

Putting green jobs into action: Green Business Options

Addressing climate change through the creation of new businesses and new green jobs

Green Business Options (GBO) training scheme

The GBO training scheme is currently offered in China and Mongolia as part of the ILO Green Jobs Programme for Asia and the Pacific. The training enables potential entrepreneurs, particularly young people, to better understand and seize the business opportunities emerged through defining solutions for addressing climate change, inclusive and sustainable development, and employment issues. The GBO is an environment- and entrepreneurship-centred training module that provides learners methods and skills to develop feasible green business ideas.

Motivation, progress and next steps

Formally launched in China in April 2010, the GBO training programme engages youth in environmental protection and green jobs creation through introducing how to transform environmental awareness and motivations into environmentally friendly, economically viable, and socially just business ideas and plans. The GBO training focuses primarily on micro- and small-scale green business development.

- In the first pilot phase, training was delivered to thousands of young people in two provinces in China, under the sponsorship of the local labour bureaus through a dedicated government fund for entrepreneurship and green jobs creation.
- In the next phase, the GBO training is expanding into other marginal, ecologically vulnerable provinces by integrating environmental protection, social development, and knowledge and skills building into one training package that delivers multiple benefits for people, the environment, the local community, and society. The GBO training is also planned to take place in Mongolia.
- In the long term, the material will be revised for application in other countries, and the GBO programme will extend to more than 200 universities in China and integrate other potential groups, including migrant workers and former military officers.

The GBO is based on the ILO Start and Improve Your Business (SIYB) programme, a management training programme with a focus on starting and improving small businesses as a strategy for creating more and better employment in developing economies and economies in transition.



Yang Shumbo and colleagues during GBO training

CASE STUDY: Change is possible

Yang Shumbo, a third year electronic sciences student at Chengdu Vocational and Technical College, in southern China, has shown that even one person can make big changes to the way people consume energy through an innovative business idea on green light bulbs.

When taking part in the GBO training, Mr Yang realized that the consumption of energy-saving light bulbs has increased significantly over the past few years, and that energy efficiency has become a priority in China. After careful surveys and experiments, Mr Yang developed a controller that can reduce electricity consumption in LED light bulbs. "It's a business model intended to contribute to lighten the buildings with lower costs, no pollution, and longer lifecycle," said Mr Yang.

Together with two fellow students, Mr Yang established the Yu Chen Cheng Electronic Technology Ltd., supported by seed funding from his college. The college became the first pilot location for testing Mr Yang's system, which for now targets colleges and universities but envisions growth into the areas of interior illumination (home and commercial space), pedestrian lighting, and street advertising signs in large cities. Mr Yang intends to consolidate his business model over the next five years, then develop and improve the technology so that he can expand into south-west China in the following decade.

Operation of the Green Business Options

Dynamic and integrated green entrepreneurship training

How the GBO training is implemented

The GBO training can achieve the following benefits:

- Enhance trainees' awareness of environment protection
- Help trainees self-evaluate whether they fit to start a business
- Identify the green business idea the trainee suited the most
- Generate creative green business ideas
- Move into SIYB training module

What makes GBO different

The GBO is unique as it delivers multiple dividends that are environmental, social, and economical. More specifically, the GBO helps potential entrepreneurs to identify green business opportunities, select and use instruments to analyse the opportunities, and draw lessons learnt from real-world business case studies.

Follow-up services

Follow-up services help the trainees who have formed specific and feasible green business ideas go further, by tutoring the trainees to develop independent business plans, and consequently apply for possible loans, grants, and angel investments.

Monitoring and evaluation

During and after the GBO training course, the trainers collect data at every point of service, analyse and communicate the data findings to the training institution or department. All the monitoring and evaluation data is captured in a GBO training report after each course.

"Green innovation helps businesses stay at the cutting edge, retaining existing jobs and creating new ones."

ILO & UNEP Green Jobs Report 2008

"Addressing climate change requires a paradigm shift towards building a low-carbon society that offers substantial opportunities and ensures continued high growth and sustainable development, based on innovative technologies and more sustainable production and consumption and lifestyles, while ensuring a just transition of the workforce that creates decent work and quality jobs."

United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change – Conference of the Parties Cancun 2010



GBO trainers holding their certificates after the comprehensive training of trainers course in Beijing, 2010

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