

**YOUTH READY
GRANT PROJECT
BRIEF SUMMARY**

2026



PROJECT SUMMARY

GRANT NAME:	Vision for Vulnerable Youth Initiative (VVYI), known as Youth Ready (YR)	
AREAS OF FOCUS:	Education and Livelihood	
LOCATION:	LATIN AMERICA	Bolivia, Colombia, Ecuador, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, Peru
	EAST AFRICA	Kenya, Rwanda, Tanzania
TARGET POPULATION:	DIRECT REACH	Vulnerable youth (adolescents and young adults ages 14–29)
	INDIRECT REACH	Families, communities, and institutions supporting youth development
YEARS OF IMPLEMENTATION:	PHASE 1 (2017–2019)	Honduras and El Salvador
	PHASE 2 (2020–2023)	Bolivia, Colombia, Ecuador, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, and Peru
	PHASE 3 (2024–2025)	Expansion to Kenya, Rwanda, and Tanzania
	ACCELERATED PHASE (2025–2030)	Expanding the impact in all ten countries
FUNDED BY:	The Barrett Family Foundation (BFF) and Individual Canadian Donors	



BUDGET

INVESTMENT	BFF	PNS/SPONSORSHIP RESERVE	TOTAL
PHASE 1 October 1, 2016– September 30, 2019	\$ 5,000,000		\$5,000,000
PHASE 2 October 1, 2019– September 30, 2023	\$ 10,000,000	\$ 692,990	\$10,692,990
PHASE 3 October 1, 2023– March 30, 2025	\$ 3,750,000	\$ 770,466	\$4,520,466
ACCELERATED FUNDING PHASE April 1, 2025– March 30, 2030	\$ 25,000,000	\$ 260,300	\$25,260,300
TOTAL	\$ 43,750,000	\$ 1,723,756	\$ 45,473,756

TARGET DIRECT AND INDIRECT PARTICIPANTS

TARGET	DIRECT PARTICIPANTS	INDIRECT PARTICIPANTS
PHASE 1	2,964	8,892
PHASE 2	9,050	11,955
PHASE 3	17,822	137,099
ACCELERATED PHASE	30,000	172,000

IMPLEMENTING PARTNERS

PUBLIC SECTOR	Government institutions like the Ministry of Education and the Ministry of Justice, Labour, technical training institutions and local governments
PRIVATE SECTOR	Retail, food, manufacturing, technology, agriculture, tourism, BPO (Business Process Outsourcing) companies, Youth Networks
EDUCATION SECTOR	Secondary schools, universities, technical and vocational training centers
INTERNATIONAL COOPERATION	Multilateral and bilateral organizations, partner non-governmental organizations
FAITH-BASED ORGANIZATIONS	Churches, faith-based foundations

Youth Ready addresses the urgent challenge of youth unemployment and limited access to education and skills training across Latin America and East Africa. According to the International Labour Organization (ILO, 2024–2025):

- Youth labour-force participation (ages 15–24) has declined to 39.3%, showing significant disengagement that also impacts the broader 14–29 age range that Youth Ready is directed at.
- Young people are three times more likely to be unemployed than adults.
- Young women consistently face higher unemployment and exclusion rates than young men.
- In 2024, about 20% of young people were not in education, employment or training (NEET). Young women are affected much more: 28% were NEET, compared to 13% of young men.
- In low-income countries, informal, unstable or low-quality work remains high, absorbing a large share of new labour-market entrants.
- In Latin America and the Caribbean, the unemployment rate stayed at 6.2% in 2024, with about 20 million people looking for work. This number is expected to stay about the same in 2025.

These realities, combined with barriers such as low digital literacy, weak local labour markets, gender discrimination, a lack of disability-inclusive opportunities and limited support systems, underscore the need for a holistic, youth-centred program model—like Youth Ready—that equips young people with the skills and support necessary to succeed.

Youth Ready responds to these challenges by offering a structured pathway for young people to build confidence, develop life and work skills and engage meaningfully in their communities and economies, reducing the number of those classified as NEET.

PROGRAM DESIGN

Youth Ready equips vulnerable and marginalized youth in Latin America and East Africa to become positive agents of change in their own lives and communities. Through evidence-based, youth-centred strategies, Youth Ready promotes an enabling environment for young people and links them to opportunities to be healthy, productive, and engaged. By engaging families, peers, educators, organizations and institutions, Youth Ready drives systemic change in education, employment and entrepreneurship.

The project’s design is grounded in the Youth Ready curriculum—a holistic approach to integrating social-emotional learning, literacy, life skills and vocational training. Built on the USAID PYD (Positive Youth Development) framework, it equips young women and men to thrive and actively contribute to their communities.

KEY COMPONENTS OF THE PROGRAM

 ECONOMIC EMPOWERMENT	 EMPLOYABILITY & ENTREPRENEURSHIP	 EDUCATION	 LIFE SKILLS TRAINING
 MENTAL HEALTH, PSYCHOSOCIAL PROTECTION & WELL-BEING		 ACTIVE CITIZENSHIP & COMMUNITY PARTICIPATION	 CLIMATE CHANGE

ONE-YEAR VIABILITY JOURNEY

STAGE 1: VIABILITY FOUNDATION

A facilitated group learning experience following a curriculum in 4 modules

MODULE 1 Who Am I, Who We Are	MODULE 2 Ready for Employment	MODULE 3 Ready for Entrepreneurship	MODULE 4 Ready for Citizenship as Social Innovators
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Youth build more than 50 essential attributes, including

- Self-identity and personal development
- Social-emotional skills and resilience
- Literacy and reading comprehension
- Financial literacy and savings practices (Youth Savings Group)
- Goal setting and livelihood planning
- Preparation for education, employment or entrepreneurship pathways

STAGE 2: SUPPORTED PATHWAYS

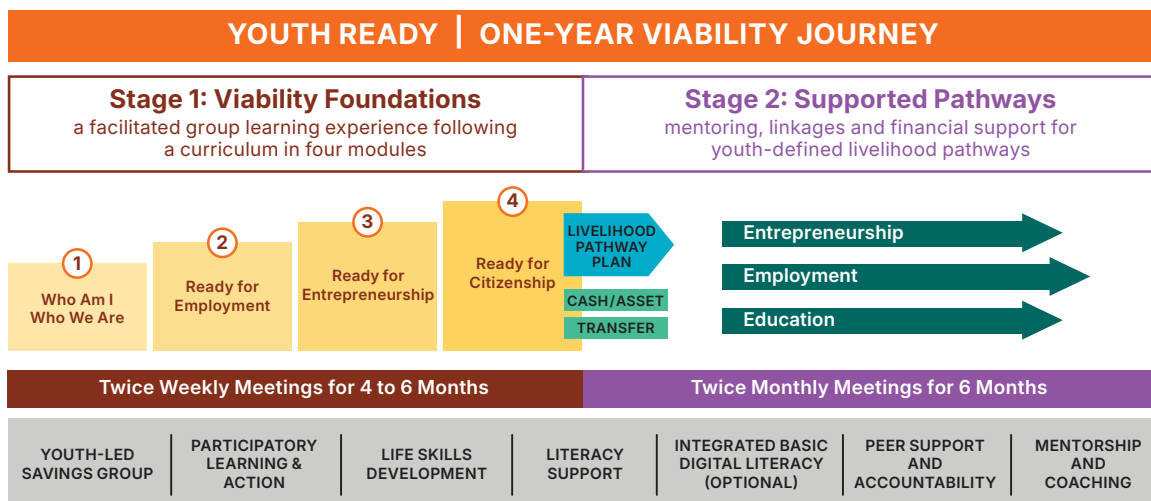
Mentoring, linkages and financial support for youth-defined livelihood pathways

Each youth executes their Livelihood Roadmap, with ongoing support from mentors, community networks and alliances. Young people can implement their Livelihood Pathways Plan with the following options:

EDUCATION Returning to school, technical training, university	EMPLOYMENT Formal employment, internships, paid apprenticeships	ENTREPRENEURSHIP New or strengthened business ventures/cooperatives
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Moreover, this stage includes:

- Coaching and mentoring networks
- Connections with companies, public institutions, Micro Finance Institutions, Business Development service providers and training centers
- Psychosocial support services
- Seed Capital support for entrepreneurship



MONITORING AND EVALUATION

Youth Ready maintains a strong learning and measurement system, including

- Pre- and Post Skills Measurement
- Employment and education outcome tracking
- Enterprise creation registry
- Well-being and resilience indicators
- Youth civic participation tracking

EVIDENCE BASED-APPROACHES



HOLISTIC, GENDER-RESPONSIVE CURRICULUM

The Youth Ready model addresses interconnected challenges in education, employment and empowerment by combining technical skills with emotional intelligence, leadership development and gender-transformative approaches. Following a 2022 Gender Equality and Social Inclusion (GESI) review, the curriculum was enhanced to better meet the gender- and disability-specific needs of youth, particularly adolescent girls and young women.



POSITIVE YOUTH DEVELOPMENT (PYD) FRAMEWORK

Drawing from evidence-based PYD theories, Youth Ready promotes youth agency, resilience and social responsibility. A 2022–2023 evaluation conducted by Johns Hopkins University in Guatemala and Ecuador demonstrated the program’s effectiveness in improving youth outcomes in education, entrepreneurship and employment.



BLENDED LEARNING AND PRACTICAL EXPERIENCE

Youth Ready combines classroom-based instruction with hands-on learning through internships, peer mentoring and seed capital for entrepreneurial ventures. This approach bridges the gap between training and real-world applications, enabling youth to transition quickly into employment or self-employment.

RESULTS SUMMARY

DIRECT PARTICIPANTS

36,781

YOUTH

have participated in the program since its inception, with more than 12,000 youth directly benefiting in Latin America.

PHASE 1	2,964
PHASE 2	12,508
PHASE 3	21,309

EDUCATION PATHWAY

17,211

VULNERABLE ADOLESCENTS AND YOUTH

on the education track who received support to complete their chosen level of education or vocational/technical training.

PHASE 1	1,792
PHASE 2	5,455
PHASE 3	9,964

EMPLOYMENT PATHWAY

4,521

VULNERABLE ADOLESCENTS AND YOUTH

on the employability pathway who have obtained employment and/or internships.

PHASE 1	427
PHASE 2	1,535
PHASE 3	2,559

ENTREPRENEURSHIP PATHWAY

8,490

VULNERABLE ADOLESCENTS AND YOUTH

on the entrepreneurship track have established and/or expanded a business venture.

PHASE 1	397
PHASE 2	2,388
PHASE 3	7,788

INDIRECT BENEFICIARIES

307,000+

COMMUNITY MEMBERS AND PEOPLE

were reached across their communities.

PHASE 1	11,856
PHASE 2	146,535
PHASE 3	148,967

CONTACT INFORMATION

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