



SPOTLIGHT ON YOUTH

Youth bring creativity and energy to the urgent challenge of building a prosperous and stable future for themselves, their families, and communities. They also bring something key to market systems: innovation. As a growing demographic, youth, aged 10 to 29, need skills and support to participate in agricultural food systems, find economic opportunities, and drive growth in their communities. They need access to jobs and soft skills training to prepare them to enter the modern workforce. They also need business skills, mentoring, and access to finance to succeed as first-time entrepreneurs.

ACDI/VOCA believes in investing in new ways to support youth, especially by creating on- and off-farm economic opportunities, thus lessening the negative effects of mass migration. We engage youth groups that embolden and equip the next generation to be central actors in their own development. We mentor, train, and facilitate access to loans, land, and technology. We identify and respond to social and gender inequalities among youth populations, ensuring that both young women and men benefit equally. While youth face substantial barriers, they also hold vast potential, making it doubly important to invest in them now.



"OUR WORK IS NOT JUST ABOUT JOB PLACEMENT; IT'S ABOUT GIVING YOUTH THE KNOWLEDGE AND TOOLS TO ACHIEVE ECONOMIC AUTONOMY."

— Giovanni Cuero, economic opportunities manager for Afro-Colombian and Indigenous Program (ACIP)

GLOBAL YOUTH FACTS



Half the world's population is **under 30**



Youth population to reach **1.4 billion** by 2050



24 million youth will never enter a classroom



103 million youth are illiterate



1 in 9 girls in developing countries are married before the age of 15



30% of all migrants are under the age of 29



1.1 billion youth will enter the job market by 2020

Sources: UNESCO, UN, ICRW, PRB

ACDI/VOCA is an international development nonprofit that envisions a world in which all people are empowered to build healthy families and resilient communities. Learn more about ACDI/VOCA at www.acdivoca.org.



COLOMBIA

In Colombia, where stereotypes of ethnic youth associate them with crime and armed conflict, ACDI/VOCA and its affiliate Tanager work to change these stereotypes among employers and remove the barriers youth face through job training and placement. With our support, local employers and governments form unlikely alliances to ensure youth have access to jobs in high-growth industries.

ACDI/VOCA worked with nearly 17,000 young people, almost two-thirds of whom found formal jobs and increased their incomes by 40 to 200 percent. Many decided to continue their education at universities or technical schools. Training courses exposed them to information communication technology (ICT), such as database management.

Youth placed in jobs become productive contributors to the local economy. Private-sector companies also see higher employee satisfaction and improved brand image thanks to transformed hiring practices that bring in more diversity.

JAMAICA

ACDI/VOCA helps schools in Jamaica integrate climate change into the curriculum through activities like starting small farming plots. For the first time, many students saw climate-smart agriculture as a promising career and themselves as leaders.

Jamaica's youth are effective change agents in their communities, where traditionally elders lead decision making. They are eager to share newly acquired knowledge and skills for the good of all.

A week-long climate camp organized by ACDI/VOCA's program in Jamaica engages hundreds of young people between the ages of eight and 17 in preparing for the effects of climate change. Those who participate see how their voices can bring about real change—from sharing what they learn with a neighbor to influencing local policies.



**"IT AWAKENED IN US
A SENSE OF RESPONSIBILITY
TO MOTHER EARTH...AND
WE WERE TRANSFORMED
INTO CLIMATE CHANGE
ADVOCATES."**

— Carlton Collins, Jamaica Rural
Economy and Ecosystems Adapting to
Climate Change II (Ja REEACH II) participant

COLOMBIAN YOUTH BOOST PRIVATE SECTOR

- Engaged **15,000** youth
- Helped **8,000** youth secure jobs
- Benefited **13,000** families
- **25-40%** reduced operating costs in first two years
- **40-50%** reduced employee turnover
- **81%** (52 companies surveyed) reported reduced costs due to hiring youth participants
- **1,545** companies increased diversity and inclusion

Data includes companies that hired one or more youth

JAMAICAN YOUTH LEAD CHANGE

- Reached **504** youth (255 female; 249 male)
- Engaged **219** youth in climate change events
- Trained **224** youth in climate change

