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This edition of Sphere recognizes The World Day Against Child Labor by reflecting on the intersection of youth, education, employment, and the global economy.

As youth in developing countries enter the workforce, providing skills and strategies so that they find meaningful employment is imperative.

DevTech is proud to dedicate this issue of Sphere to the children and families who struggle against child labor, and, through education, seek a better future for themselves and their countries.

It is estimated that by 2015 there will be three billion people under the age of 25 in the world.¹ While, globally, this population is the most educated generation ever, the International Labor Organization (ILO) shows unemployed youth continuing to rise.² Additionally, the United Nation's 2008 Global Employment Trends for Youth estimate that youth make up almost 40 percent of global unemployment. In the current economic crisis, the connection between education, the workforce, and economic development demands a steadfast focus.

In late April 2010, the Obama Administration held the U.S. Presidential Summit on Entrepreneurship. Co-hosted by the Departments of Commerce and State, the Summit brought together participants from over 50 countries to identify how our nation can deepen ties between business leaders, foundations, and entrepreneurs, and introduced a new US' Global Entrepreneurship Program. The program will tap the American private sector and civil society to bring about "successful entrepreneurial environments," by expanding entrepreneurs' access to capital, sponsoring business plan competitions, and strengthening business education.

Also in April, U.S. Secretary of Labor Hilda L. Solis and other G20 labor and employment ministers met with President Obama to share recommendations to address the challenges that the economic crisis brings for workers and their families. While many recommendations focused on programs and policies of the G20, a central focus was the need to place employment at the center of national and global economic strategies. The group underscored that education, lifelong learning, job training and skills development strategies be prioritized and linked to growth strategies.



Children learning computer skills at an EpE in Cali, Colombia

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The President's Entrepreneurship Summit and the recommendations of the G20 labor leaders suggest an increased acknowledgment that job skills and entrepreneurial training merit a place in the formal education system and in society. These attributes are not necessarily born of natural talent or exclusive to certain countries.

Furthermore, this increased focus on education, employability, and entrepreneurship calls for reflection on how the skills and abilities important to workforce development are built into education systems, and the long-term pay-offs for investment in this arena. Development assistance and programs have often been subjected to bureaucratic silos and technical disciplines. In past, public and private vocational education has emphasized the hard skills of a particular specialization, often in response to the demands of students and parents.

Perhaps due to its strong roots in economic analysis as a practice, DevTech has emphasized the relationship between human capital and the market. Historically, DevTech has sought to incorporate the 'soft-skills' of leadership, entrepreneurship, and communication into all of its vocational and education programs. When providing project management support to rebuild and rehabilitate vocational education centers in Honduras, the firm added a training component in micro- and small-business development for participants. Likewise, in Indonesia, DevTech conducted a feasibility assessment to determine the options of strengthening the relevance, accessibility, and quality of technical education in Aceh.

In this issue of Sphere, we highlight a current DevTech program and analyze some of the key considerations that exist in the current dialogue about youth employability and entrepreneurship.

YOUTH PROGRAMMING: ESPACIOS PARA EMPRENDER (EPE)—SPACES FOR ENTREPRENEURSHIP

DevTech's experience from the Dominican Republic and Colombia

Over the past three years, DevTech has implemented programs focused on building young people's entrepreneurial skills in an effort to keep youth out of the worst forms of child labor. Currently, DevTech and Entrena S.A., along with local implementing partners, are operating these programs in the Dominican Republic (DR) and Colombia.

In late 2007, DevTech and its partners began implementing a new project in the DR to build on the successful Espacios para Crecer (EpC) program (see box). The Espacios para Emprender (EpE) program, in English, "Spaces for Entrepreneurship", responded to a call from communities and families to provide the same services offered to younger students through the EpC program to youth and adolescents. The EpE program is designed for adolescents 14 to 17 years of age, to be withdrawn or prevented from experiencing the worst forms of child labor, and helps these youth to build the skills and attributes necessary to succeed in the workforce. The EpE program was

developed, piloted and validated in the DR in early 2008, and adapted and implemented in Colombia in 2009.

The EpE program equips young people with skills and strategies to find a job or establish a micro-enterprise or continue formal education. The program aims to instill youth with a sense that they are equal to all others and they should receive the same educational opportunities as their peers. The program consists of three modules including 1) Life and Leadership skills; 2) Vocational Job-entry Skills; and 3) Financial and Basic Managerial Skills, as well as programs to supplement and improve academic skills. In both DR and Colombia, DevTech has partnered with national institutions that provide vocational and technical courses to participants so that youth gain marketable skills in growing labor fields.

Espacios para Crecer/Spaces for Growth

In 2003, DevTech Systems, Inc. (DevTech) and Entrena, S.A. developed the Espacios para Crecer (EpC), in English "Spaces for Growth" program with support from the U.S. Department of Labor. Since then, DevTech, Entrena, and our local partners have been working with vulnerable and at-risk children in the DR and Colombia where the school day lasts only half the day. The program provides a structured environment for children ages 6-14 to develop academically, personally and socially during the half of the day when they are not in school and provides an alternative to child labor.

The EpC program has been internationally recognized as a best practice in reducing child labor and improving education programming. At the June 2009 International Labor Conference in Geneva, Senator Tom Harkin highlighted the EpC program as a model practice by saying, "every child deserves an EpC." In 2009, the EpC program received an award from the Interamerican Development Bank, UNESCO, UNICEF, ILO and the Government of Mexico for "Best Practice in Programs and Policies for Youth".

KEY CONSIDERATIONS

Understanding the complexities of youth employability and entrepreneurship

In this rapidly changing, increasingly global market, educated youth equipped with leadership, critical thinking, communication and management skills will drive economic growth. Entrepreneurial training for youth in the developing world must rely on a dynamic combination of both "hard" and "soft" skills.

In fact, a recent U.S. Department of Labor roundtable entitled, "What Works in Promoting Youth Entrepreneurship? Evidence & Lessons from the LAC Region" explored whether hard or soft skills matter most when promoting employability and entrepreneurship among young people. At the roundtable, DevTech's Chief Operating Officer, Tonya Giannoni, shared lessons from our work with the EpE program.

In the DR, the EpE program has evolved to more effectively integrate hard and soft skills. Initially, the program led with a module focused on vocational training which was designed by

the state and driven by local market needs. However, students abandoned the program at high rates as soon as they had acquired the vocational skills necessary to secure a job. Integration of hard and soft skills has improved program retention and completion rates. Longitudinal research into whether these additional soft skills have long-term payoff for students would increase our understanding of the balance between hard and soft skill needs.

An increased emphasis on entrepreneurship requires a change of mindset, culture, and language as well as concerted efforts to embed these skills into formal education and curricula. At the 2008 Global Forum on Youth Entrepreneurship David Stewart-Patterson, Senior Vice President of the Canadian Council of Chief Executives noted, “Entrepreneurship, at its core, is not only an activity. It is an attitude, one that can and should infuse every sector of our society.”

While soft skills like teamwork, problem solving, adaptability and flexibility are often cited as desirable by 21st century employers, the culture of entrepreneurship, which requires risk-taking, independent thinking, and often principal for investment, is not universally culturally acceptable or feasible, especially for young people. In fact, young people favor formal wage work over self-employment.

Research from the World Bank examines young people’s opinions about entrepreneurial ventures.³ In looking at select Latin American countries, for example, among 15- to 18-year-olds, only 6 percent of Mexicans and 12 to 17 percent of Argentines select self-employment as their initial form of employment. In contrast, nearly one third of Argentine adults (ages 25-44) become self-employed. In Brazil, 70 percent of young people ages 15–18 who are currently self-employed would prefer to enter the formal-sector, and 50 percent of people ages 19–24 have the same preference.

Sociologists and economists alike have noted that human and physical capital accumulation may require several years to develop, so young people are less apt to select self-employment as a viable workforce option.⁴ Training, skills development, and mentorship are likely important aspects of ensuring youth experience successful entrepreneurial ventures.

Continued economic growth, particularly for developing nations, will rely on young people’s abilities to develop the skills critical for entrepreneurial ventures whether they use these skills to start their own business or join existing businesses competing in the global marketplace. An increased emphasis on entrepreneurship will require a concerted effort to embed these skills into formal education and curricula. Yet many national educational systems are hardly ready for this type of change.

At the President’s Entrepreneurship Summit, Lawrence Summers cited Stanford’s Paul Romer, a leading scholar of economic growth saying, “Economic growth springs from better recipes, not just from more cooking.” The Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), which call for universal primary education, do not necessarily expect “new recipes” in education.

Recent focus on youth employability and entrepreneurship poses key questions about how to ensure that the education-focused MDG responds to 21st century workforce needs, considers the balance between “hard” and “soft” skills, and ensures that older students (beyond primary school) have the skills and attributes necessary to be successful in the workforce.

The 21st century demands the most dynamic workforce we have ever known. The changing face of technology and the rapid speed of its transformation ensure that “hard”, technical skills are often outdated by the time they are learned and that critical thinking, communication, and other “soft skills” are imperative. Moreover, this frenetic pace ensures that only nations with human capital that possess attributes and strategies to drive innovation, creativity, and growth will be the nations that lead us into the 21st century.

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Youth develop team building skills at an EpE in Santo Domingo, Dominican Republic

¹World Bank. Population Projection Tables by Country. Retrieved June 11, 2010 from <http://go.worldbank.org/KZHE1CQFA0>.

²International Labour Organization. Global Employment Trends for Youth. <http://www.ilo.org/trends>; ISBN 92-2-118627-X and 978-92-2-118627-4 (print), ISBN 92-2-118628-8 and 978-92-2-118628-1 (web pdf).

³Cunningham, W., McGinnis, L., García Verdú, R., Tesliuc, C., Verner, D., (2008) Youth at Risk in Latin America and the Caribbean: Understanding the Causes, Realizing the Potential. Washington, DC: The World Bank.

⁴Balán, J., H. L. Browning, and E. Jelin. 1973. Men in a Developing Society. Austin: Institute of Latin American Studies, University of Texas Press. See also Fields (1990), Lopez-Castaño (1990), Peattie (1982), and Aroca and Maloney (1997), as cited in Cunningham, W., McGinnis, L., García Verdú, R., Tesliuc, C., Verner, D., (2008) Youth at Risk in Latin America and the Caribbean: Understanding the Causes, Realizing the Potential. Washington, DC: The World Bank.

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Established in 1984 by economist Jorge A. Sanguinetti, Ph.D., DevTech Systems, Inc. is a consulting firm that offers technical assistance in the following practice areas:

- Economic and Social Development
- Education and Human Capacity Development
- Environment and Natural Resource Management
- Gender Integration (Women in Development)
- Governance and Decentralization
- Performance Monitoring and Evaluation

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DevTech recognizes The World Day Against Child Labor, June 12, 2010

Each year, the world recognizes The World Day Against Child Labor. During a conference recognizing the day held jointly by the United States Departments of State and Labor on 8 June 2010, Mr. Kailash Satyarthi of the Global March Against Child Labor challenged us all to continue our efforts to eliminate the root causes of child labor and restore all children's human rights. He reminded us that child labor is a major factor contributing to inter-generational poverty in the world. The collective "we" will not accomplish the Millennium Development Goal of universal primary education without addressing the issue of child labor.

The lessons learned and programs discussed in this issue of *Sphere* highlight our efforts to provide opportunities for youth. The time is now. DevTech uses this space and takes this moment to recognize the efforts of all of our partners and facilitators, and especially the children and parents who work each day to eliminate exploitive child labor.

The opinions expressed in Sphere are entirely those of the authors, and do not necessarily reflect a statement or position of DevTech Systems, Inc., the U.S. Government, or any other entity.

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