



THE ILO CALL FOR GOOD PRACTICES ON YOUTH EMPLOYMENT

Summary report

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Introduction

The youth employment crisis remains one of the greatest challenges of the 21st century, affecting industrialised as well as developing countries. Young people¹ all over the world face increased difficulties in entering and remaining in the labour market. The global youth unemployment rate is estimated at 12.6 per cent (73 million) in 2013, and young people are almost three times more likely than adults to be out of job. Unemployed rates are particularly high in the Developed Economies and the European Union (estimated at 17.9 per cent), in the Middle East (estimated at 29.1 per cent), in the non-EU Central and South-Eastern and CIS (estimated at 18.0 per cent), and in Northern Africa (estimated at 23.9 per cent). Young people are not only affected by exclusion from the labour market in form of unemployment, but also by the poor quality of job opportunities available to them. An ILO study in ten developing countries showed that in average eight out of ten young people are in informal employment, six in ten lack formal contracts, five in ten are either over- or undereducated and six out of ten receive below average wages.²

The persisting global phenomena of the youth employment crisis urgently requires integrated and coherent interventions on the national and international level. However, evidence of what works best to promote decent youth employment is still scarce. Learning and sharing of experiences, promising approaches, challenges, and lessons learned is, therefore, a vital component of joint efforts to face the youth employment crisis.

The Call for Good Practices on Youth Employment seeks to identify and share good practices that are effective in promoting decent work opportunities for young people. This initiative builds on two previous phases, a regional one in 2009 and a global one in 2012. Both were considered successful. In order to give continuity to these efforts, and in response to the request of several ILO member states, it was agreed to launch a third phase in 2013.

The third call for submission of good practice on youth employment was announced in July 2013. Over a period of three months, good and promising practices on youth employment were collected from all over the world. Of the 101 programmes submitted, the

¹ According to the UN “young people” are defined as the group of young people aged 15-24. For more details see: <http://www.unesco.org/new/en/social-and-human-sciences/themes/youth/youth-definition>

² For more details see: International Labour Office (2013): *Global Employment Trends for Youth 2013: A Generation at Risk*. Available at: <http://www.ilo.org/global/research/global-reports/global-employment-trends/2013/lang--en/index.htm>.

following seven programmes were selected as examples of good practice to be portrayed in detail in this report.

The 3 programmes that were placed first:

- The **Financially Self-Sufficient School** programme submitted through *Fundación Paraguaya (Paraguay)*
- The **From Margin to Mainstream** programme submitted by *Action on Disability and Development (ADD) (Bangladesh)*
- The **2GetThere** programme submitted by *the Team VSV (Netherlands)*

The 4 programmes that were placed second:

- The **Employment Fund** programme submitted by *Employment Fund project (Nepal)*
- The **Moje Ikušnje** programme submitted by *ŠS storitveno podjetje d.o.o. (e-Študentski Servis) (Slovenia)*
- The **A Ganar** programme submitted by *Partners of the Americas (Mexico)*
- The **SUPERATEC A.C. Personal Development through Technology** programme submitted by *SUPERATEC (Venezuela)*

The conceptual framework for the assessment process was elaborated by the Swiss Academy for Development (SAD) in compliance with the Youth Employment Programme (YEP). The practices submitted were assessed based on the following six criteria: (i) relevance, (ii) effectiveness & impact, (iii) efficiency, (iv) sustainability, (v) innovation and (vi) replicability.

This document provides a detailed description of the methodology used for the good practice assessment and portrays the seven selected examples of good practice. The process of the evaluation is explained in Chapter 2, followed by a detailed description of the conceptual framework and the criteria that were used in the assessment in Chapter 3. In Chapter 4, the seven selected examples of good practice are described with a short outline of the socio-economic background of the beneficiaries, the response of the programme to the youth employment challenge and a presentation of the major achievements and results of the programmes. In Chapter 5, strengths and weaknesses of programmes are analysed according to the above mentioned evaluation criteria and major key aspects and challenges that were faced during programme implementation are highlighted. Finally, Chapter 6 provides summary notes with key features of each practice for an easy overview.

Procedure of the good practice assessment

The third Call for Good Practices on Youth Employment was launched in July 2013. Over a period of three and a half months interested organisations had the opportunity to submit information on their programmes via an online platform. To participate in the call, the organisations provided detailed information on their programmes by filling in an online questionnaire. The information provided allowed an expert committee on youth employment to assess the programmes based on the six criteria: (i) relevance, (ii) effectiveness & impact, (iii) efficiency, (iv) sustainability, (v) innovation and (vi) replicability. To make the process as transparent as possible, supporting documents explaining the conceptual background of the initiative, the evaluation criteria and the purpose of the questions in the questionnaire were made available to the submitting organisations.

The evaluation process had the following 3 steps:

- I) The completed questionnaires were reviewed to verify whether the programmes met the eligibility criteria set out in the call framework
- II) Those programmes which met the eligibility criteria were scored according to the six key criteria by an evaluation committee comprised of the Swiss Academy for Development (SAD) and an international expert with longstanding experience in the field of youth employment
- III) The 20 programmes that scored the highest were submitted to the final selection committee, composed of experts in youth employment from the Youth Employment Programme (YEP) and the Youth Employment Network (YEN) who selected the seven good practices that are described in this document

The organisations implementing the selected practices received up to USD 2000 and were in the spotlight for a video produced by MTV Agents of Change! They were also offered a counselling session with an expert on youth employment, and the possibility of having information on their programmes published online. All of the participating organisations received well-grounded feedback on their submitted programmes. This feedback set out the major considerations of the assessment as well as strengths and weaknesses of the programmes with regards to the assessment criteria.

Conceptual framework of the good practice assessment

The methodology of the good practice evaluation and the design of the questionnaire that participating organisations filled in was developed based on conceptual considerations on what constitutes good practice in youth employment. This conceptual framework is elaborated in detail below.

The concept of good practice

There is no common understanding of what is understood by “good practice” in the field of youth employment. Different organisations use varying terms and definitions. A first, important step was, therefore, to develop a common understanding of the core characteristics of good practice, and a conceptual framework for the evaluation process.

The conceptual framework, as well as the tools and the scoring procedures used in the evaluation, were elaborated by the Swiss Academy for Development (SAD) in compliance with the Youth Employment Programme (YEP) and other ILO experts on youth employment. The starting point for the conceptual considerations was the very general definition of good practice as a practice that has been tested and where a number of practitioners feel it works in the field. Further, it was defined that it is possible to prove the effectiveness of good practices in different contexts and/or different organisations, and that they show high potential for replication by other organisations or institutions in different geographical regions and contexts.³

From this very general definition of a good practice, the following **core characteristics of a good practice** in youth employment were defined:

A good practice in youth employment

³ These terms are adopted from the following source to fit the context and need of the Good Practice in Youth Employment Initiative: National Resource Center & Compassion Capital Fund (2010): Identifying and Promoting Effective Practices. Intermediary Development Series. Available at: http://medinfo.psu.ac.th/KM/images/stories/Identify_best_practices.pdf

... has positively affected the quantity and/or quality of youth employment and is able to provide evidence or proof of its positive results. This is any kind of data or information that has been collected to support the positive change.

... must be able to specify why it has been successful by explaining how the programme's activities have affected the beneficiaries and how this has led to a positive change in the quantity and/or quality of youth employment.

... has a high potential to be replicated by other organisations or institutions and must be able to specify how and in which context it can be useful for others, as well as what the necessary preconditions and challenges are.

The ability of providing evidence and proof of a practice's positive results on the quality and quantity of work for young people is an important characteristic of a good practice because, in the field of youth employment, evidence on what works best is relatively weak and research shows mixed results on what kind of interventions work best.⁴ At the same time, it must be taken into account that research is costly. A majority of organisations or programmes lack the funding to finance methodologically and scientifically sound evaluations that provide proof of their programme's effectiveness and impact. The Good Practice on Youth Employment Initiative, therefore, adapted a more differentiated approach that does not discard programmes that have not been validated by research. Such an approach must give consideration to the fact that even though some practices may not meet the standards of a research validated programme they nevertheless have the potential to become a good practice. This is the case with programmes which demonstrably engage with less commonly addressed but nevertheless essential topics in youth employment, or with programmes which apply new, innovative approaches or use resources more efficiently to achieve their goals. We believe that such programmes, whether research validated or not, have great potential to inspire others and are, therefore, worth sharing more broadly.

The following classification of programmes as either "research validated good practice", "field tested good practice", or "promising practice" serves as the conceptual framework for the selection and weighting of the evaluation criteria (elaborated in the next chapter). These three categories are based on the considerations above:

A research validated good practice is a programme that has the highest degree of proven effectiveness supported by objective and comprehensive research, i.e. which has gone through rigorous external evaluation and shows positive results from

⁴ Betcherman, G., Godfrey, M., Puerto, D. Rother, F., Stavreska. A. (2007): *A Review of Interventions to Support Young Workers: Findings of the Youth Employment Inventory*. Social Protection Unit, World Bank. Available at: <http://web.worldbank.org/WBSITE/EXTERNAL/TOPICS/EXTSOCIALPROTECTION/EXTLM/0,,contentMDK:21454391~menuPK:7220492~pagePK:148956~piPK:216618~theSitePK:390615~isCURL:Y,00.html>.

⁴ OECD (1991): *Principles for the Evaluation of Development Assistance*. Development Assistance Committee. Available at: <http://www.oecd.org/dac/evaluation/2755284.pdf>

comparing data to objective benchmarks (e.g. control group designs). The practice has proven to be effective in different organisations and contexts. Replicability is given on a broad scale.

A field tested good practice is a programme, activity, or strategy that has been shown to work effectively and that has produced successful outcomes. It is supported to some degree by subjective and objective data, i.e. it has gone through internal or external evaluation using objective benchmarks for comparison. The practice has proved effective in more than one organisation and more than one context. Replicability is given on a limited scale.

A promising practice is a programme, activity, or strategy that has worked within an organisation. During its early stages it shows promise for becoming a good practice with long-term sustainable impact by demonstrating the use of innovative activities, approaches or resources or by addressing crucial yet less commonly addressed issues in youth employment. There is limited or no supporting data for comparison with objective benchmarks. However, there is supporting subjective data (e.g. from interviews with implementers or anecdotal references). It has been successful in one context and one organisation. It has high potential for replication within other organisations.

The evaluation criteria for the good practice assessment

Keeping this concept of good practice in mind, the five standard **criteria for programme evaluation** – relevance, effectiveness, impact, efficiency, and sustainability – were complemented by two key characteristics of good practice in youth employment, namely replicability and innovation. The programmes were, therefore, assessed in accordance with the following criteria:

Relevance measures the degree to which a youth employment programme is suited to the priorities, needs and interests of young people (and other stakeholders, e.g. donors), and whether it is aligned with contextual factors (e.g. the labour market situation). It answers the question of whether the programme is doing the right things to address the needs and interests of young people to, for example, improve their employability, support them in finding a decent job and/or improve the working environment.

Effectiveness measures the degree to which a youth employment programme achieves its objectives. It answers the question of whether the programme is doing

things correctly – whether the activities have actually brought about the desired changes for young people.

Impact measures the positive and negative changes produced by a youth employment programme, directly or indirectly, intended or unintended. It thereby assesses the extent to which changes in social, economic, environmental, and other development indicators can be attributed to the programme, and the programme only.

Efficiency measures the results – qualitative and quantitative – in relation to the inputs. It is an economic term which signifies that the youth employment programme uses the least costly resources possible to achieve the desired results. There is a focus on the ability of the youth employment programme to clearly identify and quantify the human, financial, and material resources required and to explain how they have helped achieve the intended results.

Sustainability measures whether the benefits of a youth employment programme are likely to continue after external funding/support has ceased and/or the programme ends.

Innovation measures the creativity of a youth employment programme, i.e. the ability to invent and implement new approaches. It indicates whether the programme has used approaches or activities that are new, different, or not well-known. Programmes that address pressing but mostly unaddressed issues in youth employment are also considered to be innovative.

Replicability measures the degree to which a programme or its parts can be integrated into other programmes or transferred to other geographical regions or contexts.

In order to avoid overloading the questionnaire the criteria were not assessed to their full extent. Instead, for each criterion the focus was put on some key aspects (see table 1). For a better focus on key aspects for each criterion, a set of specific questions was developed additionally. These questions guided the evaluators through the assessment. The evaluation committee rated and scored the programmes against the key aspects only (with the exception of the overall assessment where the committee was free to contemplate additional considerations).

Table 1. Key aspects of the criteria used to assess the submitted practices

Criteria	Key aspects
Relevance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The specific situation of the beneficiaries has been analysed properly and their problems have been identified • The beneficiaries' own voices were taken into account for programme planning and/or implementation • The programme's activities are adequate for addressing the identified problems and contribute directly or indirectly to the promotion of decent jobs for young people • The programme's design is in line with, or part of, governmental youth employment strategies or policies • Links, coordination and dialogue among different stakeholders are facilitated and strengthened
Effectiveness & Impact	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Programme results and achievements are measured based on rigorous methods • The programme has proven positive results with regard to its desired outcomes • The programme contributes directly to the overall aim of improving the quality and/or quantity of work for young people • Positive (or negative) effects of the programme on a broader scale are known and can be attributed to the programme
Efficiency	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The input-output relationship seems reasonable • The programme coordinates its activities with other relevant actors in the field to increase efficiency by using synergies
Sustainability	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The benefits and/or activities of a programme are going to continue after donor funding/external support has ceased and/or the programme ends
Replicability	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The programme, or parts of it, has/have already been replicated or have the potential for replication by other organisations, in other geographical settings and/or in other contexts. • Key criteria and conditions for the programme to be successful are clearly described • Lessons learnt from a first implementation phase are identified, documented and accessible
Innovation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The programme tackles pressing, but largely unaddressed topics in youth employment and/or has integrated innovative practices or approaches into programme delivery
Overall assessment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • General impression of the submitted programme by the evaluation committee

The weighting of the criteria

Not all of the assessment criteria influenced the outcome of the evaluation to the same extent. Based on the selected concept of good practice in youth employment, we prioritised the criteria and weighted them accordingly (see table 2).

Table 2. Weights of the evaluation criteria

Criteria	Weight
Relevance	10%
Effectiveness & Impact	20%
Efficiency	10%
Sustainability	10%
Innovation	15%
Replicability	15%
Overall assessment	20%

The effectiveness & impact criterion was a key feature for a programme to qualify as a good practice in youth employment. Consequently, this was weighted highest with 20 per cent. Replicability is also defined as a core element of the concept of good practice. The approaches, strategies, or activities of a programme are most useful for others when they can be replicated. This transferability is a key criterion that distinguishes a “good practice” from a programme that is “only” successful.

Inevitably, proof of measured, positive results needs to be provided for a programme to serve as good practice. However, as outlined above, the Good Practice on Youth Employment Initiative gave programmes with lack of funding and resources for rigorous evaluation a chance to counterbalance this short-coming by demonstrating high levels of innovation. Therefore innovation was weighted relatively high with 15 per cent. Relevance, sustainability and efficiency are important criteria when it comes to evaluating youth employment programmes. However, they were weighted lower (10 per cent) because they were not considered as key characteristics that distinguish a good practice from other successful programmes.

While assessing the criteria separately, the overall picture should not be overlooked. The overall assessment was completed at the end and allowed the evaluation committee to give a final score after having gained a thorough understanding of the programme in question. The overall assessment was weighted with the remaining 20 per cent.

Summary of the selected good practices

A total of 101 programmes were submitted. Most programmes were submitted from Latin America (44 per cent) followed by African countries (26 per cent), European countries (15 per cent) and Asian countries (12 per cent). Two programmes were submitted by North American countries and one from Oceania. The submitted programmes addressed a broad range of youth employment challenges and had a broad thematic scope. The type of organisations that submitted their programmes was very diverse too, ranging from small grass roots organisations to private sector companies and governmental agencies. A vast majority of the programmes were submitted by non-governmental and non-profit organisations (64 per cent), but also governmental institutions such as ministries and employment agencies (12 per cent). The private sector also participated (8 per cent). Only a few programmes were submitted by workers' (5 per cent) or employers' (4 per cent) organisations (and the remaining 7 per cent could not be categorised due to missing information).

Based on the conceptual framework described above, 3 of these programmes were selected as good practices and another 4 practices were selected as second best. These seven programmes are portrayed in detail below. For each programme, a short outline of the socio-economic background of the beneficiaries is presented which should help to understand the context of the programme implementation. In the section "Description of the Programme" the response of the programme to the youth employment challenge is explained. In the last section the achievements and results of programme are highlighted.

The three winning programmes

Financially Self-Sufficient Schools

Paraguay

Background

Education is one of the key factors in escaping poverty. However, in many rural areas of Paraguay access to education is not guaranteed and, especially for children of subsistence farmers, it is not affordable. Additionally, many schools constantly lack the necessary funding and resources for providing good-quality education. Young people from these rural areas have gloomy perspectives for earning a living and many of them migrate from the countryside to the slums around major cities in the hope of finding jobs.

Description of the programme

The Financially Self-Sufficient Schools programme addresses two key problems that plague post-primary school education in Paraguay as in other countries around the globe: 1) the mismatch between the education that low-income students receive and the skills they need to earn a decent living and 2) schools' chronic shortage of funds.

The Self-Sufficient Schools programme offers high-quality education to young people with low income and equips them with the knowledge and skills needed to become rural entrepreneurs by integrating traditional high-school subjects with practical entrepreneurship training. Students spend half their time in the classroom where they take subjects required to earn an officially recognized high school diploma or certificate and where they are trained in business management. The other half of the time the students acquire practical, entrepreneurial and life skills by operating on-campus businesses. Types of on-campus business vary according to the needs of the local market and business opportunities. Some businesses, for example, produce agricultural products such as eggs, milk, cheese and organic vegetables, or livestock. In other areas these businesses consist of restaurants, hotels, or outdoor education programmes for children or adults. Besides learning by doing, the Financially Self-Sufficient Schools programme provides students with opportunities to earn money and save. At the San Francisco School in Paraguay, for example, students earn commission selling products at the weekly organic market in the capital city, or door-to-door in nearby communities. Third-year students run a student cooperative with an on-campus store that sells snacks and student supplies. This cooperative also has the concession for selling water and soft drinks in the school hotel and restaurant. The proceeds from coop activities are saved and divided among coop members at the end of each year when the

coop is passed onto the next third-year class. To graduate, each student must complete a business plan for an activity they could implement on the family farm and which must be sufficiently creditworthy to qualify for a microfinance line-of-credit.

When schools adopt the Financially Self-Sufficient Schools programme's approach, they usually need external support in order to establish the on-campus businesses. Thereafter, the strategy is for each school to generate increasing amounts of income from these businesses in order to cover an increasing percentage of school operating costs. To ensure this, schools develop their own business plan based on their land, labour, capital and market opportunities. Within 5-7 years, the school income is expected to cover all school costs, including depreciation, and to become independent of external support.

Achievements and results

- 100 per cent of school graduates become productively engaged within 3-4 months of graduation, i.e. they find formal sector jobs, start their own micro-enterprises, enter university and/or spread their knowledge as teachers, extension agents and microfinance officers.
- In contrast to other schools where dropout rates are high, the schools of the Financially Self-Sufficient Schools programme have very few dropouts, a sign that students attach a high value to this kind of education.
- Several indigenous graduates have become the first indigenous teachers and nurses in their communities.
- Testimony from employers about the reasons why they hired graduates from the Financially Self-Sufficient School Programme include: sense of responsibility, initiative, practical skills, market/client orientation and use of ICTs.
- The flagship of the Financially Self-Sufficient Schools programme, the San Francisco School, adopted the model and designed its business plan in 2003. By the end of 2007 the school's income covered 100 per cent of the school's operating costs, including depreciation.
- In total, about 20 schools in Latin America and Africa are currently replicating the Financially Self-Sufficient Schools programme's model and are following school business plans with a view to achieving 100 per cent financial self-sufficiency.

Background

There are about 15-16 million persons with physical or mental disabilities in Bangladesh. The vast majority are extremely poor and reside in rural areas. Over 1.5 million people with disabilities live in slums around Dhaka. Amongst other problems, they are without access to education, health care, employment, sanitary facilities, and clean water supply. Disability is still subject to social stigma and taboo in Bangladesh. This means disabled people are often excluded from social and family life and political participation. They are challenged by discrimination and ignorance and constitute the poorest, most excluded and neglected section of the population.

Description of the programme

The From Margin to Mainstream programme targets young disabled people to make them employable, or able to be self-employed, and at the same time works with potential employers and the government to reduce prejudice towards people with disabilities and to sensitise them on the need to create decent job opportunities for them.

The programme takes advantage of the fact that there is a lack of skilled labour in some branches of industry (e.g. the garment industry) and convinces potential employers that providing employment to people with disabilities is not charity but profitable.

The From Margin to Mainstream programme established six training and skills development centres near the living area of the targeted young people (around the slums area of Dhaka). In these centres the young people receive either vocational training or training in small business management for those who are more interested in pursuing a career as entrepreneur. The type of vocational training depends on the wage employment potential in the area and established partnerships with potential industries and employers. The programme started off with cooperation with the garment industry and established agreements with these potential employers. Consequently the young people are trained in basic skills which are needed in the garment industry such as stitching and cutting. In this first phase of training, the young people are supported with accommodation and food to prevent them from reverting to their previous situation. In a second phase, the young people are linked with potential employers. Salaries for the first month of work are subsidised by the From Margin to Mainstream programme, which helps to reduce uncertainty and

reluctance of employers to engage people with disabilities. Those young people that want to set up a business are supported in finding secure places for their businesses and are supported followed-up until they become independent.

Besides providing training and assistant to young people with disabilities, the From Margin to Mainstream programme is continuously advocating the needs and potential of disabled people among the manufacturing and service industries as well as to the government, to reach partnerships and agreements which promote adequate employment opportunities, and an appropriate environment for disabled people.

Achievements and results

- 700 young people with disabilities were initially selected by the From Margin to Mainstream programme of which 691 completed the training (8 dropped out, 1 died).
- From the initially selected young people, 234 were trained in skills needed in the garment industry (210 females, 24 males) and 547 (192 females, 265 males) opted for running a small business (e.g. tea stalls, selling fruit and vegetables or local snacks).
- Of the 691 participants in the training, 224 are gainfully employed in 6 different garment industries, and more than 440 have set up small businesses.
- Tracking the participants revealed stories of success from small entrepreneurs who started out with head-loads of goods and are gradually moving about in cycle vans and others who are looking out for permanent locations. Also, some of the young people in the garment industry have already been promoted and the owners are now looking for extra workers.
- Negotiations with the two major garment associations of Bangladesh are underway to sign a MoU to set-up more training and skills development centres.
- The From Margin to Mainstream programme is gradually expanding in 25 other districts of Bangladesh and the leather industry.
- There is increasing interest from other city slum areas and other industrial sectors to set up similar training facilities.
- Observers have come from other industrial hubs in Chittagong, Khulna, Sylhet, Gazipur and others to study the practical examples of the training centre in Dhaka.
- The government shows increasing interest in channelling safety net programs for disabled people.

Background

The Netherlands, as with other countries around the globe, is facing a youth unemployment issue. Increasing rates of school dropouts and increased engagement of these young people in criminal activities pose further challenges. Social safety has become critical and worrisome, as have curative costs arising from this situation. In Arnhem, the city government was confronted with the presence of an increasing number of young people with migrant backgrounds who are not registered with the municipal authorities. These young people at the margin of society are especially liable to falling through all safety and social security networks because they are not officially known. Due to their status, they have no opportunity to be integrated into the formal labour market and the risk that they turn to criminal activities to earn their living is high.

Description of the programme

The 2GetThere programme was launched in order to reach out especially to these groups of young people and to assist them and other young people who face difficulties at school or in the job market. The 2GetThere programme adopts a peer-to-peer coaching approach which means that the young people are offered advice and guidance by young people who have gone through similar difficult situations. These youth coaches know from their own experience what it is like to be without a job, regular income, and proper education and to lose self-confidence and future prospects.

In a first step, the young people who are selected to be youth coaches go through a “learning-by-doing” education programme. This education programme aims at helping these future youth coaches to adequately deal with their own situation and prepares them to be coaches for other young people. The education programme consists of short vocational training courses, presentations, workshops, and traineeships. The young people are coached in personal development and attend peer review meetings. Through this process they learn how to tackle areas of little progression and setbacks in their personal development path and experience what it is like to work hard on bettering themselves.

The education programme puts the young people in the right position to pass on what they have learned to other young people. Due to their personal background and their own experiences of dealing with difficulties, they are able to gain the trust of the young

people, to act as role models and youth coaches. Both the coaching of the youth coaches and the coaching of the young people is tailored to individual live paths with a focus on personal strengths, self-reliance, and responsibility.

In addition to their main activity, which is coaching other young people, the youth coaches build bridges between young people and various stakeholders such as schools, employers and social services providers. They act as mediators between these different actors and translate the language of the young people. They provide feedback to social service providers and other stakeholders about what is effective in helping young people and what could be done differently. A youth coach normally remains active in the programme for a maximum of two years and then leaves for a normal job based on their personal and professional development.

Achievements and results

- The 2GetThere programme manages to locate and identify around 300 young people each year who are not registered and out of sight of governmental awareness.
- More than 80 per cent of these young people have found jobs, started an internship and/or returned to school after having been coached by the 2GetThere youth coaches.
- 66 per cent of the 2GetThere youth coaches find formal employment after attending the 2GetThere Programme.
- Due to its success the 2GetThere programme was extended to another municipality in the Netherlands.
- Other countries and governments have shown interest in the 2GetThere programme (Belgium, Germany, Curacao).

The four programmes placed second

Employment Fund

Nepal

Background

Every year an estimated 450,000 young people enter the Nepalese labour market. With a majority of young people dropping out of school before the 10th grade and with the very limited availability of training in market-relevant skills, most of these young people are without, or lacking in, sufficient technical and vocational skills. Rates of underemployment and unemployment among young people are high and most of the available jobs are in the informal sector. Young people from marginalised areas and disadvantaged groups barely have access to market-relevant training. Especially well trained young people tend to migrate to other countries to find gainful employment.

Description of the programme

The Employment Fund programme grew out of a previous intervention and was established in close collaboration with the Nepalese Government, which identified an urgent need to improve availability of and access to technical and vocational education and training. The Employment Fund programme is a comprehensive programme with national coverage, which aims to improve the access to market-relevant training (technical, vocational, soft skills) for young people seeking employment as well as training (business training, financial literacy) for business-minded young people who aim at setting-up their own micro-enterprise.

The Employment Fund programme provides short-term training sessions and is implemented through private sector training and employment providers. The private sector training providers are close to the market and well informed about local market needs and hence better able than others to identify market relevant skills and job opportunities. The Employment Fund programme uses an output and outcome based financing approach for these service providers. This means the service providers are not pre-financed for any activities (e.g. providing training) but receive payments dependent on output and outcomes, i.e. the actual delivery of training and the successful provision of gainful employment to the trained young people.

A central concern of the Employment Fund programme is to improve outreach to disadvantaged and economically deprived young people, i.e. to young people with

disabilities, young people from geographically remote and disadvantaged areas, or who suffer from ethnic discrimination and the very poor. To ensure broader outreach to these groups of disadvantaged young people, the Employment Fund programme applies a social inclusion mechanism. This means that the private sector service providers are paid higher incentives for reaching out to, and admitting young people from, the most disadvantaged groups to the training. The Employment Fund programme is also cooperating closely with other poverty alleviation programmes to improve targeting and to move the training to areas where the poorest live.

Achievements and results

- A rigorous evaluation of the Employment Fund programme showed a significant increase in income of the young people after the training, and significant positive impact on the livelihood of graduates and especially for women
- After the training, approximately 80 per cent of the graduates find employment and 68 per cent are gainfully employed
- A tracer study conducted in 2013 showed that two years after graduation from the training, the incomes of the young people have, on average, doubled
- The Employment Fund Programme has a high rate of inclusion of young people from disadvantaged groups (around 85 per cent of all participants)
- Whereas migration rates are usually quite high among young Nepalese, only 2 per cent of the graduates leave Nepal to work abroad
- The Employment Fund programme is replicated by the Ministry of Education and is used as a model for establishing a National TVET policy

Background

In Slovenia there is a big mismatch of skills gained through formal education and skills such as technical and soft skills actually required by the labour market and employers often ask job applicants to provide a record of previous work experience. Young people in the transition from school to the world of work are therefore often disadvantaged. On the one hand, a majority of students have actually gained such skills from informal so-called student work during their studies. But on the other hand, this informally acquired work experience and the associated competencies are usually not confirmed, nor are they recognised by the potential employers. Thus these young people face great difficulties when entering the labour market and looking for their first formal employment.

Description of the programme

The Moje Ikušnje (My experience) programme acts as an intermediary between students and employers and facilitates the recognition of informally gained competencies, skills, and knowledge, which students acquire by working in informal jobs. It addresses the young people's need to demonstrate their competencies to potential employers when searching for their first regular employment as well as the need of employers to identify the best candidates for job vacancies.

The Moje Ikušnje programme provides a digital tool for validation of informally gained working experience. For this purpose, Moje Ikušnje designed software in which thousands of different student jobs are recorded, categorized and matched with respective skills. The tool creates digital portfolios for the young people in which all informal work experience is listed. The software then automatically matches this work experiences with associated skills. Students are able to access this information through an online platform and gain access to soft copies (pdf formats) or printouts of certificates attesting their work experience. The certificates contain details of the type of student job (information on the employer, date and duration of work, type of work and the relevant technical and soft skills acquired through the job) and are officially confirmed by the respective employers. The certificates can then be used by the young people to prove and demonstrate relevant skills to potential employers. Further, these certificates are useful career planning tools and help young people gain awareness of their own potential and competencies. For employers, the tool is a credible way to get an overview of job candidates' skills and competencies, and it allows them to easily compare and choose the most suitable candidates for job vacancies.

The tool also sensitises potential employers to the fact that student jobs are an appropriate way to acquire relevant skills and competencies.

Besides providing a user friendly IT solution, Moje Ikušnje also engages in awareness raising campaigns. It organises events with experts, politicians, governmental representatives, employers, young people and other important stakeholders to bring together young people and potential employers, to stimulate discussions among experts on youth employment issues and to sensitise them towards relevance of soft skills in the labour market.

Achievements and results

- The Moje Ikušnje platform has been used by over 135,000 students during the first year of implementation.
- The analysis of users' data and a mid-term evaluation showed that the platform was perceived as being useful and helpful by employers and young people.
- A mid-term evaluation and informal feedback from students provided evidence that the platform stimulates a change in mentality: students are more willing to take up jobs that bring them valuable experience rather than just considering financial rewards.
- A mid-term evaluation and informal feedback from employers point towards a change in mentality among employers too: employers start realising and acknowledging the relevance of informally gained work experience in acquiring work-relevant skills and competencies.
- The Flemish Ministry of Education used the IT solution developed by the Moje Ikušnje programme as a basis for developing a similar mechanism for the acknowledgment of holiday jobs.

Background

Youth unemployment and lack of education affect socially disadvantaged people and lead to violence, poverty, and inequality. Juárez has 1,3 million inhabitants of which 37.6 per cent are poor. 120,000 young people of Ciudad Juárez aged between 13 and 24 years have neither access to the school system nor to the labour market. These young people are from low-income sectors of the population and live in resident areas characterised by violence and a risks of involvement in organised crime and gangs. Between 2008 and 2011, 7,596 young people between 15 and 29 were killed, most of them shot dead in the street. Young Mexicans face many challenges in entering the labour market, remaining employed, and earning a decent income in return. Official statistics show an unemployment rate of 8 per cent among young people aged 14-29, whereas the unemployment rate of people above 30 decreases to 3 per cent. 45 per cent of the young people that work do not have formal contracts, and 38 per cent do not benefit from earning replacements. Causes of high youth unemployment are diverse: dropping out from school, insufficient access to specialised capacity building, lack of work experience, lack of job offers for young people, lack of career counselling and job placement services.

Description of the programme

The mission of the A Ganar programme (a ganar means to win or to earn in Spanish) is to help young people in Ciudad Juárez to develop the knowledge, skills, and attitudes needed to find positive engagements in their communities through employment, entrepreneurship or a return to formal education. A Ganar adopts a sport-based approach to reaching young people and motivating them to engage in skill acquisition. The basic idea behind this sport-based approach is that to be successful in sports the young people need to understand, practice, and promote respect, teamwork, discipline, and effective communication. They need to stay focussed on results and continuously work on self-improvement. These soft skills are at the same time “employability skills” that are needed to be successful in the labour market.

The A Ganar programme uses a combination of sport-based training, teaching in a classroom setting and vocational training. The young people spend a minimum of 160 hours in the sport-based learning-model to acquire social skills and competencies. Additionally, they acquire market-relevant technical skills (at least 400 hours), put the acquired knowledge into practice through internships (at least 80 hours in different enterprises), and

engage in voluntary services for their communities (40 hours). After completion of this programme, the young people are assisted in finding employment, in setting up small entrepreneurship projects or in returning to formal education. During the whole process the young people are mentored.

The integrated approach with its different elements allows the young people to acquire necessary skills and competencies step-by-step and to develop a sense of responsibility and service orientation. The young people first practice these skills in a playful, sport setting and then successively transfer what they have learned to the world of work during the internships, while searching for employment and then finally on the job or in their entrepreneur projects. During this process, mentorship plays a vital role. The A Ganar programme provides counselling services and continuously coaches the young people in their professional path.

Achievements and results

- 86 per cent of the participants in the programme found employment (58 per cent), continued to study (22 per cent) or established a business (6 per cent). The remaining participants are still in process of finding a job, setting up a business, or returning to education.
- The majority of the participants have found decent employment, i.e. they benefit from full-time employment and social security. Success stories show that many participants were able to progress up the career ladder and to secure better salaries after they had convinced their employers of their skills and competencies.
- Feedback from employers shows that they are very satisfied with the performance of the young people who graduated from the programme.
- The A Ganar programme became highly accepted by the communities and the families of the participants, who play a crucial role in its success.
- The A Ganar programme successfully built alliances with industries and employers from various productive sectors (more than 150 companies).
- The A Ganar programme has been replicated in 16 other Latin American Countries, benefiting approximately 10,000 disadvantaged young people.

Background

According to the XIV National Census of Population and Housing 2011, the youth unemployment rate in Venezuela is 8 per cent, which is higher than the Latin American average of 6.7 per cent. Among the economically active urban population, young people between 15 and 24 years old are most affected by unemployment (women 21.2 per cent, men 14 per cent). Venezuela's high number of teenage pregnancies hampers labour market access for young women. Furthermore, school graduates are not well enough prepared for the job market since the formal school system does not favour the development of skills that are relevant to entering the labour market (including communication skills, decision-making skills, interpersonal skills and skills for lifelong learning).

Description of the programme

The SUPERATEC (from Spanish "supérate", outdo yourself) programme aims to transform the lives of people from low-income communities by offering young people aged between 15 and 24 support in insertion into the job market and, thus, in improving their living conditions.

The programme consists of different components such as:

1. Training in IT-related technologies combined with developing the soft skills needed to access decent work and/or to start progressively sustainable independent ventures.
2. Training in specific trades with direct access to the labour market.
3. Training aiming to identify job opportunities, prepare CVs, submit applications and get ready for job interviews (job preparedness).
4. Facilitation of the access of young people from traditionally excluded communities to decent jobs and opportunities for developing careers in large enterprises.
5. Provision of personnel screening services to a growing number of companies for entry level positions where the SUPERATEC programme graduates are part of the employment pool.
6. Information on job offers.

The SUPERATEC programme has a comprehensive “life cycle” approach, which means that it starts working with young people when they are in the last year of middle school and follows them until they have found their first job.

Achievements and results

- Approximately 15,000 young people have graduated from SUPERATEC: around 2500 young SUPERATEC graduates have secured a job and 1300 have continued university studies.
- Growing numbers of businesses are using the employment pool services and a majority are repeat customers.
- Students of the Catholic University Andrés Bello conducted evaluation which showed that participation in the programme impacted positively on the skills needed to secure and maintain formal employment.

Analysis of the selected good practices

The following chapter provides a short analysis of the programmes and elaborates on the major considerations that were taken into account by the evaluators during the assessment of the six key criteria. The boxes at the end of the section for each programme highlight some strength of the programmes that make it of potential interest for other organisations. Key points and major challenges for successful programme implementation as experienced by the organisation are presented as well.

The three winning programmes

Financially Self-Sufficient Schools *Paraguay*

Analysis of the programme

The Financially Self-Sufficient Schools programme targets a highly vulnerable group of young people, in particular young women and men with a low-income background and low levels of education who suffer from a lack of access to high-quality post-primary education and appropriate employment opportunities. The programme is highly relevant to this group of young people because it ensures that the quality of education is maintained and that skills taught match market needs. At the same time, school fees can be kept to a minimum, thereby remaining affordable to these young people. The market orientation of the educational programme is ensured by the fact that schools that adopt the model conduct a market assessment and develop their own context specific business plans. Furthermore, schools are constantly forced to reflect on their practices because the on-campus businesses need to stay profitable. Teaching market-relevant skills automatically becomes a central issue and of interest to the school itself. A side effect of these efforts is a constant exchange between the schools and their environments.

The Financially Self-Sufficient School programme has not been evaluated rigorously and cannot be considered as an example of research-validated good practice. However, the programme monitors and evaluates the development of knowledge and skills of its students

with a baseline assessment, regular tests on the students' skills and knowledge and follow-up on their careers after graduation. It is remarkable that literally all graduates manage to further push themselves either by taking up further studies, by finding employment or by engaging in income-generating activities. Feedback from employers, though not systematically collected, also paints a positive picture of the skills development the schools provide, not only with regards to practical skills but also with regards to the sense of responsibility, personal initiative and market orientation the graduates have.

The approach to making schools financially independent and self-sufficient, the fact that the certificates obtained by students are officially acknowledged by the government, and the high market orientation of the curriculum make the programme highly efficient and also sustainable. After the initial investment that is needed to set up the on-campus businesses and to adapt a new model and teaching methods, the schools will eventually become independent of governmental subsidies or long-term donor funding.

The Financially Self-Sufficient School programme has been on-going since 2003 and can look back at almost ten years experience of implementation. It demonstrates high potential for replication, proven by on-going replication in different contexts and countries. Additionally, the availability of manuals and online training on the model ease the set-up of, or the transformation to, a financially self-sufficient school.

The Financially Self-Sufficient School programme uses a highly innovative approach by combining the needs of the young people with the interests and needs of the schools and the market. The need for financial self-sufficiency also encourages constant business innovation: schools open new enterprises as they find attractive new market niches and close others as they become less profitable. Thus, the training the students receive is fully aligned with market demand. In contrast, traditional vocational programs react to changes in market demand much more slowly.

Some **highlights of the Financially Self-Sufficient School programme** are that...

- it manages the balancing act between delivering high quality, market relevant education and ensuring that it is at the same time affordable to young people with a low income background
- its approach leads to financial self-sufficiency of schools and thus makes schools independent of long-term donor funding
- it demonstrated replicability in various different contexts all over the world
- it is willing to share experiences and provides guidelines and online courses on how to set-up a self-sufficient school.

Some **key points and challenges to consider for a successful implementation of the Financially Self-Sufficient School programme** are that...

- an initial investment is needed to cover the set-up of the on-campus businesses and the operating cost of the schools until self-sufficiency
- it requires a system change for schools with regards to teaching methods and the willingness of staff to try something new
- the government needs to authorise the school's system and operation
- some families may be too poor to pay even symbolic school fees. In such cases it is advisable to allow school fees to be paid in kind (e.g. students performing weekend chores and parents helping with construction tasks or providing products from the family farm)
- the school's on-campus businesses are, first and foremost, vehicles for teaching students which makes it inevitable that students will make mistakes that reduce profitability and adversely affect school income. However, mistakes can be turned into learning opportunities and engage students in devising procedures to prevent the repetition of errors
- access to a market must be provided where goods and services produced by the school can be sold and there must be a labour market demand for young people with entrepreneurial skills

Analysis of the programme

The From Margin to Mainstream programme targets young people with disabilities who are living at the margin of society in extreme poverty and who constitute the most neglected and poorest sector of the population in Bangladesh. The From Margin to Mainstream programme's relevance lays not only in enabling these young people to find employment opportunities but also within the fact that it is fighting the taboos and discrimination that still exist in the society regarding people with disabilities. It manages to transform the perspective of employers and governmental institutions, by convincing them that employing these young people is not charity but that they have a right to employment and that employing them brings benefits and profit not only to the employees but also to the employers and society as a whole.

The From Margin to Mainstream programme is not an example of research validated good practice, i.e. it has not yet been evaluated externally and more rigorously. However, the From Margin to Mainstream programme tracks its participants and is able to demonstrate successful results with regards to its ability to integrate young people with disabilities in the labour market. A great majority of participants of the project have found employment or have set up small businesses after they have gone through training. Anecdotal evidence from the field shows how the experience of working with young people with disabilities can change an employers' mind and make them realise the great potential of these young people.

The From Margin to Mainstream programme has not yet been replicated on a broader scale. However, starting off with the garment industry it sparked the interest of other industrial sectors and plans for expansion are underway. The From Margin to Mainstream programme builds on the disabled young people's existing skills and interests as well as the interests and needs of the labour market. Trainings focuses on upgrading existing potential, can be attuned to any industrial sector, and is relatively short and cost-effective. Also, the From Margin to Mainstream programme does not use any high-tech applications, meaning that it is suitable for contexts in which only relatively rudimentary means and facilities are available. However, cost may be slightly higher compared to similar programmes for a different target group due to the necessity of subsidising salaries in the early stages of employment as a trust building measure for the employers.

Integration of young people with disabilities into the labour market, and making them economically productive, is something that is not often tackled in Bangladesh. The programme adopts an interesting approach with a view on the whole of society. It is not only addressing young people with disabilities' need for opportunities to earn a living, but shifting the focus to the other side of the coin, i.e. the lack of quality workers in the industry and the benefits these young people can bring to society. It also advocates the mainstreaming of the rights of people with disabilities in national policymaking and works on changing understanding of disability within families, communities, and policymakers by influencing attitudes and behaviours towards people with disabilities through direct positive experiences.

Some **highlights of the From Margin to Mainstream programme** are that...

- it targets a highly vulnerable group of young people who are situated at the bottom of society
- it works towards changing attitudes and behaviours towards young people with disabilities by enabling positive experiences
- it adopts a strengths based approach with focus on the benefits these young people can bring to society.

Some **key points and challenges to consider for successful implementation of the From Margin to Mainstream programme** are that...

- it is necessary to gain trust from both the young people and potential employers to participate in the programme
- the industries and factories with a shortage of skilled labourers need to be located in proximity to the places where the young people with disabilities live
- the selection of the young people for the programme is guided by their interest and must be matched with respective sector or industry with which the programme is collaborating
- the programme needs to collaborate with families, care-takers and communities to gain their support.

Analysis of the programme

The 2GetThere programme targets low income individuals, mostly with migrant backgrounds who are not registered and thus not known to the municipality. Its core element is a peer-to-peer approach that targets young people and helps them to get connected to society again (by resuming school, attending vocational training, finding internships or jobs). This bottom-up approach ensures relevance of the 2GetThere programme on two levels. First, by involving peer coaches who have the same background as the target young people the coaching is more likely to stay relevant and appropriate to the target group. At the same time, the 2GetThere programme does not only re-connect young people to society but works also the other way around. Important stakeholders such as governmental institutions, schools, and social service providers receive direct feedback from the young people, which ensures their awareness of the target group and the appropriateness and efficacy of their actions and services for tackling these young people's problems.

Though not based on rigorous evaluation, the 2GetThere programme shows positive results. More than 80 per cent of young people return to school or find jobs or internships after their coaching. Long-term impact and attribution of results to the 2GetThere programme are not research validated but can be assumed due to the coherent description of the context, challenges and solutions the programme provides.

97 per cent of 2GetThere programme costs are staff costs and the costs per participant seem relatively high compared to other programmes. However, the 2GetThere programme focuses on providing help for self-help. Hence, if the re-integration of the young people is sustainable and the positive results will last, the cost per participant will be eventually lower than the "curative costs" that arise when the problem is not faced and these young people remain excluded from society and the job market.

The 2GetThere programme has not yet been replicated on a broader scale. However, it has been extended to another municipality, and other countries (Germany, Belgium and Curacao) showed interest replicating the approach. The experiences and lessons learned during the three years of implementation are extensively documented by the 2GetThere

programme and will ease replication of the same or similar approach by any other organisation.

The 2GetThere programme is innovative because: 1. It represents a successful peer-to-peer approach using young people themselves as a solution to their problems, 2. Young people select their own coaches which makes the coaching more likely succeed, 3. The approach is strength based and resource based, 4. it is a genuine bottom-up approach.

Some **highlights of the 2GetThere programme** are that...

- it adopts a innovative bottom-up approach in which the young people are no longer perceived as a problem but as part of the solution
- it adopts a strength-based approach to coaching which focuses on the young people's self-reliance and responsibility
- it recognises and values the specific knowledge of these young people and makes use of it for the benefit of all stakeholders

Some **key points and challenges to consider for a successful implementation of the 2GetThere programme** are that...

- it needs a strong commitment to the belief that young people can themselves be a solution to their problems
- it requires willingness for mutual learning
- professional coaching needs to be provided for the youth coaches
- the programme involves close collaboration with, and strong support from, various stakeholders such as schools, social service providers and potential employers that must be willing to give these group of young people a chance
- the programme depends on the willingness of governmental institutions and officials to implement and support a new approach

The four programmes placed second

Employment Fund

Nepal

Analysis of the programme

The Employment Fund programme targets disadvantaged young people from urban and rural areas and it strives to improve their access to labour market-relevant training (vocational, business and life skills) by engaging private sector trainers and employment service providers.

The Employment Fund programme applies two interesting innovative approaches: a social inclusion mechanism and an output and outcome based financing system. Often, the people most in need are the most hard-to-reach. Sometime programmes fail to reach out and include these groups of young people even though the programmes intend to serve the most disadvantaged. By rewarding the private sector providers financially for including young people from disadvantaged groups in the training, the social inclusion mechanism is an effective way to ensure outreach to the most vulnerable groups of young people. The second approach, the output and outcome based financing system greatly contributes to the efficiency of the project. It shifts the focus away from activities towards the desired outcome of the Employment Fund programme – the integration of young people into the labour market. It stimulates and motivates the private sector service providers to ensure that training stays relevant to the labour market in the sense that skills and knowledge taught are actually useful for the Employment Fund programme’s purpose of helping young people to get involved in gainful employment.

The Employment Fund is one of the few programmes that has been rigorously evaluated and which provided proof of effectiveness and impact. Positive outcomes for the young people can be considered a result of the Employment Fund programme, i.e. they can clearly be attributed to its activities. This not only with regards to participants’ incomes, which have significantly improved as a consequence of the Employment Fund programme, but also on a broader scale in the sense that the Employment Fund programme not only increased income but also contributed to overall improved livelihood for the participants, especially for women.

The Employment Fund programme operates country-wide and its approach is suited to large-scale programmes. The programme managed to constantly expand its activities and its approach is currently being replicated by the Nepalese government. The Employment Fund has collected lessons learned and insights through its extensive monitoring and evaluation activities. As the Employment Fund is openly sharing its learning with interested organisations, this could be of great use to organisations which aim to use a similar approach.

Some highlights of the Employment Fund programme are that...

- it applies a social inclusion mechanism that ensures outreach to the most disadvantaged groups of young people
- it applies an output and outcome based finance system
- it has been evaluated rigorously and demonstrated proven positive results with regards to improved income and livelihood for programme participants

Some key points and challenges to consider for successful implementation of the Employment Fund programme are that...

- private sector service providers need to be guided and coached to ensure the quality of the training
- private sector providers may at first find it difficult to work with an output and outcome based financing system and must be guided accordingly
- political instability and slow economic growth makes collaboration with private sector service providers challenging
- the labour market conditions need to provide both formal and informal employment possibilities to which young people can be matched
- close collaboration with the government is needed to ensure large scale outreach and to make the programme sustainable in the longer term
- geographic remoteness makes it difficult for service providers to identify trades in which participants could be employable
- at first, graduates find employment largely in the informal sector which provides little job security

Analysis of the programme

The Moje Ikušnje programme is designed as an intermediary between young people in transition from school to the world of work and potential employers. It provides mechanism through which informally gained work experience is confirmed and made visible to potential employers. The initiation of the programme was driven by the need expressed by young people and employers to better match job opportunities to young candidates. The young people's and employers' ideas and wishes on how this mechanism should work and what it should look like were carefully assessed and re-assessed during the design stage of the programme, and as part of monitoring and evaluation of the programme. This process led to the design of a user-friendly IT-solution which is very much tailored to the needs of the young people as well as the needs of potential employers.

The Moje Ikušnje programme cannot be considered to be a research-validated good practice, i.e. it has not been evaluated based on a rigorous design that allows strict attribution of young people's improved employability and access to job opportunities to the Moje Ikušnje programme. However, the number of users grew much faster than initially expected and reached over 135,000 students during the first year of implementation which is an indication that the Moje Ikušnje programme satisfies a real need. Additionally, the information collected during a mid-term evaluation using qualitative methods and a quantitative online survey provides an indication of the usefulness and user friendliness of the system. The evaluation also indicates that the platform is appreciated by young people and employers. It also seems that the Moje Ikušnje programme leads to increased acknowledgement of informal work experience by employers, and young people report a smoother school to work transition. By demonstrating work experience gained in student jobs, the students are able to apply for jobs that require work experience, hence they gain access to higher quality jobs.

The awareness campaigns initiated by the Moje Ikušnje programme influence employers' perceptions, leading to better recognition of young people's work-related competencies and abilities. If these changes in thinking are durable, the Moje Ikušnje programme is sustainable in the sense that it does not only serve young people who have access to the platform but it also improves young people's employability in general. After initial investment during the setting-up of the platform and the categorising of student jobs, the automated data processing efficiently assists a great number of young people.

The Moje Ikušnje programme has high potential for replication and can be adapted to various contexts and needs, given that easy access to the internet for young people is provided. Lessons learned are collected and documented systematically which, if shared, can help other organisations to design a similar IT solution. The programme has already served as basis for the Belgian government's development of a similar system (for the acknowledgement of vacation jobs).

Some **highlights of the Moje Ikušnje programme** are that...

- it designed a user-friendly digital platform which automatically produces confirmation for informally gained work experience
- it advocates the importance of soft skills among students and employers
- it gives young people awareness of their own strengths and competencies of which they would not otherwise have been aware

Some **key points and challenges to consider for successful implementation of the Moje Ikušnje programme** are, that...

- adequate marketing strategies need to be in place to raise awareness among young people and employers about the existence of the platform
- a sufficient number of companies and employers need to cooperate
- the platform should be accompanied by workshops and events that promote and explain the importance of soft skills in the labour market
- the system needs to be user-friendly i.e. pre-tested and adapted according to users needs and input
- technical expertise is required for building the IT system and the system needs to be maintained
- thousands of jobs need to be categorised and associated with the relevant competencies and skills
- cooperation with the government is highly recommended to ensure wider (national) outreach

Analysis of the programme

The A Ganar programme targets a high-risk group of young people who are exposed to violence, crime, and poverty and who have restricted access to the school system and the labour market. The holistic programme enables these young people to leap into the world of work by providing soft skills training, technical skills training, work experience, and continuous mentorship. The sport-based approach is targeted to this group of young people because it takes into account that it is not only formal education and missing technical skills which play a crucial role, but that the lack of necessary soft skills also hampers integration into the labour market. The holistic programme with its different components allows for step-by-step acquisition of skills and competencies and gradual integration of these young people into the labour market. At the same time, the young people need to demonstrate motivation to change their lives, and willingness for self-improvement. This approach is very promising, especially for young people living in areas and neighbourhoods dominated by violence, crime and loss of future prospects, and who are not easily motivated to participate in employability programmes. Additionally, the relevance of the A Ganar programme is increased by continuous consideration of young people's voices, and by integrating their needs and wishes into the programme. Furthermore, by constantly monitoring the labour market, and through close contacts with the private sector, it is ensured that technical skills training meets the labour market demands.

The A Ganar programme has not yet been evaluated rigorously, i.e. it cannot be considered as an example of research validated good practice. However, results from monitoring and evaluation show that the majority of the young graduates found employment, returned to education, or started their own businesses. Also, the positive feedback from employers is encouraging, as is the fact that many participants managed to advance in their careers after the first employment.

The A Ganar programme managed to establish a broad alliance of private sector, governmental and civil society stakeholders and is broadly accepted and supported. This provides a good basis for ensuring relevance and improving the efficiency and sustainability of the programme. The close cooperation with the private sector can also be used to fight discrimination against young people and to reduce the stigmatisation that young people from these areas often experience.

The A Ganar programme has been replicated in over 16 Latin American countries and is able to clearly specify key conditions for successful replication. This experience, together with its innovative approach of using sport as a vehicle for youth employment, makes the A Ganar programme a very interesting and promising practice that could be of great use to other organisations working in similar contexts and with similar approaches.

Some **highlights of the A Ganar programme** are that...

- it applies an innovative sport-based approach which uses sport as vehicle for youth employment and which is in contrast with traditional classroom teaching
- it has managed to establish a broad alliance including the private sector, governmental institutions and civil society, and is very broadly accepted and supported
- it has a strong focus on developing soft skills, which are much demanded in the labour market

Some **key points and challenges to consider for successful implementation of the A Ganar programme** are that...

- families, communities and potential employers may not be convinced by the programme's approach at first and it is necessary to do a lot of persuading
- the programme and the curricula need to be adapted to local circumstances, changing needs and market demand and the fact that the young people should be included in the planning process
- broad alliances are important for the success of the programme but they are not easy to manage and to maintain
- participants need to be carefully selected because their motivation is key for success
- the mentorship of the young people is a crucial component throughout the whole programme and must focus on building self-confidence and reducing negative perceptions in order to ensure that the young people are ready to learn and also reducing the risk of participants dropping out of the programme
- the facilitators and mentors need to bring qualities with them that enable them to appropriately react to young people and different situations

Analysis of the programme

The SUPERATEC programme targets a highly vulnerable group of young people with a low-income background who suffer from limited access to decent employment and/or their own ventures. SUPERATEC provides an alternative option to the education system, contributing to the strengthening of social and technical skills of young people from poor communities and offering them the tools to succeed personally and professionally in the labour market. SUPERATEC uses a comprehensive curriculum that integrates technology and life skills training, meeting a labour market demand that is largely unmet by the formal school system. In this regard, even though there is no alignment with the government or government policies, the programme is highly relevant to the target group, and to its context. Furthermore, through employment pool and job placement services, the programme collaborates closely with the private sector thereby ensuring that it takes labour market requirements into account effectively. Offering a labour-market relevant skills development programme and concrete job placement support, the latter based on private sector enterprises that advertise entry-level jobs on the portal, fosters programme sustainability.

However, the programme has not been evaluated rigorously and can therefore not be considered as an example of research-validated good practice. This lack of rigorous evaluation also makes judgements on longer-term impacts of the programme, i.e. retention rates of previous beneficiaries who benefited from job placements, impossible. Nevertheless, SUPERATEC is conscious of this fact and is currently planning an external evaluation. On an annual basis, the programme implementation is self-evaluated by the all the organisation's staff.

The programme is innovative since it:

1. Combines the needs of the young people with the interest and needs of the labour market and compared to traditional vocational programmes, the SUPERATEC programme reacts to changes in market demand much quicker
2. Because it does not just prepare young people for the labour market, but supports the programme beneficiaries in undertaking this step through job placements
3. Because it applies a comprehensive approach to skills development: capacity building of the target group is not limited to offering relevant hard skills, but includes soft

skills (life skills, interpersonal skills, conflict resolution skills, etc.) that are needed to create responsible, socio-economically integrated actors of change.

Some **highlights of SUPERATEC** programme are that...

- it uses a comprehensive approach to transforming lives of marginalised young people and prepares them to become socially responsible actors of change
- it not only focuses on the acquisition of hard skills (vocational, IT-related) but also on development of soft skills
- it combines the needs of the young people with the needs of the market and is able to quickly react to a changing environment
- it has built up a huge job network for programme graduates, through which they are followed-up and through which job placements are offered to them

Some **key points and challenges to consider for successful implementation of SUPERATEC** are that...

- a sufficient number of potential employers have to be convinced to participate in the network and to give young people a chance
- substantial amount of resources have to be allocated to manage and maintain a job network of over 110 companies and over 1,500 young people
- when giving training on information technology the technical equipment should be up to date and retailers have to be available (to ensure that the training matches labour market standards)

Summary note on the presented practices

Financially Self-Sufficient School programme	
Country	Paraguay
Organisation	Fundación Paraguaya
Target group	Young women and men mostly from rural contexts with low income and low levels of education
Overall objective	To offer young people the high-quality education needed to become entrepreneurs and at the same time to enable schools to provide high-quality education and to become financially self-sufficient
Approach	The Financially Self-Sufficient Schools programme provides a combination of traditional high-school subjects and practical entrepreneurship training to young people. The young people acquire practical skills by operating on-campus businesses and participate in cooperatives to earn and save money. The on-campus businesses allow schools to gradually become self-sufficient and independent of external funding
Major challenges addressed	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Quality and/or relevance of education and training - Accessibility and affordability of education and training - Technical skills not matching labour market requirements - Inadequate soft/life skills - Lack of access to financial capital - Scarcity of career counselling and employment services - Lack of labour market information - Discrimination in employment and training - Lack of quality jobs (low-paid, working poor, informality)
Programme status	On-going since 01/01/2003
Total budget	\$ 530,000

From Margin to Mainstream	
Country	Bangladesh
Organisation	Action on Disability and Development (ADD) International
Target group	Young women and men with disabilities and low income
Overall objective	To integrate young people with disabilities in the labour market, to provide them with possibilities for gainful employment and to advocate their rights, needs and potential among employers and in society
Approach	The From Margin to Mainstream programme equips young people with disabilities with the skills needed for employment in industrial sectors facing a shortage of skilled labour, or to become entrepreneurs. The programme also establishes partnerships with employers and the government to promote adequate employment opportunities for disabled young people, and raises their awareness of the benefits these young people can bring to society.
Major challenges addressed	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Quality and/or relevance of education and training - Technical skills not matching labour market requirements - Lack of access to financial capital - Scarcity of career counselling and employment services - Lack of labour market information - Discrimination in employment and training - Lack of quality jobs (low-paid, working poor, informality) - Employers reluctant to employ persons with disabilities
Programme status	Ongoing 01/01/2011 – 31/12/2013
Total budget	\$ 408,751

2GetThere	
Country	Netherlands
Organisation	2GetThere (Team VSV project)
Target group	Young men and women with low income, mostly with migrant backgrounds
Overall objective	To assist young people who face problems in school, in work, or both, with a focus on young people who are not officially registered with the government
Approach	The 2GetThere programme adopts a preventive approach by establishing a peer-to-peer safety network created for and run by young people. Young people act as coaches and provide assistance to other young people who face difficulties at school, work, or both
Major challenges addressed	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Quality and/or relevance of education and training - Inadequate soft/life skills - Lack of access to financial capital - Scarcity of career counselling and employment services - Lack of labour market information - Discrimination in employment and training - Constraints in labour market mobility - (Re)gaining self-confidence, experience expert, creative solutions in employability
Programme status	Ongoing since 01/01/2010 until 31/12/2014
Total budget	€ 350,000 (\$ 474,082)

Employment Fund	
Country	Nepal
Organisation	Employment Fund project
Target group	Young women and men from rural and urban areas from disadvantaged groups in society
Overall objective	To provide access to market-relevant education for disadvantaged young people and to give them access to gainful employment
Approach	The Employment Fund programme engages private sector actors to provide training and to provide young people with access to gainful employment. It uses a social inclusion mechanism to ensure outreach to the most disadvantaged groups of young people and an outcome based financing system to ensure high market-relevance of training
Major challenges addressed	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Quality and/or relevance of education and training - Accessibility and affordability of education and training - Technical skills not matching labour market requirements - Inadequate soft/life skills - Lack of access to financial capital - Scarcity of career counselling and employment services - Lack of labour market information - Lack of labour demand - Discrimination in employment and training - Lack of quality jobs (low-paid, working poor, informality)
Programme status	Ongoing since 01/01/2008 (until 30/06/2015)
Total budget	\$ 20,000,000

Moje Ikušnje (My Experience)	
Country	Slovenia
Organisation	ŠS storitveno podjetje d.o.o. (e-Študentski Servis)
Target group	Students at all levels of secondary education from urban and rural contexts with low income
Overall objective	To smooth the transition from school to work by overcoming the lack of recognition of non-formally gained, work relevant skills and competencies, thereby fighting discrimination against young people from low income backgrounds and improving their employability
Approach	The Moje Ikušnje programme creates digital portfolios for young people through an online platform where informally gained work-related competencies are formally acknowledged and confirmed by employers
Major challenges addressed	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Technical skills not matching labour market requirements - Inadequate soft/life skills - Discrimination in employment and training - Lack of recognition of competencies gained non-formally through student work
Programme status	Ongoing since 01/06/2010 (until 01/2015)
Total budget	\$ 372,312

SUPERATEC A.C. Personal Development through Technology	
Country	Venezuela
Organisation	SUPERATEC
Target group	Young women and men aged 15-24 years old from low-income communities
Overall objective	To smooth the transition from school to work for disadvantaged young people, to improve their employability and to integrate them into the labour market
Approach	The SUPERATEC programme utilises a comprehensive, integrated curriculum with a focus on information technology training, additionally covering personal development topics such as ethics, goal-setting, personal initiative, change and conflict management, effective communication, teamwork and leadership. The SUPERATEC graduates are supported in finding their first employment through a job network and job placement services. Additionally, the SUPERATEC programme provides screening services for enterprises
Major challenges addressed	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Quality and relevance of formal education - Skills that do not match with labour market requirements - Inadequate life skills - Lack of career counselling and employment services - Lack of labour market information
Programme status	Ongoing since 15/08/2002
Total budget	\$ 177,882