



International
Labour
Organization

Youth-to-Youth fund: Improving work opportunities for young people in the Mano River Union

Over the past ten years sub-Saharan Africa has recorded the highest increase of the young working age population (34 per cent). Today, 200 million people are aged 15-24 in this region. Additionally, youth unemployment rates (which are on average 12 per cent) do not adequately describe the depth of the employment challenges for young women and men in Africa. According to ILO estimates, 72 per cent of the youth population in sub-Saharan Africa earns less than \$2 per day. As it stands, there are not enough jobs created to absorb the hundreds of thousands of young people who join the labour force every year. With every increase in the number of unemployed young people, there is a higher likelihood of conflict in a country, putting political stability at risk.

In 2010, in Guinea the situation was particularly alarming - GNI per capita was USD 360, compared to an average among low income countries in sub-Saharan Africa of USD 516, and an average across Sub-Saharan Africa as a whole of USD 1,175.

The Youth Employment Network (YEN) has a long history of working with youth organizations in developing countries. Though many of these organizations have viable and innovative ideas for youth employment related projects, many lack the financial or human capital to implement them.

FACTS AND FIGURES

Partners:

UNIDO; the World Bank (WB); the International Olympic Committee (IOC); Fonds de Consolidation de la Paix (FCO); A Ganar

Beneficiary Countries:

Guinea

Timeframe:

January 2010 – August 2011

Budget:

IOC -USD 100,000

WB - 129,000

UNIDO - 350,000

THE RESPONSE

Aimed at youth-led organizations in Guinea, the YEN, in collaboration with UNIDO, FCP, and the WB, launched a competitive grant scheme. The call was for innovative small-scale youth employment projects and supported youths to transition from being passive recipients to active participants in the creation of employment and the effects this can have on the promotion of peace. Successful applicants were awarded a grant of between USD 5,000 and 20,000 in tandem with the provision of capacity building assistance in order to support the project implementation.

In addition to assistance with project design, project management seminars, accounting and evaluation tools, monthly on-site visits, and peer review meetings, the Youth-to-Youth fund endowed beneficiaries with fundamental soft skills. By partnering with A Ganar and the IOC, the inclusion of the "Employability through Sports" curriculum was made possible.

This innovative curriculum utilizes football and employs a blend of field and classroom activities combining physical and intellectual elements to achieve meaningful results. By the end of the training course beneficiaries have been schooled in 6 key soft skills, resulting in increased employability.

The method is particularly useful when targeting - as YEN does - disadvantaged youths who come from difficult circumstances and have weak educational backgrounds. Indeed, research suggests that being involved in sport can equip young people with specific 'core' and 'soft' skills that play a crucial role in the success of entrepreneurs (Harvard University estimates that a person's level of achievement in their career is 80% determined by soft skills and only 20% by hard skills).

Partnerships and Field Support Department (PARDEV)

International Labour Organization
4, Route des Morillons
CH-1211 Geneva-22 – Switzerland

Tel: +41 22 799 7309

Fax: +41 22 799 6668

E-mail: ppp@ilo.org

www.ilo.org/ppp



"YEN's intervention to support job creation for youth in war-torn West Africa makes a sustainable investment to young people's futures. Youth are often the primary beneficiary of IOC programmes and we would like to do our best to ensure that youth have access to decent employment opportunities which will lead to better lives".

*Mr Thomas Sithole -
Director of International
Cooperation, IOC*



RESULTS

In total USD 245,877 was distributed across 16 projects (174 applications were received) in the form of grants. With the additional support of capacity building and sport the following results are estimated:

- The creation of 479 new sustainable decent jobs for youth in Guinea. The average increase in revenue for each beneficiary was expected to be 142 per cent.
- The establishment of 38 new cooperatives with an average expected annual profit of USD 2,042.

The estimated average grant contribution per new job created was USD 513; each will provide a person with a long-term sustainable income. Beyond income these jobs also provide individuals with a sense of well-being, increased social capital, dignity, independence and opportunities for personal growth. Furthermore, as a result of these 16 projects, communities will benefit from increased environmental protection and reforestation, new spaces for dialogue and discussion on youth issues, support against rural exodus, reduced dependence on imported vegetables, and added value to specific economic sectors such as red oil and kernel.

For example, one project established a radio station discussing various topics revolving around issues afflicting youth while another sees the promotion of youth employment through the mechanization of palm oil production.

A full list of the initiatives supported is available here:

<http://www.ilo.org/public/english/employment/yen/whatwedo/projects/y2y/guinea/winners.htm>

Integrated within, and integral to, the capacity building was the aspect of soft skills through sport funded by the IOC and implemented in partnership with A Ganar. As a result of this partnership element the following was achieved:

- The 'Employability through sport' course was adapted to the context in Guinea to ensure its effectiveness;
- Two trainers from A Ganar in Brazil extended training capacity to nine trainers from Guinea, thus equipping them with the required skills to train youth;
- 470 youths from Guinea completed the training and as a result improved their soft skills.

BENEFITS OF PARTNERING

With this partnership the IOC were supported towards meeting their social commitments. Furthermore, the approach of a competitive grant scheme fits well with the Olympic spirit of striving for high performance based on friendship, solidarity, and fair play.

The fund was expected to create 479 jobs and 38 cooperatives, thus addressing the Decent Work Agenda and MDG Target 1.B: Achieve full and productive employment and decent work for all, including women and young people.

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