



Implementing a Labour Market-Responsive Entrepreneurship Training Programme For the Youth: A Case Study

By Wilbert San Pedro and Roche Angon¹

In a pilot scheme that sought to increase young people's access to decent work at the local level through entrepreneurship, programme implementers, trainers, and the youth themselves were able to learn significant insights to add to their store of life experiences. These insights include lessons learnt in surmounting the challenges associated with implementing an entrepreneurship training programme, the importance of renewing the hopes of disadvantaged youth searching for a better future, and the value of building the capabilities of local development workers from government and the private sector in delivering entrepreneurship training to the youth.

Background of the Joint Programme

The MDG Fund Joint Programme on Alternatives to Migration: Decent Jobs for Filipino Youth was funded by the Spanish Government and was executed in the Philippines from July 2009 to July 2012. It is subsumed under the Millennium Development Goals thematic window of Youth Employment and Migration. The Joint Programme was envisioned to contribute to Millennium Development Goals 1, 3 and 8. MDG 1 aims to eradicate poverty and hunger, MDG 3 strives to promote gender equality and empower women, while MDG 8 endeavours to develop a global partnership for development.

¹ The authors would like to acknowledge Lourdes Kathleen Santos for her technical inputs.

Multi-stakeholder approach

The Joint Programme was jointly implemented by United Nations Country Team agencies including the International Labour Organization (ILO), International Organization for Migration (IOM), United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), and United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA), in line with the Philippine Government's vision of a productive and competitive youth sector.

On the local front, the UN Country Team was joined in the collaboration by stakeholders from the government including the Department of Labor and Employment (DOLE), Department of Education (DepEd), Technical Education and Skills Development Authority (TESDA), Department of Trade and Industry (DTI), National Youth Commission (NYC), Philippine Commission on Women (PCW), the Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao (ARMM), and the Provincial Governments of Agusan del Sur, Antique, Masbate, and Maguindanao. The private sector was represented by local businesses, chambers of commerce, employers and business organizations, NGOs, worker organizations, and youth organizations.

Focus on entrepreneurship training

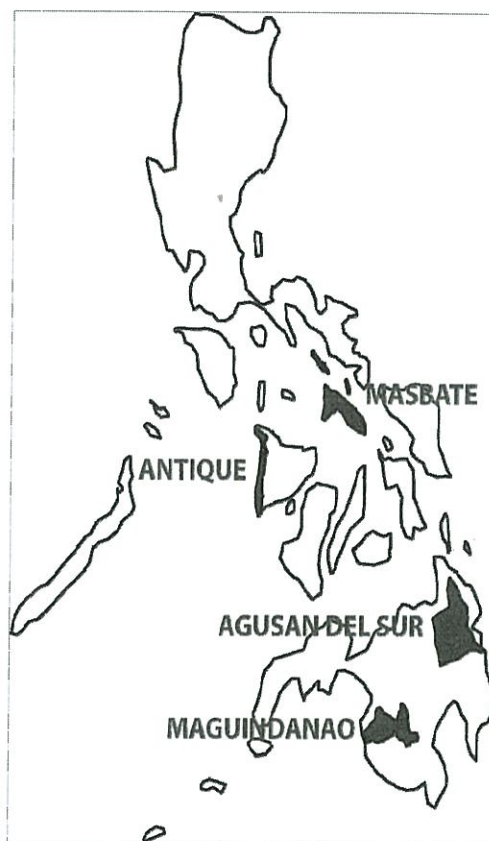
Entrepreneurship training is one of the components of the Joint Programme. As one of the more visible components, its results are seen to have a tangible and immediate impact on reducing unemployment and providing livelihood opportunities for disadvantaged youth. The provision of entrepreneurship training is aligned to Outcome 2 of the Joint Programme the goal of which is increased access to decent work for young women and men through public-private partnerships, more inclusive basic education and life skills, provisions of career guidance including on safe migration, and conduct of vocational training and *entrepreneurship*.

Why a case study on entrepreneurship for the disadvantaged youth

The conduct of the labour-market responsive entrepreneurship training for the youth component of the Joint Programme was a learning experience for all concerned from programme implementers to local partners to the disadvantaged youth themselves. This case study aims to highlight the strategies and innovations adopted by the Joint Programme and the challenges and lessons learned in the implementation of entrepreneurship training. It has the added value of serving as a start-off point and reference material for future undertakings of a similar nature.

Targeting the disadvantaged youth

Between July 2009 and July 2012—the official implementation phase of the Joint Programme—a targeted 10,000 poor and vulnerable Filipino young men and women (between the ages of 15–24 years old) directly and indirectly benefitted from the Joint Programme. These included out-of-school youth, in-school youth, high school graduates, overseas Filipino workers (OFWs), and youth left behind by OFW parents. The rationale was to put in place incentives, mechanisms and schemes—including entrepreneurship training—which provide an enabling environment for local youth to find decent work in their localities in lieu of migrating for work. The Joint Programme was piloted in four of the poorest provinces in the Philippines including Masbate, Antique, Maguindanao and Agusan del Sur.



The Philippines in context

The Philippines is a chain of islands at the edge of the western Pacific with a population of 92.34 million as of last count (NSO Census of Population: 2010). Many Filipinos migrate for work abroad to support their families. There are many motivations for the decision to work abroad but perhaps the most pressing are those of an economic nature. Although basic commodities are cheap in comparison with those abroad, wages are also low. Many still conform to the tenet of raising a large family but this has the consequence of greater expenses for food, health and educational needs of children, among others.

Under this scenario, many venture abroad to work as domestics, seafarers, entertainers and professionals. The prime consideration is to support their families back home. Because Filipinos place a high value on the extended family system, even people who are not yet saddled with family obligations—many of them youth—go abroad for work not only to support themselves but also their parents, siblings and relatives. In 2011 alone, total remittances to the Philippines of overseas Filipino workers were worth US\$20.12 billion, according to the Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas. The contribution to the Philippine economy of OFWs cannot be underestimated since OFW remittances constitute around 10 per cent of the country's GDP.



Although overseas employment has proved to be an effective strategy for providing employment to those who want and need it most, many more people who remain in the country have to contend with underemployment and unemployment. Today, a high number of people within the country continue to be at risk of facing difficulties in their search for work. One sector that faces severe challenge is the youth, technically classified by the United Nations as those who belong to the 15 to 24 age range. In 2011, youth unemployment stood at 1.4 million which is more than twice the national average level, according to data from the National Statistics Office. Many young people are also trapped in vulnerable forms of employment. Statistics show that nearly 2.3 million youth are engaged in vulnerable forms of employment.

Focus on four pilot provinces

Within the time span in which it was executed, the Joint Programme provided direct services in four of the poorest regions of the country—Masbate, Antique, Maguindanao and Agusan del Sur—wherein a selection of disadvantaged youth had been given the opportunity to train in entrepreneurship and experience first-hand the rigors of running their own microenterprise as an alternative to migration. Focus was given to these four provinces because of observed high incidences of out-of-school and poor youth, low enrolment rates, and high drop-out rates.

Of the four provinces as of May 2010, Antique had the lowest population count numbering at just over half a million (546,031 to be exact) while Masbate had the next most numerous population at 834,650 after Maguindanao. Maguindanao had a population of 944,718 while Agusan del Sur's population was pegged at 656,418 (NSO Census of Population: 2010). Lower ratio of youth to total population was observed in the four provinces based on 2007 NSO figures. National Statistics Office data shows that average share of youth (those in the 15 to 24 age group) to total population across the Philippines was 20 per cent. The figures are lower in the four provinces (in Antique it was 17.7 per cent; in Masbate, 15.8 per cent; 19.7 per cent in Agusan del Sur and 18.8 per cent in Maguindanao). One reason for the smaller share of youth in these provinces is out-migration. Many local youth migrate for work to Manila and other urban areas as well as abroad.

Entrepreneurship as a career option

Promoting entrepreneurship mitigates youth underemployment and unemployment. Providing it to young people in their own locality becomes an incentive for them to stay in their home provinces instead of joining the number of young people migrating for work. Furthermore, it is acknowledged that widening the scope of young people's choices to include entrepreneurship and self employment has the desirable end of empowering the youth so that they can contribute to rural transformation and local economic development. Although engaging in self employment is often treated as a last resort by the unemployed, it actually has potential in absorbing many young people who cannot be accommodated in the formal labour market for one reason or another. An entrepreneurial mindset needs to be instilled among the youth, however, if the country is ever going to develop a corps of entrepreneurs with the potential for creating more jobs for the growing legion of people entering the labour force. Entrepreneurship as a career is therefore being promoted as an option for decent work within the boundaries of one's province and without the need to migrate for work elsewhere.

A brief overview of the implementation process of entrepreneurship training

The labour market-responsive entrepreneurship training component of the Joint Programme followed a simple progression of steps that takes into account all aspects of the training cycle.

Initially, a *convergence planning* workshop was able to gain commitment from partners including ILO, DOLE, TESDA-ARMM, the provincial local governments of Masbate, Antique, Maguindanao and Agusan del Sur, and other public and private sector partners. Scoping of the local environment was next undertaken resulting in the study report *assessing entrepreneurship potentials and the business climate* in the four pilot sites. Pre-training activities included a *training of trainers* (ToT) with those qualifying under this training expected to handle and facilitate the training of entrepreneurs (ToE). Activities at this stage also included *enhancing the SIYB training modules*. The ILO's Start and Improve Your Business (SIYB) was the main reference material of the entrepreneurship training. Two modules of the SIYB were particularly useful. The Generate Your Business Idea (GYB) module is a two-day course designed to enable potential micro-entrepreneurs to generate and analyze business ideas. The SYB component is designed to enable people to draw up a

SIDEBAR 1: Young women and entrepreneurship training

Although the participation of young women in the entrepreneurship trainings conducted is not in the ratio of 50-50, there had been no built-in bias shown toward women when awarding training slots or employment opportunities during the course of the Joint Programme. In fact, young women constituted 41.5 per cent of participants to the SIYB entrepreneurship training, which is a reasonable ratio. The relatively lower rate—compared to males—may simply be a reflection of the traditional role of men as family breadwinners which is the reason why more of them seek training and employment opportunities.

A 2010 ILO-sponsored assessment of entrepreneurship potentials in Masbate, Antique, Agusan del Sur and Maguindanao reports that based on a selected sample of disadvantaged youth, female respondents in the four provinces have a higher average score of 68.8 per cent in the entrepreneurship potential assessment compared to 65.2 per cent for males (A score of 70 to 75 per cent is needed for a chance to attend the SYB module). Furthermore, development organizations and microfinance institutions in the four provinces put a high trust on women as primary clients. Many observed that "women exhibit more responsibility and interest in the technical and financial aspects of entrepreneurship management". As further commitment to the mainstreaming of issues on women and gender, the integration of a three-day gender sensitivity training in the regular training courses of TESDA was made possible by the support of UNFPA under the Joint Programme.



Photo: 20-year old Noria Y. Amilil is one of the young women grantees of a starter kit for a gasoline retailing business in Datu Montawal, Maguindanao. She and business partner Sadam Saligan (also a grantee) have already expanded the microenterprise to include other basic commodities which are in demand in the community.

business plan for the business that they have identified and which they wish to start in the very near future.

The *identification and selection of candidates for entrepreneurship training* was jointly accomplished by the DOLE and the provincial local governments in Masbate, Antique and Agusan del Sur. In Maguindanao, the selection was undertaken by the TESDA-ARMM and the provincial



government of Maguindanao. Primary considerations to qualify for the training include being able to read, write, and do simple calculations. These are necessary for practical considerations since trainees are expected to understand simple business and financial planning. Also important is the potential for entrepreneurship of the candidate. The *training of entrepreneurs* (ToE) was a five day live-in activity that devoted two days for the Generate Your Business Idea (GYB) module and three days for the Start Your Business (SYB) module. At the end of the training,

the youth participants were expected to come up with a business plan applying the technical and financial skills learned during their five-day training. The most tangible output of the training is the submission of a business plan.

Evaluating the business plans of the trainees was the task of an evaluation committee which screened and selected feasible business plans. *Starter kits* were given to selected graduates with feasible business plans. The rationale behind the provision of starter kits is that ultimately, entrepreneurship training is being undertaken with the goal of self employment. The starter kits are composed of commodities or equipment needed by the entrepreneur to jumpstart the venture. Youth entrepreneurs received starter kits worth between PhP8,000 and PhP15,000.

The next crucial step in the process is *implementing the business plans*. This involved the actual setting up and day-to-day operations of the microenterprise as described in the business plan submitted by the entrepreneur. *Mentoring and coaching activities* were provided to the fledgling enterprises by the SIYB trainers from DOLE, TESDA-ARMM and partner organizations. *Monitoring and evaluation* activities included periodic visits to the youth-run enterprises to assess progress. *Assessing the impact* of the entrepreneurship training on the employment of the training graduates completes the training cycle. Results of the impact assessment are tangible indicators for gauging the effectiveness of training.

Achievements of the entrepreneurship training component

Of the original 400 disadvantaged youth targeted for training in entrepreneurship (broken down into 100 trainees for each province), the actual number of trained youth rose to 475 at programme's end because some of the graduates of the technical vocational skills training and educational subsidy components of the Joint Programme also received entrepreneurship training (see Table 1). Young women constitute 41.5 per cent of the total number of trainees.

Meanwhile, of a targeted number of trainees with feasible business plans pegged at a minimum of 60 per cent of the total number of all youth trained, results at programme's end showed that the target was breached. In absolute terms, a total of 240 feasible business plans, broken down into 60 feasible business plans for each province, was targeted. The actual accomplishment at programme's end was 254 feasible business plans submitted by the trainees meeting the criteria of the selection committees (see Table 1). Most of these business plans were for individual microenterprises although some business plans from prospective youth entrepreneurs were group-based endeavors.

As of 31 December 2012, a total of 215 starter kits had been distributed to qualified youth based on the feasibility of their business plans (see Table 1). Of this number, 131 starter kits were distributed to male youth entrepreneurs and 84 starter kits to female youth entrepreneurs. Targeted also at the start of the Joint Programme was a minimum 40 per cent of starter kit recipients being able to set up their own individual or group-based microenterprises. In absolute terms, this means a total target of 96 recipients or 24 recipients for each province. The target had been surpassed at

programme's end with 193 youth having established their microenterprises (see Table 1). The youth-run microenterprises range from fish vending, gasoline retailing, goat raising, hog fattening, and sari-sari store operation; also included are buy-and-sell activities, perfume retailing, soap making, and other trading activities. The youth entrepreneurs received starter kits with a monetary value of between PhP8,000 and PhP15,000.

Table 1: Summary of accomplishments as of 31 December 2012

Province	Number of Youth Trained			Number of Youth Qualified to Receive Starter Kits			Number of Recipients of Starter Kits			Number of Microenterprises Run by Youth		
	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total
Masbate	67	52	119	32	28	60	24	21	45	24	21	45
Antique	72	47	119	35	19	54	35	19	54	35	19	54
Agusan del Sur	67	57	124	47	33	80	33	23	56	33	23	56
Maguindanao	72	41	113	39	21	60	39	21	60	25	13	38
Total	278	197	475	153	101	254	131	84	215	117	76	193

Strategies and innovations

Interconnectivity of interventions contributes to a holistic approach. The Joint Programme is constituted of a set of interlocking interventions set to provide long term solutions to the problem of youth employment and underemployment and stem the phenomenon of youth migration.

Its interlocking components aimed at increasing access to decent work for young women and men include (1) establishment of partnerships with the private sector, local governments, and financial institutions to create employment and entrepreneurship opportunities (Output 2.1), (2) provision of labour market-responsive technical and vocational education and entrepreneurship skills training to the youth including life skills, gender and migration modules (Output 2.2), (3) mainstreaming of gender-sensitive entrepreneurship education in public secondary education (Output 2.3), and (4) strengthening of employment services including career guidance, referral and tracking services to promote youth employment (Output 2.4).

The holistic approach makes it possible for the technical vocational and entrepreneurship skills training component (Output 2.2) to link where appropriate with Outputs 2.1, 2.3 and 2.4. A specific result of these linkages include public-private partnerships (Output 2.1) utilized to assist technical vocational and entrepreneurship skills training graduates (Output 2.2) in on-the-job training, employment, and business development services.

Another specific intersection is the assistance of local employment service providers such as the PESO (which were given technical and financial assistance as part of Output 2.4) in jobs bridging and employment facilitation for youth graduates under the technical vocational and entrepreneurship skills training component (Output 2.2).

Participatory process intensifies local ownership. From conceptualization to monitoring and evaluation, there was a high degree of ownership of the project shown by national and local partners. As reported in the MDG Fund midterm evaluation of the Joint Programme, "the high involvement of government agencies relates mainly to the fact that programme activities are coherent with their priorities and that the programme funds have made it possible to either expand what they were doing or to incorporate new approaches." The downside to the participatory process, however, is the amount of time needed especially when building consensus. Nonetheless, the protracted nature of the process was well worth the trouble since positive gains had been secured including bonding among stakeholders and the high degree of ownership of the results.

Responsiveness to the needs of the local market ensures success of youth-run microenterprises. In the pre-training phase, the Joint Programme took measures to ensure that the entrepreneurship training would contribute to the immediate needs of the locality by encouraging youth-based microenterprises that are local resource-based as well as those entrepreneurial undertakings with the most chances of prospering and contributing to local economic development.

SIDEBAR 2: Helping persons with disability (PWDs) help themselves

20-year old Guinaid K. Unos is a youth brimming with life despite the fact that life has dealt him with a blow. As a young boy, he was injured from falling while mounted on the back of a carabao. The accident prevented the bone structure in his upper body to grow normally.

The eldest of seven siblings, Guinaid lives with his parents in the rural community of Paglat in Maguindanao. The family is experiencing bad times with his father being unemployed and his mother selling vegetable to eke out a living. Guinaid was given the chance to add to the family's meager income through the Joint Programme. After completing the SIYB entrepreneurship training and submitting a feasible business plan on goat fattening, Guinaid received from TESDA-ARMM a starter kit of eight goats. Disease had decimated the original eight goats to five. The remaining goats are healthy as a result of the care Guinaid has been giving them. He anticipates that his goats will increase in number in the coming months as they bear kids. He plans to take up a computer course with his projected income.



PHOTO: Guinaid Unos tends to his goats inside their pen located at the backyard of his parents' home in Datu Paglat, Maguindanao

To map out the local entrepreneurial terrain, a full-length assessment of entrepreneurship potentials of disadvantaged youth together with an assessment of the business climate in the four provinces were conducted with the participation of the local stakeholders and the community. This became a reference material that guided the implementers, trainers and mentors when selecting those business plans which were feasible and attuned to the needs of the local market. Implementers and trainers also discouraged the youth entrepreneurs from going into saturated enterprises and those enterprises which do not have a ready market.

Completing the training cycle contributes to greater impact of training. Most people think of training as a stand-alone activity. In truth, however, it is actually a series of interrelated activities that culminate in the potential employment of trainees. This concept of training has led to a growing awareness of the direct link between training and employment. The Joint Programme's entrepreneurship training component adopted the full training cycle reinforcing the link between training and employment and the supporting mechanisms which were provided to ensure greater chances of employment of the trainees.

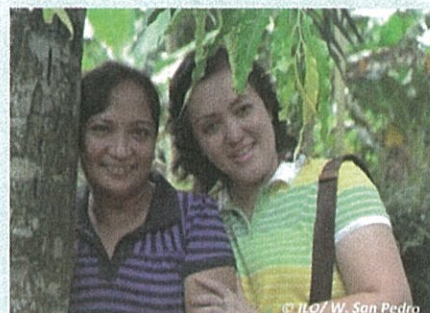
Utilizing local trainers makes training more relevant to disadvantaged youth. The training of trainers (ToT) on the ILO's Start and Improve Your Business (SIYB) was a strategy adopted by the Joint Programme to ensure that an expert pool of local trainers exists in the provinces to train local people. Each province is unique in its own way particularly in the possession of distinct dialects and customs. The ILO-certified local trainers were considered to be in a better position to impart entrepreneurial skills to local people. They are in command of the local dialects and can therefore discuss and interpret the SIYB trainer's guide and workbooks in a manner that makes it possible for disadvantaged youth, with their limited education, to appreciate and understand.

Providing support services deepens the impact of training. For many training providers, training stops the moment the last topic in the training manual has been covered. Many others pay only lip service to the concept of employment after training. The Joint Programme took extra effort to make the training more holistic and of practical value to the participants through the provision of starter kits and coaching and mentoring activities conducted by the local trainers to entrepreneurs whose business plans were approved.

Strengthening monitoring and evaluation systems makes information and database more accessible and easier to retrieve. The Joint Programme advocated for better and more efficient tracking systems and an end-of-project impact assessment cognizant of the benefits to programme implementers and policymakers of systematizing these data information sources.

SIDEBAR 3: Profile of three ILO-certified SIYB trainers

Carmen Echavez-Quesada (at right in top photo) is a school administrator and instructor at the Southern Philippines College in Parang, Maguindanao while Melani G. Aguas (at left in top photo) teaches at Saint Benedict College in Cotabato City. In 2011, they were invited to join the ILO's Start and Improve Your Business (SIYB) training programme. Having passed the requirements of this programme, the two educators are now certified members of the ILO pool of local trainers qualified to teach entrepreneurship using the SIYB. Carmen was so good, in fact, that she was also invited to join the training that will qualify her as a master trainer of the SIYB although she declined the offer due to a conflict in schedule. Carmen and Melani were trainers in TESDA-ARMM's SIYB training for the youth under the Joint Programme. They were also active in coaching and mentoring the youth entrepreneurs. Seeing the potential of the SIYB modules as learning tools, Carmen and Melani plan to introduce the SIYB to their business students in the coming school term.



Meanwhile, Maricar Baldevia (bottom photo) works at Saint Anthony's College in San Jose, Antique. She is also the Public Employment Service Office (PESO) manager of her school. On top of these duties, she was selected to participate in the ILO's SIYB training of trainers (ToT) in 2011. Later on, she was one of only two Filipinos (the other is DOLE's Roberto Rodelas) invited to the SIYB's international master trainers' course. She is now an ILO master trainer based in Antique and shares her knowledge with local organizations and the youth in her province.



Challenges and lessons learned

System of funding slows down implementation process. Throughout the project cycle of the Joint Programme, delays in the downloading of fund needed to implement the project components were experienced. For funds downloaded to national government offices, the system of the flow of funds is from the national office to the regional offices down to the provincial offices. At each level, there is layer of bureaucracy which needs to be contended with in compliance with government rules and regulations.

As reported in the MDG Fund midterm evaluation of the Joint Programme, "the experience of the JP YEM suggests that the transferring of funds to government agencies and application of national procurement procedures included in the Paris Declaration on Aid Effectiveness may sometimes be associated with slower implementation. Although UN Country Team agencies may have somewhat complicated and different procurement procedures, the downloading of funds to the government agencies involved in the implementation of the JP YEM were associated with even more complicated and slower procurement procedures, causing an overload to those government agencies' limited human resources, especially if the time for implementation is limited. By transferring funds and responsibilities, the Paris Declaration aims at promoting the building of capacities of government agencies, higher transparency in the use of funds, and increased ownership. However, the experience of the JP YEM suggests that the direct payment modality, which involves administration of programme funds by the UN participating organizations, may not compromise transparency and ownership."

Trainee selection criteria and process are crucial to the success of the training programme. Local stakeholders in the four provinces reported difficulty in screening applicants considering the distance and rugged terrain of the territory in the four provinces. There is the problem of accessibility of some areas and the gathering of youth participants in area where service transportation and communication are scarce. In Maguindanao, some areas can only be reached by horseback or banca outrigger and there is also the peace and order situation to contend with. Across the four provinces, some qualified applicants backed out of the training even when they have already confirmed their

participation because of the perceived long duration of the seminar. Some reason out that they are needed by their families in farming chores and this has relative importance to them (as it is a matter of family survival) compared to attending the training. To expedite the process of trainee selection, it was suggested by the stakeholders that linkage with the network of municipality-based PESOs be established and that the PESO themselves be requested to gather trainees in one place for easier access or to assist the applicants directly.

A major lesson is that the selection of qualified participants is the key to the success of training. The personal plans of the applicants must be considered and enough funds and logistical support should be provided to reach out to a broader base of applicants. A word of caution is that awarding training only to those with high potential for entrepreneurship to maintain programme efficiency may conflict with the mission of providing social equity, especially in opening the doors of opportunity for disadvantaged youth with limited access to government services and resources. Although programme efficiency dictates that training should be in favor of those entrepreneurs with high chances of success, doing so would leave those with lower potential for entrepreneurship (but with the desire to try it out) to remain without access to these services.



Trainers need to deal with the emotional and intellectual maturity levels of youth trainees.

Many trainees are out-of-school youth and have been away from school for some time while others do not have the natural inclination for study. It was a challenge for the trainers trying to hold the attention of trainees belonging to these groups for long periods of time although cracking jokes and lightening the mood of the discussion helped the trainees to become more involved.

Since the emotional maturity of the youth is still in its formative stage, local trainers recommended the need for emotional mentoring of the youth as well. It has also been observed that some youth are not yet serious when it comes to setting up a business. When writing their business plans during the entrepreneurship training, some did not have the drive to work extra hours after the training session to finish their business plans. One trainer reported that the trainees in her batch tend to be distracted by more fun occupations such as socials so that they could not concentrate anymore on the training itself.

Other trainers observed that basic literacy and numeracy requirements for entry to the SIYB programme may not be enough. It was noted that trainees who have reached only the first few years of the elementary level had a hard time catching up with trainees who have a higher education. Another trainer observed that giving special attention to those youth with limited education to draw them out

SIDEBAR 4: Entrepreneurship potentials of disadvantaged youth

A 2010 ILO-sponsored study on entrepreneurship potentials surveyed 410 disadvantaged youth in Masbate, Antique, Maguindanao and Agusan del Sur. Using the ILO-developed tool, it reports that the respondents have an average entrepreneurship potential of 67.0 per cent. As a general rule, the Start Your Business (SYB) training module under ILO's SIYB only accept participants who accomplished the GYB Personal Assessment Exercise and obtain a score over 70 before being allowed to proceed to the SYB training. There is a need therefore for the disadvantaged youth to hone on entrepreneurship attributes to increase their chances of succeeding in a microenterprise.

The report states that many disadvantaged youth need to build up on their social, networking, and negotiation skills including competitiveness. It was also reported that many youth believe that owning one's business is an easy job compared to working for a superior. The report noted that such misperceptions should be corrected with training emphasizing the hard work that a business necessitates especially in the start-up phase. The report further states that to turn the youth into serious entrepreneurs involves inculcating in them values that promotes commitment to business, hard work and patience.

of their shell may backfire as some have the tendency to withdraw. An emotional element is thus present and should be taken into consideration. Meanwhile, perceived low comprehension rates of some trainees in such topics as financial aspects of the business were seen to have an effect in the preparation of the business plans.

The need to further simplify business concepts so that the youth can understand them better. Part of the recommendation to address the challenges is to simplify further the SIYB learning materials to suit different types of youth. Of particular interest is the challenge of translating the business topics into the local tongue. Most times, it is hard to translate foreign ideas because there is not an exact match of the word in the local dialect. The trainers agree that using the simplest of business examples would benefit trainees. One trainer suggested illustrating business concepts using the banana-cue business (the banana-cue is a cheap and popular local snack of deep-fried sugar-coated cardava bananas). This business example is seen to have down-to-earth appeal because many patronize street sellers of banana-cue. It also entails a very simple costing process since the banana-cue business requires only a cooking stove, oil for frying, bananas, sugar, and the bamboo spit needed to skewer the fried bananas. Formulating templates for particular business ideas are also seen to be of particular use.

The need to address varying levels of maturity of the youth. To address the varying levels of maturity, experience, and literacy and numeracy skills of participants, it was suggested that specific trainings should include homogenous populations whenever possible and appropriate training techniques should be adopted. Enough trainers are needed as the youth participants require a lot of “hand-holding”, even counseling. The ideal number of trainers suggested is 4-5 for every 25-30 youth participants.

The need to address lack of knowledge and appreciation of the local business situation by the youth. For other youth trainees, it is the lack of a working knowledge of the local economic situation that is seen as the challenge. Many do not have or could not formulate a business idea because they have very little exposure to business. Viability of a project depends on how the potential entrepreneurs understand the ups and downs and the seasonality of the business. Thus, discussion on the business climate of the locality as part of the GYB training is seen to be useful.

Local cultural nuances and attitudes must be acknowledged. Although many established principles of business have a long standing tradition, they may not easily be implementable in some locales. As an example, buying on credit has been a way of life for many local folks in the Philippines and the provinces are no exception. Youth entrepreneurs are well aware that their fledgling microenterprises cannot survive if they do not provide credit. Their potential buyers have enough market power to simply change allegiance to other enterprises. On top of this, local custom requires them to provide credit to people in need and there is the perception that people who refuse to give

SIDEBAR 5: Forum to discuss improved delivery of entrepreneurship training

Trainers of ILO's Start and Improve Your Business (SIYB) shared their experiences in training disadvantaged youth in Masbate, Antique, Maguindanao and Agusan del Sur during the Refresher Workshop for Master Trainers and Trainers of SIYB in May 2012.

During the workshop, the trainers discussed how they may further market SIYB as a training product and considered the proper selection of partner organizations and of trainees, development of appropriate materials, and provision of after-training support. The strategies that surfaced were seen to help improve subsequent entrepreneurship trainings beyond the completion of the Joint Programme in July 2012.

The refresher workshop on SIYB, the first of its kind to be held in the Philippines, was designed by the Joint Programme to help institutionalize the programme in the country through its project partners as well as the national and local government.



credit are niggardly and lacking in community spirit. As shown by experience, most credit takes a long time in getting paid and some do not even get paid at all. A situation where credit does not get paid on time creates cash flow problems. There are also cases of too much familial intervention such that it is not the youth who is in charge of the venture anymore but the parents. For the trainers, the most important lesson learned when dealing with these challenges is patience. Again, there is need of much “hand holding” between mentor and protégé.

The need to deal with some traditionally-minded local government units (LGUs). The Joint Programme’s stakeholders at the local level need to do a balancing act when procuring the good will of local officials. In some isolated cases in Maguindanao, local trainers reported the attempt by some barangay officials to get a share of the starter kits meant for distribution to the youth beneficiaries. The diplomatic skills of the trainers helped them sidetrack the potentially awkward situation.

Mentoring, monitoring and evaluation issues. Timely conduct of follow-through activities in mentoring, coaching and monitoring is necessary. The continued use of relevant SIYB forms during mentoring and coaching is important to systematize monitoring. Compliance with reporting standards including completion of SIYB forms and other related forms needs to be kept in mind while the importance of coordination with national and local partners in post-training support is acknowledged. One difficulty in programme monitoring and assessment is keeping track of trainees who keep changing their contact information (cell phone number).



Some commonalities among the successful youth entrepreneurs

Exposure to entrepreneurial activities at an early age gave them a head start. Most of the successful youth entrepreneurs were exposed to entrepreneurial activities at a young age. This seemed to be a pronounced commonality with many of the youth entrepreneurs acknowledging the valuable life lessons that their experience in entrepreneurship as children has taught them.

Unemployment and limited education are not seen as major hindrances. Despite being unemployed or having finished only the high school level and others having dropped out of school even earlier, the successful youth entrepreneurs were enthusiastic about entrepreneurship seeing it as a chance for them to earn cash and help their families.

Poverty can sometimes be a powerful motivator. Although most of the youth entrepreneurs were not able to pursue a college education due to financial reasons, many plan to go back to school if given a chance. Poverty is seen as a powerful motivator which oftentimes gave them the impetus to do their best despite the economic situation that they find themselves in. With the support given to them through the starter kits after their training, the successful youth entrepreneurs proved to be productive.

Parental and family support is important. Although the youth have their own issues and emotional baggage to contend with, their families have been there for them at all times. Within this comforting environment, many of the successful youth entrepreneurs gained the additional “hand holding” needed for them to muster the extra courage to keep afloat and continue their quest to break out of poverty.

SIDEBAR 6: Sustainability mechanisms

To date, 88 representatives of local partner organizations—DOLE, TESDA-ARMM and other organizations in the four pilot provinces—have been capacitated as ILO-certified trainers through the auspices of the Joint Programme and can now train youths on SIYB as well as assess entrepreneurship potentials of the youth. Two master trainers, one from the DOLE and another from Antique, have also been certified after completing a master trainer course on SIYB. The two master trainers are eligible to teach SIYB trainers in their organizations or provinces. DOLE and TESDA-ARMM have committed to sustain entrepreneurship training programmes to disadvantaged youth beyond the four pilot provinces of the Joint Programme, such as in other areas of the Caraga region. They will also monitor the microenterprises that were given assistance as well as continue with counseling and mentoring of young people through the local trainers.

Meanwhile, TESDA's current direction is to strengthen its skills development programme through the integration of entrepreneurship in its curriculum. Hence, ILO's support will focus on increasing TESDA's capacity in terms of developing a pool of trainers within TESDA and among teachers in technical vocational institutions as well as preparing a strategy to better integrate entrepreneurship in the technical vocational training curriculum. Already, ILO is conducting SIYB training which targets key technical training institutes (TTIs) across the country. This is one of the critical activities to sustain the entrepreneurship development component of the Joint Programme.

Conclusions

Despite the challenges faced by the entrepreneurship component of the Joint Programme, it is worthwhile to note that many of the youth trained in entrepreneurship exhibited the ability to come up with a feasible business plan though marginalized in education. For many of them, the best lesson that they have learned is the immersion in a real enterprise and the realization of potentials lying deep inside of them. There is also the inestimable building of self-confidence brought about by engaging in a project that requires them to give their very best. The trust given to them by their mentors and trainers is also a powerful incentive for them to make good. As for the trainers, an enduring benefit is the furtherance of their professional growth brought about by the capability building and training provided through the auspices of the Joint Programme.

In conclusion, although it is not humanly possible to deal with the myriad issues impacting on youth employment and migration in all their complexity within the span of three years, the Joint Programme was able to put in place the beginnings of what are hoped to be exemplars guiding strategies and innovations in entrepreneurship training for the youth.

Contacts

*International Labour Organization
Country Office for the Philippines
19th Floor Yuchengco Tower, RCBC Plaza
6819 Ayala Avenue, Makati City 1200 Philippines
Tel: +632 5809900
Website: www.ilo.org/manila*

*Bureau of Workers with Special Concerns
Department of Labor and Employment
9th Floor G.E. Antonino Building
J. Bocobo corner T.M. Kalaw Street, Manila
Tel: +63 2 5275858
Website: www.dole.gov.ph*

*Technical Education and Skills Development Authority
Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao
RMDC, Barangay Rebuken, Sultan Kudarat
Maguindanao
Tel: +63 64 4290005
Website: <http://www.tesda-armm.ph>*