young adults, who were directly affected by cuts in public educational spending during their formative years, are particularly affected and educational deficits of this kind translate into increased levels of unemployment with spreading, deepening poverty among young people.

Furthermore, the limited formal wage sector in many communities means there are fewer jobs being created than there are young people leaving school or already in the labor market seeking employment. Young people suffer the effects of unemployment disproportionately, as economically active young adults often are unable to find work or get a start in business. The result is a persistent, high level of poverty, increased delinquency, and joblessness among employment-age young people.

The advent of free trade regimes and the acceleration of technological change, privatization, and the globalization of the economy have added more pressure by profoundly altered all dimensions of the productive sector. While this sector has diversified, income distribution in Latin America continues to grow increasingly skewed and the Americas continue to suffer among the most inequitable levels of distribution of income in the world.

#### **Potential Partners and Contributors**

- General Secretariat of the OAS
  - Office for Trade, Growth, and Competitiveness
  - Office of Education, Science, and Technology
  - Summits of the Americas Secretariat
  - Executive Secretariat for Integral Development
  - Offices of the OAS General Secretariat in the Member States
  - Permanent Missions and Permanent Observer Missions to the OAS
- ProArgentina and national organizations and universities in Argentina
- YABT National Chapters and affiliated civil society organizations, universities, and municipalities
- World Bank Global Development Learning Network
- National small business development agencies and Ministries in OAS Member States
- Young Entrepreneurs, Associations, and Chambers of Commerce in OAS Member States
- Global Foundation for Democracy and Development, Washington D.C. and Dominican Republic
- National Ministries, public agencies, national and international nongovernmental organizations
- Inter-American Development Bank Youth Development and Outreach Project, IDB Youth
- US, Small Business Administration
- Young Connection of the Inter-American Development Bank
- Y2Y Connection of the World Bank
- Youth Network for the Americas of the Organization of American States
- World Bank, World Bank Institute, and United Nations agencies
- Partners of the Americas Chapters
- Open Society Institute
- YES -Global Campaign of Actions for the Youth Employment 2002-2012
- Private and Public Universities in the OAS Member States
- Global Youth Action Network
- Taking IT Global
- International Youth Foundation
- Iberoamerican Organization of Youth, OIJ
- Iberoamerican Confederation of Young Entrepreneurs National Associations, CIJE
- Iberemprende Foundation

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- Civil Society Organizations registered with OAS Summits of the Americas Secretariat
- National and international foundations and donors
- Private sector and business supporters and sponsors, good corporate citizens

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

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.”

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

At 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.

As part of its work with the OAS General Secretariat in fulfilling the priorities of the Summits, the Young Americas Business Trust (YABT) promotes social and economic development in the Western Hemisphere and elsewhere through programs, projects, and activities. These focus 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 and civic participation forum with the Member States and public and private sector institutions to develop 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.

The Young Americas Business Trust, a non-profit corporation affiliated with the General Secretariat of the OAS through a Cooperation Agreement signed by the Secretary General and the YABT Board Chair in 1999. YABT was created as an action following the Second Summit of the Americas to realize a stronger partnership with the private sector for the OAS in addressing critical issues of poverty, education, and employment.

The Young Americas Business Trust works through public / private sector partnerships links to OAS Offices and programs, OAS Member States, and Permanent Missions to organize and conduct programs to create employment and small business opportunities for young people as a strategy to overcome poverty. It connects public and private sector organizations to the OAS through innovative partnership projects with the young entrepreneur and business community, non-profit organizations, universities, and other civil society groups. Example of current activities includes YABT’s Leadership Network, Business Labs, Conference on “Creating Trade Opportunities for Hispanics and Caribbean People in the United States with their Home Countries, as well as national initiatives.”

**For more information, please contact: Young Americas Business Trust [www.ybiz.net](http://www.ybiz.net)**

**Washington, DC – OAS General Secretariat**  
*Office for Trade, Growth and Competitiveness*

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