



Youth employability

THE CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES



Internationaal

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Youth employability

THE CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES

Trade unions give young workers a voice

Employability. Sustainable employability. The desire to contribute and feel valued. Doing work that suits you. Feeling connected. Nice notions, indeed. However, many people in the western world - both young and old - find them to be in contrast with their reality. If this is true for us, how then is the situation elsewhere?

Youth unemployment is a serious issue in many countries. In Africa, for example, the formal economy offers very little work, resulting in a talent drain at this continent. It is easy to say that people should take responsibility for their employability and their career - but sometimes it is not even possible for them to start a career. This problem gets a lot of attention in our partner countries.

Together with its partner organisations all over the world, CNV Internationaal tries to promote access to decent work by engaging in the political dialogue on education, skills development, careers and internship programmes, for instance. This is an area in which trade unions and young people must cooperate, especially when it comes to the social dialogue with governments and employers. Trade unions can promote youth empowerment by convincing

Pre face

governments and employers of the importance and benefits of employability programmes.

This is why employability for young people and social dialogue are priorities in the new CNV Internationaal programme. In this themed booklet, we explain how we aim to give a voice to young workers worldwide. We want to support efforts to enhance their employability and assist young people in taking responsibility for their employability.

*Pieter de Vente,
CNV Internationaal Chairman
General Secretary of CNV*





Youth employability in five answers

WHAT DOES THE CHALLENGE OF YOUTH EMPLOYABILITY ENTAIL?

Many developing nations are struggling with high unemployment. Youths especially are having a hard time finding work. In addition, many countries are faced with a strong population growth, which contributes to the increasing number of unemployed young people. As a result, many youths are forced to resort to jobs in the informal economy, which typically come with low wages and poor working conditions. Other young people leave their country hoping to find (better) work elsewhere, or end up committing crimes. Such a start at the labour market is disastrous for the further career of young people. The entire situation poses a threat to the economic development of many countries. After all, young people are the future... but what if they are not there (any more) or do not get the opportunity to build that future?

WHAT IS YOUTH EMPLOYABILITY?

The concept of youth employability refers to the possibilities for young people to find and keep decent work: no temporary jobs, but employment in the formal sector on the basis of a (permanent) contract. To achieve this there have to be job opportunities, but young people must also be able to acquire the right skills for those jobs. In other words, finding employment and keeping it by remaining attractive for employers.

This themed booklet focuses on youth employability. By this, we mean the challenge for young people to participate fully on the labour market. Five clarifying questions and answers.

WHY IS YOUTH EMPLOYABILITY SUCH A BIG CHALLENGE?

Unemployment among young people is not simply caused by a lack of jobs. Many countries have job opportunities, but youths do not qualify because they lack the right knowledge and skills. Educational programmes often do not meet the demands of the labour market. Additionally, young people struggle to find job vacancies, let alone know what kind of jobs are available, and so make the wrong study choices. Lack of experience is another issue. Employers want experienced workers. But because young people are seldom given the opportunity to gain this experience, they are left out in the cold.

WHAT CAN TRADE UNIONS DO TO HELP SOLVE THE ISSUE?

Trade unions might not be able to create job opportunities themselves, but they can help boost the employability of young job seekers. They can lobby national governments and employers for better vocational training, internships and work experience placements. Furthermore, they can help the young people to organise themselves better, in order to give them a voice to defend their interests. Trade unions can also help equip the youths better in their search for employment, for example with job interview training and by telling them where to find vacancies.

WHAT CAN GOVERNMENTS AND EMPLOYERS DO?

National authorities can develop a policy aimed at youth employability and labour market reforms. Although many countries have some type of specific policy or targeted projects, they are often plagued by insufficient support from the relevant stakeholders (such as the business community) and inadequate budgets for the required investments. The result is that such plans and projects often fail prematurely. Employers can contribute by creating internships, and of course by giving young people a chance when they have a job opening. Finally, governments hold the key to better education.



Valter Nebuloni, ILO-YEP:

“Employability is critical for enabling young people to attain decent work and adapt to change, and for enabling enterprises to adopt new technologies and become more productive and sustainable”

Employability – and specifically youth employability – is one of the major topics the International Labour Organisation ILO is working on. Valter Nebuloni, Head of the Youth Employment Programme Unit of the ILO in Geneva, explains why it is such an important issue for the organisation. And what the ILO is doing to increase employability for young people.

The ILO promotes full and productive employment and decent work for all including young women and men. In reaction to the global youth employment crisis, the International Labour Conference in 2012 adopted a Resolution that provides a comprehensive

framework to make available more and better jobs for young people. This Resolution underlines the crucial role of education, training and skills development to enhance youth employability and facilitate school-to-work transition. In addition to knowledge development, advocacy and capacity-building activities, we have been involved in the development, implementation and evaluation of skills development programmes - including for the most vulnerable youth - in a vast number of countries in different regions.

Why is youth employability such a pressing problem for the world?

The analysis of current youth labour market trends reveals important deficits in terms of both job quantity and job quality, including youth unemployment, working poverty and labour market discouragement. Employability is critical for enabling young people

to attain decent work and adapt to change, and for enabling enterprises to adopt new technologies and become more productive and sustainable, which can in turn translate in improved employment prospects and working conditions.

The youth employability debate often focuses on job creation. Building a sustainable future through decent work for youth, is often put aside. What about the argument that ‘a job is better than no job’?

The ILO position in this respect is clearly specified in the Call for Action on youth employment, adopted by the International Labour Conference in 2012, stating that “Tackling youth unemployment should not disregard and weaken the protection to which young workers are entitled”. Youth employment policies and schemes should





reflect the relevant international labour standards and encourage the progressive transition to formality and from temporary to more stable jobs. Problems have raised in several countries in relation to unpaid internship programmes and other similar arrangements, particularly when they are used to evade the payment of applicable minimum wages. The ILO's Committee of Experts on the Application of Conventions and Recommendations (CEACR) has indicated that persons covered by apprenticeship or traineeship contracts should only be paid at a differentiated rate where they receive actual training during working hours at the workplace.

What is the role of social partners in contributing to a world where more young people have access to decent work? And what do you see as the specific role for trade unions?

The ILO considers social dialogue as an essential means to tackle the youth employment challenge. Social partners have a key role to play in the design, implementation and review of national employment policy frameworks and youth employment strategies and measures, including training and skills development interventions.

“Tackling youth unemployment should not disregard and weaken the protection to which young workers are entitled”

(ILO, The youth employment crisis: A call for action. Resolution and conclusions of the 101st Session of the International Labour Conference, 2012.)

Workers' organisations have a specific role in raising awareness about labour rights of young workers. By exercising their right to associate and to bargain collectively, young workers are able to effectively defend their social and economic interests and to negotiate acceptable conditions of employment, and to ensure that their voice is heard in the definition of public policies.

What can young people themselves do to change their future for the better?

Energy and motivation are among the essential ingredients for young people to transit from school to work and progress in their working lives. We would suggest them to have a proactive attitude in gathering a better understanding of the world of work, at early stages, ideally when they are still in school. Knowing what kind of jobs are available or will be on demand, and what kind of skills and knowledge are needed to succeed in those jobs, is crucial. For those who

are already working, it is important to get to know well their rights at work, and they should also be open to new opportunities for knowledge and skills upgrading, so to be properly equipped to adapt to change.

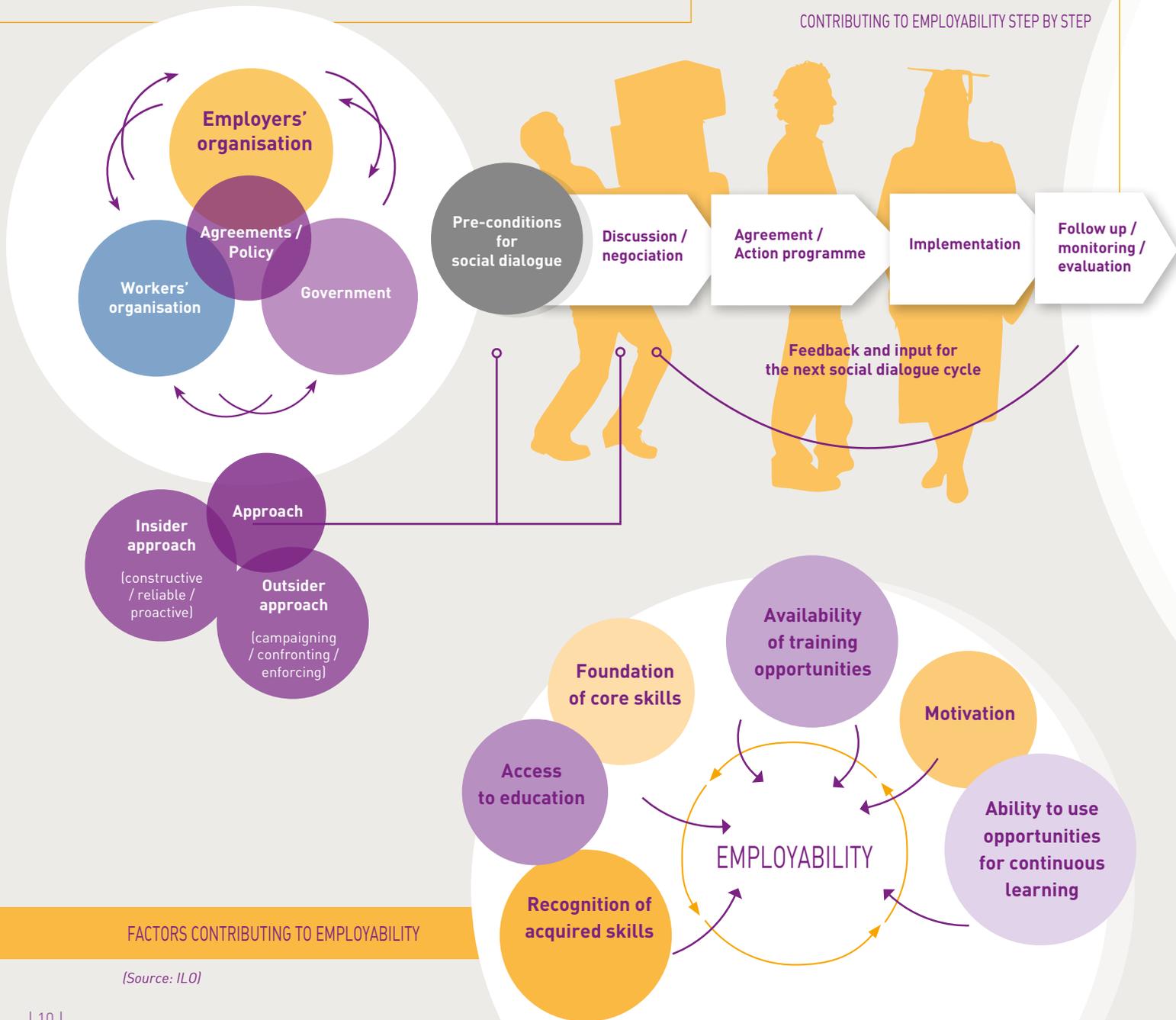
MORE ABOUT VALTER NEBULONI

Valter Nebuloni is Head of the Youth Employment Programme Unit (YEP) within the International Labour Organisation (ILO). The ILO is a unique tripartite United Nations agency which brings together government and employers' and workers' organisations. YEP conducts research, undertakes promotional activities and provides advisory and training services to support ILO constituents in their endeavours to promote decent jobs for young people.

Facts & figures

Social dialogue cycle

CONTRIBUTING TO EMPLOYABILITY STEP BY STEP

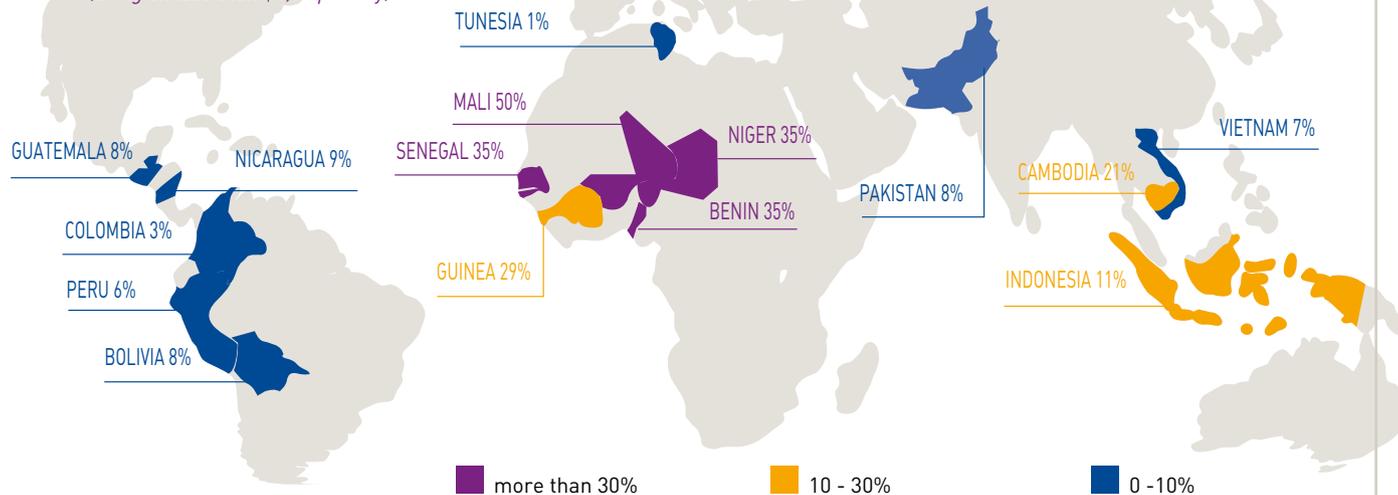


FACTORS CONTRIBUTING TO EMPLOYABILITY

[Source: ILO]

Extreme poverty amongst young workers (in partner countries of CNV Internationaal)

(living on less than \$1,90 per day)



(Source: ILO)

FACTORS AFFECTING THE EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITIES FOR YOUNG PEOPLE

THE MAIN ILO TREATIES ON YOUTH EMPLOYABILITY:



#168 PROMOTION OF EMPLOYMENT AND PROTECTION AGAINST UNEMPLOYMENT

More information:

www.ilo.org/dyn/normlex/en



#122 EMPLOYMENT POLICY

Migration

20% of the young adults aged 15-29 considered moving permanently to another country. In sub-Saharan Africa and Latin American countries, it's even 38%. Poverty and poor employment prospects are important reasons.

(Source: ILO, 2015)

Imbalanced development

The labour market imbalance is especially problematic in Africa. While the continent requires 24% of all medical assistance worldwide, only 2% of all physicians are established there. Africa also has only 35 engineers per 1 million inhabitants, whereas this ratio is 2457 per 1 million for the European Union, and 4103 per 1 million for the USA.

(Source: African Capacity Building Foundation, ACBF)

Youth employability

THE CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES



"I started working as a porter at the age of seven. It is a hard and dirty job, really not much fun. But I have to do this to support my mother financially. If I want to do something else, I would have to go to school. But we don't have money for that. My future has been decided: I will always be doing this work, unless my parents can afford to send me to school. But there is no chance of that."

– Hamsatou Mamane (17) from Niger

Trade unions and youth employability

Trade unions might not be able to create job opportunities themselves, but they help boost the employability of young job seekers in the labour market. One of the ways in which CNV Internationaal and its global partner organisations do this, is by promoting the topic with national authorities and employers. They also make sure that young people have a voice and are heard. And of course trade unions are uniquely suited to prepare young people for their search for work.

Trade unions are indispensable for the lobbying activities for youth employment and for the actual assistance of the youths in their search for (better) employment. That is why CNV Internationaal cooperates closely with trade unions in Africa, Latin America and Asia. These unions are very familiar with the local problems, know how to reach the young people, have good contacts and know the procedures. Together with its partner organisations, CNV Internationaal aims for young people currently working in the informal economy to switch to decent jobs in the formal economy. Terms of employment in the informal sector are often worse and there is little future in those jobs. The physical working conditions are often poor as well. CNV Internationaal would like to create better career opportunities for the youths who are already part of the formal sector, so that they can flourish in their career.

SETTING THE AGENDA

CNV and its partner organisations strive to put the challenges that young people face on the labour market on the agendas of the national governments and policy-makers. The trade unions also promote better education that meets the demands of the labour market. Currently, education that fits with the needs of the private sector and of the youths themselves is often lacking. This results in a mismatch between supply (young graduate job seekers) and demand (the labour market).

VOICE FOR YOUNG PEOPLE

CNV Internationaal also helps its partner organisations to develop activities aimed at recruiting more young members and to establish special youth committees. A broad support base with many young members means that young people have a voice at the table

in discussions with policy-makers and politicians. Moreover, CNV Internationaal provides its partner organisations with expertise on the challenges of youth employability and helps local trade unions to improve their negotiating skills, etc. In recent years, CNV Internationaal has contributed to job interview trainings, CV writing workshops, informal meeting sessions between employers and young job seekers and public campaigns that highlight the challenges for young people in finding decent work. The projects and activities, among others, have produced internships with employers.

COLLABORATION WITH CIVIL SOCIETY ORGANISATIONS

CNV Internationaal also values the collaboration with other civil society organisations, both in the Netherlands and in the countries with the biggest challenges in the field of youth employability. By cooperating with youth organisations for example, trade unions are able to reach youths who could previously not be reached. This results in a greater insight into the needs of young people and gives trade unions the chance to expand their support base by getting more young members. This cooperation and the

expansion of the member base enables trade unions to better represent young people and ensures that young adults are better heard in the world of politics and policy-making. Likewise, the youth organisations will be better able to help their 'target audience' with the knowledge and skills provided by the trade union movement. This will eventually lead to more successful employment searches and lasting employment.



"I cannot thank trade unions COSI and CNV Internationaal enough for the training they organised. It is an enormous help. I have been working as a housekeeper for more than 15 years but the poor working conditions have remained the same. My employers treat me like an inferior being, because I have no certificates. They refuse to pay me the wage I deserve based on the type of work I do. This training helps me to stand up for myself and to raise my voice to demand respect for my rights."

- Justine Houessou, participant in the vocational training organised by COSI. COSI developed this training for domestic workers with the support of CNV Internationaal



POSSIBILITIES FOR TRADE UNIONS

- Establish youth organisations and give a voice to young people in trade union policies
- Give young people the opportunity to develop themselves, provided they become active in the trade union movement
- Put the theme of youth unemployment on the national agenda
- Support young adults in their personal development
- Advise young adults during their job search
- Provide training on topics such as drafting a CV, practising job interviews, etc.
- Lobbying employers for more internships and professional training
- Lobbying governments for better education that meets the demands of the labour market and for internship placements with the government
- Supporting young people in starting their own businesses
- Supplying youths with useful information on topics such as labour rights, vacancies, labour market opportunities, etc.

[Source: CNV Internationaal partner consultation, 2015]

Good practices ■

LOAN FOR YOUNG ENTREPRENEURS IN HONDURAS

The trade union in Honduras supports young people with their application for a low-interest loan for starting their own business. This is something that would be virtually impossible without the help of the trade union. This scheme helped Felipe to establish his palm plantation, which is due to start making money in a few years. "If you have decent employment, you do not have to leave the country to improve your life," says Felipe. His attempt at leaving Honduras in the search for a better life elsewhere failed, and costed him vast amounts of money. "If I had invested in this plot of land earlier, I would not have had the debts that I have now. I won't leave my country in search of a better life again."



CLA-ARRANGED INTERNSHIPS IN SENEGAL

In Senegal, trade unions conclude agreements on internships for youths both directly with employers associations and government, and via collective labour agreements (CLAs). Partner organisation UDS managed to realise 86 new internship placements in the CLA negotiations in 2016 - 30 more than in the previous year!



TRAINING FOR YOUNG PEOPLE IN INDONESIA

CNV Internationaal and local partner organisation KSBSI trained Indonesian youths in the skills required on the labour market. The training was also designed to support young people during their job search. In simulated job interviews, the youths experienced what it is like to negotiate a labour contract. They also received information on how to seek financial support to establish their own business and on how to promote their products effectively. KSBSI's Sulistri: "The training sessions were very useful; the young people who participated have improved their chances of finding decent work. But perhaps more important: they have the hope that they will be able to find work."

BENIN: LOBBYING FOR INTERNSHIP PLACEMENTS

CNV Internationaal and partner organisation COSI organised a lobby session in Benin in 2016 to draw attention to the guidance of young people who are starting on the labour market. Representatives of employers and of microfinance institutes were invited, and the lobby session resulted in the employers' representatives promising to collaborate on internships at companies. Since then, COSI ensures the successful internship placements of young people.



Empowering Moldovan youths



Almost half of the Moldovan job seekers are young adults. Most youths do not know their rights, and are discriminated against on the labour market.

If they do have work, they are often exploited. In recent years, Moldovan trade union CNSM, NGO FACLIA and CNV Internationaal have been working together successfully to turn the tide.

CNSM, FACLIA and CNV Internationaal aim to empower the Moldovan youth and the Moldovan society. The partner organisations want the socio-economic situation of young people in the country to improve and that civil society organisations, youth organisations and the government stand up for the rights of young

people. The effort also targets the youths themselves: activities have been developed for them to be better prepared for the labour market and to learn to defend their rights. “We are working on the personal and professional competences of young people,” says Daniela Dirzu of FACLIA. “We also feel it is important to teach them their social and economic rights. In addition, we focus on the social dialogue by means of lobbying.”

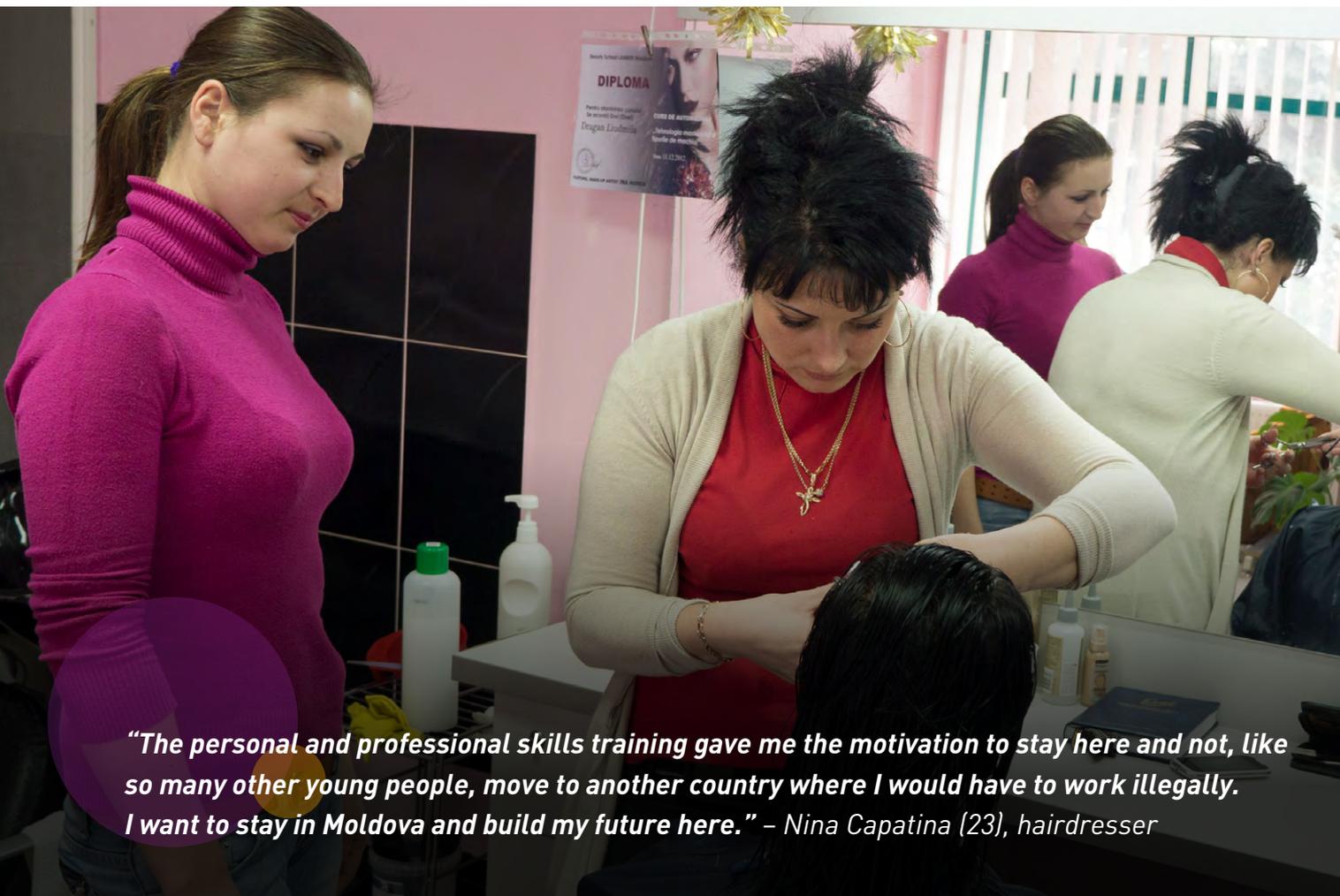
TOOL KITS, BOOKLETS AND RESEARCH

Thus far, this has resulted in a tool kit for young people, with practical advice on job seeking and how to draw up a CV, for example. After having conducted research, the partner organisations also published a booklet for employers explaining the advantages of hiring (and retaining) young employees. The partners also researched the

mismatch between education and the labour market in Moldova (as well as in many other countries). This resulted in recommendations for a better alignment of education and the labour market.

BROAD COOPERATION

In the project, CNV Internationaal, CNSM and FACLIA also work with committees consisting of representatives of employer organisations, the labour inspectorate, the ministries of youth, education and labour & social protection and of the young people themselves. They also cooperate with the so-called ROST network, which comprises 27 civil society organisations. With lobbying activities, the network strives to put the rights, opportunities and problems of young people on the agendas of local and national authorities.

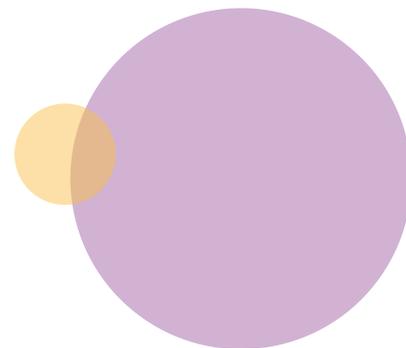


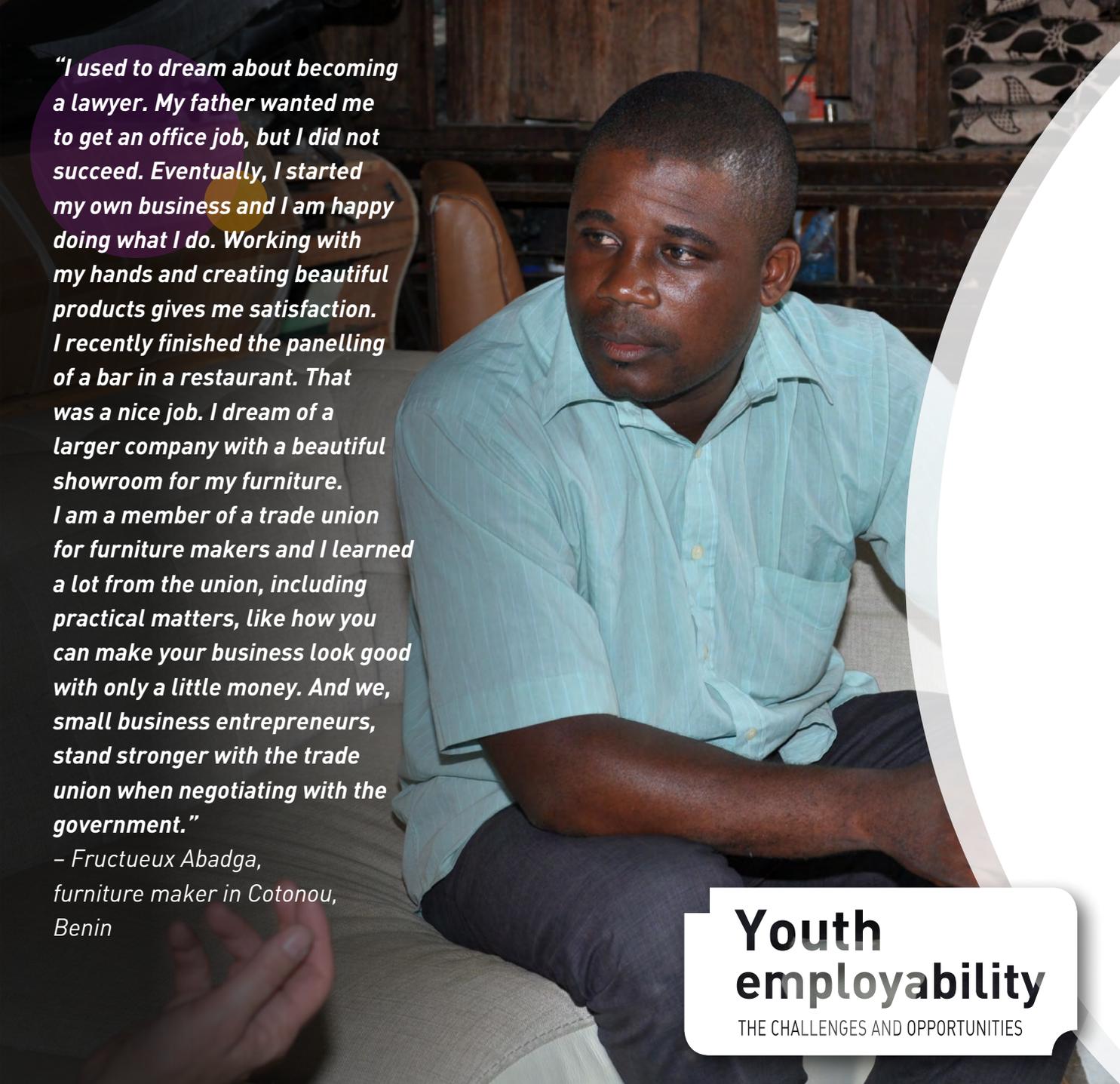
“The personal and professional skills training gave me the motivation to stay here and not, like so many other young people, move to another country where I would have to work illegally. I want to stay in Moldova and build my future here.” – Nina Capatina (23), hairdresser

CONCRETE FIGURES

In 2016 alone, 167 young people attended the job application training set up by CNSM and FACLIA. 40 young adults were given the opportunity to complete an internship. Ion Donea, head of the youth section of the Moldovan Ministry of Youth and Sports,

says the collaboration is very valuable: “It is important for us to work together to find a way in which we can give the best support to young people. Our lobby is also aimed at the wide-ranging interests of young adults.”



A young man with short dark hair, wearing a light blue button-down shirt and dark trousers, is sitting on a light-colored chair. He is looking off to the side with a thoughtful expression. The background is slightly blurred, showing what appears to be a workshop or a room with wooden elements and a patterned fabric.

“I used to dream about becoming a lawyer. My father wanted me to get an office job, but I did not succeed. Eventually, I started my own business and I am happy doing what I do. Working with my hands and creating beautiful products gives me satisfaction. I recently finished the panelling of a bar in a restaurant. That was a nice job. I dream of a larger company with a beautiful showroom for my furniture. I am a member of a trade union for furniture makers and I learned a lot from the union, including practical matters, like how you can make your business look good with only a little money. And we, small business entrepreneurs, stand stronger with the trade union when negotiating with the government.”

*– Fructueux Abadga,
furniture maker in Cotonou,
Benin*

Youth employability

THE CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES

Employers and youth employability



Many young adults do not succeed at getting a job. Many of CNV Internationaal's partner countries do not have sufficient employment for all job seekers, but there definitely are open vacancies. Unfortunately, young people often do not qualify. Various studies, including those commissioned by CNV Internationaal, show that one of the problems is the lack of experience. Another issue is the mismatch between the required level of education and/or skills by the labour market and the actual level and/or skills of the young jobseekers. While the employers are not the only factor causing this issue, they are in the position to do something about this.

WORK EXPERIENCE PLACEMENTS

Employers could start by offering work experience placements and internships in their organisations. This would enable young people to gain work experience while employers

get to see the opportunities and advantages young employees have to offer.

As to training and education, employers can play a part by training (young) employees themselves, for example by offering skills programmes and company training. Obviously, there is the risk that a young employee will start working elsewhere after completing the training, but agreements can be made on this. The trade unions can assist here as well. Another option is for employers (organisations) and trade unions to jointly lobby the government for improvement of the quality of educational programmes and the alignment of education and the labour market. CNV Internationaal is in favour of involving employers in the establishment of educational programmes so that students will study the knowledge and skills required on the labour market.

Employers are particularly well-positioned to give young people a position on the labour market. After all, the employers have and create job opportunities. Yet, this is easier said than done.

Semih Eski van CNV Jongeren:

“Youth unemployment is a global problem”



Semih Eski is the chairperson of CNV Jongeren, and is committed to the interests of young people in the Netherlands. “But”, he continues “we would like to share our expertise with youths, employers and authorities in other countries. Conversely, we can learn from the developments in other countries. The unemployment issue is a global problem.”

WHAT CAN CNV JONGEREN DO FOR YOUNG PEOPLE?

“In the Netherlands we teach the young people job market skills and we make sure that their points of view are heard when policy is made. We can also inform young people across the border, and train them in these skills. We are a trade union for young people and know them like no one else does. We talk with the youths and know what they want. We can deploy this knowledge to resolve the youth’s problems.”

WHY ARE YOU COMMITTED TO THIS?

“Young people are all born with the same dreams, but we don’t all have the same opportunities to realise those dreams. It is the fair distribution of wealth that inspires us.”

WHAT ARE THE ISSUES FOR YOUNG PEOPLE WORLDWIDE?

Young people cannot find work, are unable to develop themselves and therefore unable to start their lives. I recently spoke with a young, African trade union leader. He explained how young people who graduate join the queue of the unemployed, often at the age of 25. And then it takes another 10 years before they are next in line for a job. Imagine the problems for those who want to start a family and build their life. I am genuinely concerned about this.”

SO WHAT CAN CNV JONGEREN DO FOR THIS YOUNG TRADE UNION LEADER?

“We can help educate the youth of his nation in employee skills, but also in entrepreneurial skills. If permanent employment is not an option, starting

your own company can be an alternative. We can also help young people to find alternatives. If you cannot find a job, what other options are there? Doing something is better than doing nothing. And unemployed people can be tempted into crime. Once they head down that path, things will only get worse. We must stop that.”

WHAT COULD BE ARRANGED BETTER FOR YOUNG ADULTS?

“I have the impression that young adults often lose out. With all the interests represented at the negotiation table, those of young people are overlooked, simply because they are not represented themselves. People talk about the youths, not with the youths. I propose that there is at least one young adult present at any negotiation table. That is the only way to create the right solutions.”

WHAT ROLE DO YOU SEE FOR EMPLOYERS?

“In the Netherlands, we frequently meet with employers, but that does not happen enough in an international setting. It would be a good idea to discuss the challenges of the youth in an international context. You could in-

clude this in the negotiations on sector agreements regarding international corporate social responsibility or in trade missions.”

WHAT CAN CNV JONGEREN AND OTHER COUNTRIES LEARN FROM EACH OTHER?

“I do not claim that our ways are better than those in other countries - far from it! Here in the Netherlands we are not very good at organising large groups. Trade unions in other countries often succeed very well at this, but they lack the influence at the negotiation tables, whereas I meet with our Members of Parliament - that is something others could learn from us. It is all about finding synergy.”

WHAT ARE YOUR EXPECTATIONS FOR THE NEXT FIVE YEARS?

“I hope that within five years the issue gets just as much attention as climate change is getting today. Climate change is a global theme that affects future generations, but that is also true for the unemployment issue. The challenge for the coming years is to ensure that young people everywhere in the world have the same chances to fulfil their dreams.”

“Young people have the same dreams, but not the same opportunities to realise those dreams”

- Semih Eski

AND WHAT IS THE ROLE OF CNV JONGEREN HERE?

“We continue to share our knowledge, to inspire young people. We will continue giving workshops and talking with young adults about their dreams and their problems. The key question here is: How can we create solutions together? And the guiding principle will be not to talk about young people, but to talk with young people. Believe me, we work with young people all the time. And to the youths we say: ‘Try it! You will be amazed by your powers’.”

MORE ABOUT SEMIH ESKI

Semih Eski (27) is chairperson for CNV Jongeren. This youth organisation has 1,400 members and reaches thousands of youths daily via channels such as Facebook and Twitter.

More information: www.cnvjongeren.nl.

Evariste Glodijigbe:

**“I remain positive,
the situation is
slowly improving”** ■



Finding employment is a major challenge for young people in West Africa. And that includes those who are well-educated and highly motivated, like Evariste Glodijigbe (32) from Cotonou, the biggest city in Benin. His wife is due to give birth to their first child.

“I have a good education but so far, I have been unable to find work in my field. There aren’t many jobs available, even if you are qualified and skilled. It is virtually impossible without connections or paying bribes.”

SUBSTITUTE JOBS

“I have been working as a substitute geography teacher for years, and have been moving from one temporary job to the next. And even those are hard to come by without paying bribes – but I refuse to do that. The corruption will never stop as long as people keep paying bribes.”

AWAY ALL DAY

“I spend the whole day traversing the city, going from one school to the next. An hour of substitute work here, an hour there. All together I am usually away from home from early morning to late evening, whereas I can actually work only a few hours, because of traffic jams and travel time. It is frustrating not being able to find a permanent position.”

TRADE UNION CREATES IMPROVEMENTS

“But I am staying positive. I can see that the situation is slowly improving. That is partly due to trade unions such

as COSI. COSI is committed to better work for young people and to the fight against corruption. When people find out that you are a member of the trade union, they tend not to abuse you as much because they know the trade union can help you sue them.”

MY DREAM

“I want to complete a Master’s degree in management, as I still dream about a position in my field, namely water

management or ecology. They are hot topics in Benin, as many people do not have access to clean drinking water. Fortunately, we have a well for drinking water in the neighbourhood where I live. But in many areas, people have to use the rainwater that they collect themselves, with all the associated health risks.”

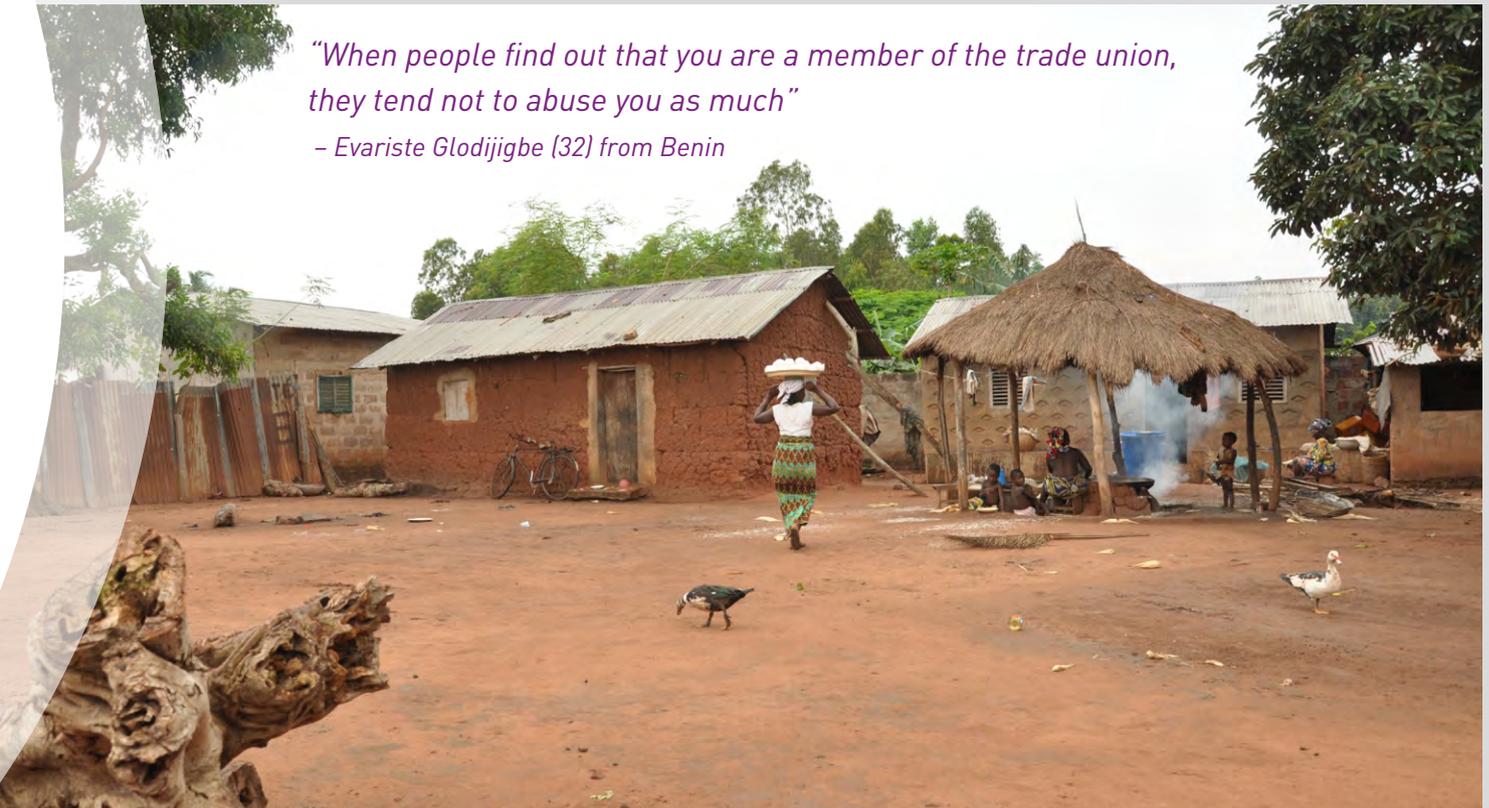
MY FUTURE IS HERE, IN BENIN

“Many young people try to leave to

find employment elsewhere. I won’t. We live in a tiny two-room house outside of the city. My wife and I are expecting our first child. We live in a quiet area and the rent is cheap. We made the choice to live close to my family. My father is getting older, and at times he is struggling to raise my younger brothers. I feel responsible for them. I want to be close to them to make sure they don’t end up making the wrong choices.”

“When people find out that you are a member of the trade union, they tend not to abuse you as much”

– Evariste Glodijigbe (32) from Benin



Governments and employability for youth



Governments make and implement policies. That puts public authorities in the driving seat when it comes to the employability of young people and access to decent work.

Governments have a big responsibility when it comes to decent work. The realisation of (access to) decent work is one of the four ILO pillars in the battle against poverty and for fair globalisation, as laid down in the Decent Work Agenda. Governments have an important role to play in the realisation of this agenda. For example, the employability of young people in the job market is closely related to education. Public authorities are responsible for education and edu-

cational programmes in their country, and if they were to ensure better education, young people would stand a better chance of success in the labour market.

MISMATCH

This need for a shift in focus to education is underpinned by results of the study by the African Capacity Building Foundation (ACBF), among other things. It appears that many young people in Africa choose a study for which there is no direct need in the labour market. Social and communication-oriented programmes are more popular than technical and sciences-based programmes, whereas there are more employment opportunities for graduates of the latter programmes than for those of the former. Hence, there is a mismatch between

the educational choices and the needs of the job market. In Africa, this leads to workers with the right skills and expertise being recruited from abroad. CNV Internationaal country studies also indicate that the quality of education in many countries is substandard. The teaching material is outdated or not geared to the knowledge and skills the private sector needs.

WORKING TOGETHER ON EDUCATION

Obviously, governments are not on their own when it comes to updating education and study programmes. Curricula and study programmes can be composed jointly by governments and the private sector. Internship programmes and other initiatives can be established in the same manner, to ensure better alignment with the labour market. Another option is to



develop initiatives to encourage young people to study (or keep studying), with a possible emphasis on certain programmes.

YOUTH AND LABOUR MARKET POLICIES

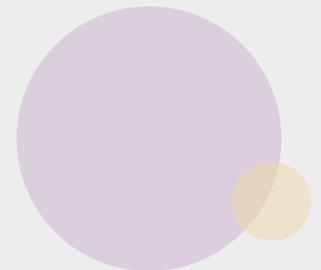
Besides education, authorities are also responsible for youth and labour market policies. Reforms in these two areas can create opportunities for youths in the job market. This could even involve reforming pension policies, because a generation of workers that retires opens up jobs for many young people. But reforms require that governments are willing to invest, such as in economic incentives to create more economic activities in areas with high (youth) unemployment. This could also include special projects to attract foreign investment. Authorities

can also invest in initiatives and programmes aimed at improving the chances of young adults in the job market. Lastly, investments are needed in social security, so that unemployed young people do not end up leading a life of crime, or are forced to leave the country to build a future elsewhere.

Here too, governments can work together with other parties. Trade unions - including the CNV Internationaal partner organisations - and youth organisations are happy to provide input. They can consult their support base and deploy their expertise on young adults. Additionally, trade unions and youth organisations have channels to communicate with young people, to give them information on the labour market and vacancies, for example.

ECONOMIC BENEFITS

Authorities will benefit from all these measures. For instance, decent work for the working population and young people in particular, will lead to lower unemployment. It will eventually even result in positive economic development. This is because education and training leads to better qualified staff that produces more and higher quality outputs, resulting in higher profit margins for companies. In this way, investments in education and youth and labour market policies are an important driver for positive economic results.



Mor Diop and Mamadou Laïty Senghor from Senegal:

“We succeed in making agreements with companies on internships”



“There are not many proper jobs in Senegal, not in the cities and even fewer in the remote villages. And when there are vacancies, they require a minimum of four years of experience. This makes it very hard for young people to find work,” explains **Mor Diop** from trade union **UDTS**. **Mor Diop and Mamadou Laïty Senghor** are members of the **UDTS youth committee** that **supports young Senegalese job seekers.**

“Most young people here go to school until the age of 18 or 20. Their education is very general; they do not learn a profession. This means their education is not very helpful when it comes to finding work,” says Mor Diop. That is why trade union UDTS decided to organise training and counselling for young adults to enable them to acquire the practical skills needed for a job. “We also try to put the problem of the mismatch between education and the labour market on the government agenda,” adds Mamadou Senghor. “The UDTS youth committee has been organising a summer camp around International Youth Day for a number of years. We also invite young people from trade unions in neighbouring countries.”

MEDIA ATTENTION

During the summer camp, lobbying and negotiating training sessions are held, experiences are exchanged and plans are made. “We also invite representatives of the government and the employer organisations. This year we were joined by the organisation for vocational education and various civil society organisations as well. Together with all stakeholders, we try to develop strategies for a better match of young people with the labour market. Mamadou Laïty Senghor proudly tells how this year, the summer camp was even broadcast live on television. “This media attention helps us get our proposals on the government agenda.”



MORE ABOUT MOR DIOP AND MAMADOU LAÏTY SENGHOR

Mor Diop is chairperson and Mamadou Laïty Senghor is a board member for external contacts of the national youth committee of Senegalese trade union UDTs. The Union Démocratique des Travailleurs du Sénégal is not the largest trade union in Senegal but has a leading role when it comes to strengthening the position of young adults. The young UDTs members are also very active at the regional level in Africa, where they play a connecting role.

POLITICAL ARENA

The UDTs has also been successful in providing ideas to the High Council for Social Dialogue in Senegal. Mamadou Senghor: “We are good at making contact with the relevant parties. We succeed in making agreements with companies on internships.”

Mamadou works for a company in the port. “We have made agreements in the port of Dakar, but also with transport company Bolloré and with the government. UDTs is not Senegal’s largest trade union, but we are the leading trade union for young people.”

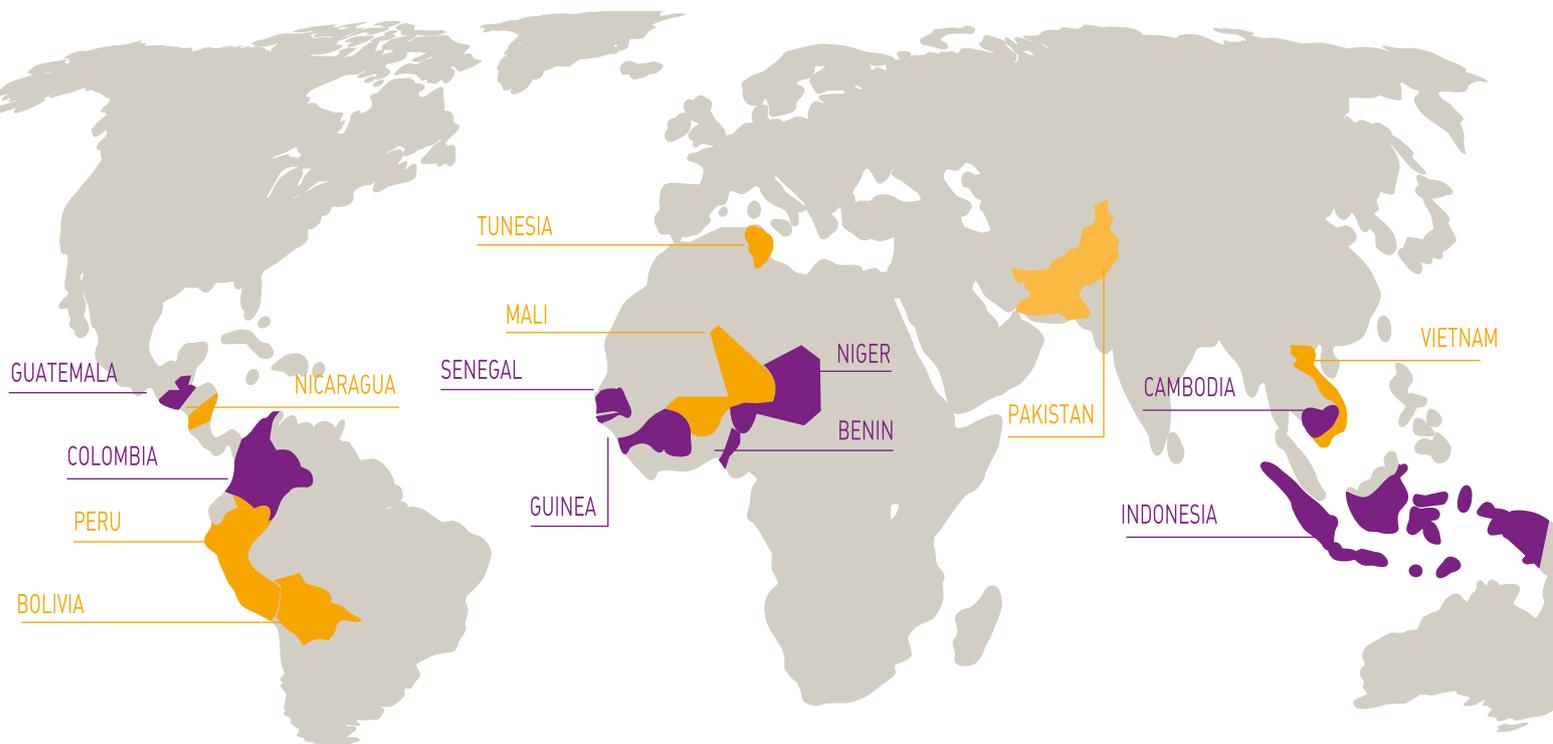


Trade union UDTs arranged an internship for Mariama Magdalène Djatta as a shop assistant at a Total filling station. She did well, and has been employed there for five years now. Today, she manages the shop.



Maguette Niang was given a place in a training class for civil servants with the help of trade union UDTs. She managed to secure a position with the government, where she has been working for five years now.

The future of CNV Internationaal



■ *Current partner countries: Benin, Cambodia, Colombia, Guatemala, Guinea, Indonesia, Niger, Senegal*

■ *New countries where cooperation is being explored: Bolivia, Mali, Nicaragua, Pakistan, Peru, Tunisia and Vietnam*

OUR WORK

The Foundation CNV Internationaal is a civil society organisation connected to the National Confederation of Christian Trade Unions in The Netherlands (CNV).

CNV Internationaal has been working with trade unions in developing countries for more than 50 years. Together with its partner organisations, CNV Internationaal protects and promotes workers' rights by means of a consultative and coherent model in which social dialogue, pluralism of the trade union movement and workers' individual responsibility are key values.

CNV Internationaal's mission is to contribute to Decent Work in developing countries through strengthening the position of workers in both the formal and informal economy, through strong social partners and by promoting sustainability throughout supply chains. In the Netherlands, CNV Internationaal – together with the CNV and CNV trade union federations – contributes to Decent Work in developing countries through lobbying, policy and raising awareness.

The work of CNV Internationaal is centred on the themes of social dialogue, labour rights in supply chains and (youth) employability.

COLOPHON

CNV Internationaal
P.O. Box 2475, NL 3500 GL Utrecht
The Netherlands
E: internationaal@cnv.nl

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Text: Frieda Tax

Photography: CNV Internationaal,
Nana Kofi Acqua, Symphorien Daghilo,
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Maarten Schuth

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www.cnvinternationaal.nl

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Facebook: [cnv.internationaal](https://www.facebook.com/cnv.internationaal)

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Youth employability

THE CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES

Many young people around the world are struggling to find decent work. Many youths who did manage to find work are working in a different field than what they were trained for, or work in the informal sector, such as selling food in the streets. Others end up leading a life of crime or they decide to move abroad in the hope of finding a better future.

This themed booklet discusses the challenges that young people face when they enter the labour market. The book is intended as a source of inspiration for trade unions, employers and governments to address these challenges. The goal is for young adults to get a decent job so they can build a sustainable future and a life without poverty.



Internationaal