

IMPACT STORIES

TECHNICAL VOCATIONAL TRAINING IN ANTIQUE: Enhancing on-the-job training and post-training services

It is a sad but common fact that not all young people who have gone through technical vocational training or college education are able to find jobs. Some of them are not able to find any job and this is especially true for people in localities with a labour market characterized by mismatches between available jobs and skills, among others.

More often than not, this has led to a situation where young people are obliged to migrate for work outside of their town or province and sometimes, even abroad.

From the standpoint of society, this is a less than optimal situation inasmuch as education and training entails costs shouldered by both training

institutions and the students/trainees. In the final analysis, maximizing the benefit of education and training entail that the skills possessed by students/trainees match the requirements of industry.

Matching skills with jobs

Recognizing this fact, the Spanish-funded *MDG Joint Programme on Alternatives to Migration: Decent Jobs for Filipino Youth* embarked on a pilot scheme for matching disadvantaged youth trained in relevant skills with the demand of industries in the local economy.

Started in July 2009, the Joint Programme is implemented by UN 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) as well as local stakeholders including the Department of Labor and Employment (DOLE), the Technical Education and Skills Development Authority (TESDA), other government agencies, and civil society. The overarching goal is to promote decent and productive work for young people.

Anticipating skills needed by the locality

Antique is one of four pilot provinces of the Joint Programme. As an initial step, the ILO commissioned a study assessing the technical vocational skills seen as most responsive to the requirements of the labour market in the province.

The following emerged as priority skills responsive to the needs of local industries—welding, motorcycle mechanics, food and beverage services including cooking and barista service, auto mechanics, brick processing, masonry, truck driving, and sugar processing.

Creating more value in training

In the light of these findings, the Joint Programme, in partnership with TESDA and the Provincial Government of Antique, engaged in providing training grants in the identified skills to disadvantaged youth with certain value-added features.



21-year old Rodel Bernabe learns on the job at the Yamaha Servicing Center in San Jose, Antique (Photo by ILO/ Roche Angon)

These include mandatory on-the-job training for the trainees, integration of a three-day gender sensitivity training in the regular training courses (made possible by the support of UNFPA), partnership agreements entered into by public and private sector partners to provide on-the-job and job opportunities to the youth, provision of a training allowance to trainees by the ILO, and a subsistence allowance provided by the UNICEF.

These value-added features were adopted in response to perceived gaps in the delivery of training.

At present, only selected training courses under the regular programme of TESDA have an on-the-job training (OJT) component. The arrangement for making OJT mandatory for training courses funded by the Joint Programme is seen as an innovation meant to involve employers in developing a pool of local skills of which they would be the direct beneficiaries.

It also deepens the training experience and makes it more meaningful to the trainees who are given first-hand knowledge including the application of the skills they acquired from the training. To respond to the problem of disadvantaged youth who drop out due to out-of-pocket costs that they cannot afford, the Joint Programme also granted allowances to help them cover expenses during the course of the training. This has proved to be the strongest incentive to the trainees.

Achievements of the technical vocational training component in Antique

As of end of June 2012, 500 enrolled youth supported by the Joint Programme in various technical vocational courses in the province have been provided with career profiling. Eighty one per cent have also undergone OJT while 76 per cent of the graduates have been assessed and 45 per cent certified. Competency assessment and skills certification are used to ascertain that the competencies and qualifications that a person

possesses conform not just to industry standards at the national but also at the international level.

Making training more effective

The ultimate goal of training is employment and the Joint Programme has this concern foremost on its agenda. To prove that it means business, the Joint Programme has targeted that at least 55 per cent of those who have completed the training programme under its auspices should be employed after the training (either in wage employment or in self-employment).

Toward this end, the provincial office of TESDA in Antique initiated partnerships with local employers. In sum, a total of 35 Memoranda of Agreement (MOAs) were forged with the private sector. These partnerships aim to provide OJT and job opportunities to the disadvantaged youth.

The concept of public-private partnerships in providing technical vocational skills training and post training services is something new to the province. At this stage, local stakeholders from government and the private sector are excited about the prospects of such collaboration.

That said, the total of 500 disadvantaged youth from Antique who were given training in technical and vocational skills and post training services through the Joint Programme have a good chance of gaining employment that is matched with their training courses.

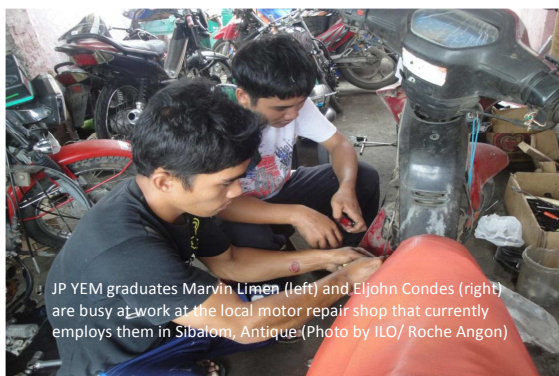
Considering that there is good relationship between the public and private sector in the province, the targeted 55 per cent employment rate of graduates is quite manageable as attested by the following cases.

From training to employment: OJT at work

21-year old Rodel Bernabe hails from the town of Bugasong in Antique province. He was able to finish his high school education through sheer persistence by working even while still studying. With his father having passed away some time ago and being the eldest, he is left to take care of his mother, who is unemployed, and three siblings.

Having received a grant from the Joint Programme coursed through the TESDA, Rodel trained in Motorcycle and Small Engine Servicing for three months and is now undergoing on-the-job training at Yamaha Servicing Center in San Jose, the capital town of Antique.

He receives a daily allowance of Php150, which is roughly equivalent to US\$3.50, for his effort. At the end of this activity, he is further qualified to undergo a three-month in-house training provided by the company. Later on, there



JP YEM graduates Marvin Limen (left) and Eljohn Condes (right) are busy at work at the local motor repair shop that currently employs them in Sibalom, Antique (Photo by ILO/ Roche Angon)

is the chance of a regular job provided that he passes the company's evaluation requirements.

Like Rodel, 23-year old Franz Marvin Limen is the eldest of four children and hails from the town of Hamtic, just a few miles from the capital town of San Jose. Although he managed to reach the first year of a computer engineering course in college, he had to stop for financial reasons. In 2009, he worked as a sales attendant in a local mall.

It is his good fortune to be included among the grantees of the Joint Programme for the training course in Motorcycle and Small Engine Servicing for three months. Upon completion, he started on-the-job training in a motor repair shop in the town of Sibalom. This happened in February 2012. Today, he is regularly employed in the same motor repair shop.

Joining Franz Marvin at work is 20-year old Eljohn Condes who is also from Hamtic. He completed high school in 2007 and worked as a delivery boy in 2008. He also trained in Motorcycle and Small Engine Servicing.

Like Franz Marvin, Eljohn completed on-the-job training at the same Sibalom motor repair shop where he is employed to this date. "I selected this training course because it is easy to land a job armed with this skill," admits Eljohn, who plans to save and go to college soon.

Meanwhile, 19-year old Jorge Noel Pajarito is no stranger to hard work. At 16, he worked with his father as a laborer-mason doing house construction in Patnongon town for which he earned a daily wage of PhP150 (US\$3.50). He completed his high school education in 2009 and worked at a local bakery for six months soon after to augment the family's income.

Through the Joint Programme, Jorge Noel completed training in Masonry NC I for 32 days in February 2012 and went through the mandatory on-the-job training at the Provincial Training Center where he learned proper measurement and finishing, among others. Today, Jorge Noel has a daily net income of PhP200 and helps his parents in



19-year old Jorge Noel Pajarito of Sibalom, Antique trained in Masonry at TESDA Antique and saw an increase in his income (Photo by ILO/ Roche Angon)

household expenses. He plans to upgrade his skill in masonry by enrolling in the Masonry NC II course and taking up engineering in college.

Lessons learned

The Joint Programme showed what could be accomplished if all stakeholders contribute their best to solving the problem of youth unemployment.

It is also acknowledged that it is crucial for young people to have access to local employment opportunities. With limited local enterprises to absorb all the new graduates, self-employment is seen as an option to promote youth employment. This is the reason why entrepreneurship as a career alternative is being pushed vigorously.

The earnest participation of the business sector is a positive sign of the potential for public-private partnership. The Yamaha Servicing Center in San Jose clearly demonstrates this. The owner of the enterprise is open to host the on-the-job training of the disadvantaged youth and perhaps gain employment later on in his enterprise. With the strong spirit of cooperation in Antique, there is every reason to hope that the goal of assuring decent work for young people everywhere in the province can be achieved. ☒ *Wilbert San Pedro and Roche Angon*

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Photo shows trainees in Masonry at the Provincial Training Center in Hamtic, Antique engaged in on-the-job training (Photo by ILO/ Roche Angon)