

(Re)Connecting Youth

Exchanging Global Lessons

FUNDACIÓN PESCAR

Buenos Aires, Argentina

THE CHALLENGE

Argentina has one of the highest youth unemployment rates in Latin America, estimated at 19.4 percent. Youth unemployment is largely attributed to poverty fueled by economic stagnation, and changes in education and the job market. More attention needs to be placed on equipping underserved youth with relevant skills for the labor market, and particularly those life skills (e.g., communication, teamwork, responsibility, goal setting) in high demand by employers.

THE INITIATIVE

They are called Pescar Centers (or in English, Fishing Centers). Established within companies, they equip underserved youth in Argentina with valuable training in technical and life skills, along with practical, on-the-job experience. The Centers are an initiative of Fundación Pescar, a civil society organization committed to bridging the gap between disadvantaged youth and opportunities to exercise their role as active citizens.

The Pescar Center concept can be traced to Brazil, where in 1976 a successful businessman opened the doors of his company to train disadvantaged youth to learn a profession. The idea caught on with more than 90 Pescar Centers now established across Brazil.

In 2004, the model was adapted to Argentina. Today, 22 Pescar Centers can be found in some of the nation's largest and most visible companies, including Accenture, Coca-Cola, Dow, Santander Río, Samsung, and Toyota.

Program participants are in their last year at technical high schools. Once selected, each enrolls in a training process that lasts 4.5 to 9 months, depending on the company. Life skills training sessions, delivered by Pescar staff, begin by developing participants' self-knowledge and ability to set realistic life goals. Following, youth acquire teamwork, communication, financial management, interviewing, and other essential skills. Each also benefits from industry-specific technical training provided by company employees. Graduates receive two years of follow-up support by Pescar staff to ensure goals are met.

With their ability to bridge the divide between youth growing up in marginalized communities and the corporate world, the Centers offer a potent message of inclusion.

IMPACT

Over 13 years, more than 3,000 youth have graduated from Pescar Centers in Argentina. Currently, 427 youth are enrolled in 22 Pescar Centers operating across the country. In 2016, 75 percent of graduates gained formal employment with 58 percent pursuing higher education.

To learn more, visit: iyfreconnectingyouth.org

**“This is a program
of inclusion...
Businesses and NGOs
both know things. We
have to work together.”**

—**Sylvia Rueda de Uranga**

Executive Director

Fundación Pescar



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