

## Application of the "Incubator" Concept to Global Youth Ministry: Promoting Empowerment, Growth and Contextualization

We are now experiencing the largest population of youth in human history.<sup>1</sup> Churches and other faith-based organizations are quickly recognizing the strategic nature of focusing on this demographic of more than 1.8 billion young people. How do we formulate a response which takes into consideration the complexity of issues global youth face and the diversity of cultures from which they come? Exporting Western youth ministry methodology is not the answer. So from where should ministry models come? The answer to this question is increasingly more important as we see the Global South now representing the majority of the world's Christians<sup>2</sup>. This changing reality leads us to ask a third question. How does ministry focused on global youth develop in both its scope and effectiveness? The concept of a *business incubator* is defined, in a secular context, as an organization that exists to "accelerate the growth and success of entrepreneurial companies through an array of support business resources and services."<sup>3</sup> This could be both an effective and sustainable approach to cultivating global youth ministry now and in the years to come. This paper proposes an adaptation of the business incubator concept for global youth ministry. It will include a theological, missiological and philosophical review of the major components of incubation, an analysis of two case studies of successful global youth ministry incubation and an examination of youth ministry leadership development through the lens of the incubator model.

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<sup>1</sup> [http://www.unfpa.org/sites/default/files/pub-pdf/EN-SWOP14-Report\\_FINAL-web.pdf](http://www.unfpa.org/sites/default/files/pub-pdf/EN-SWOP14-Report_FINAL-web.pdf)

<sup>2</sup> <http://www.washingtonpost.com/news/acts-of-faith/wp/2015/05/20/think-christianity-is-dying-no-christianity-is-shifting-dramatically/>

<sup>3</sup> <http://www.entrepreneur.com/encyclopedia/business-incubator>