

## **Brief summary for the INNOVATION FAIR**

# "Implementing the internationally agreed goals and commitments in regard to education" Palais des Nations, United Nations Office at Geneva, 4 -7 July 2011

## Approach/ tool/project

Working and Learning Together (WLT), Misa Mianatra Miaraka (MMM) in Malagasy

#### Description (methodology, techniques and strategies used)

WLT is an ATD Fourth World pilot project in which young people and adults living in extreme poverty are creating decent work opportunities, in partnership with businesses and other stakeholders.

It aims to involve the most disadvantaged citizens as project partners, incorporating aspects of both income generation schemes and intermediate labour market programmes. From July 2007 to June 2008, the project also included a research dimension, financed by the World Bank, to define the conditions needed for positive outcomes for its beneficiaries, in order for the model to be transferable.

In Madagascar, WLT has two components; 1) New Information and Communication Technologies (NICT) training for young people, and 2) a Traditional Crafts Co-operative.

For the Innovation Fair, we present the pedagogical approach used by the NICT, which is more relevant to the theme.

Literacy and education are common priorities for both the MDGs and the Education for All (EFA) initiative. However, Madagascar was considered "at serious risk" of not achieving the EFA goal, and to have a "low chance" of achieving the goal of universal primary education in 2006. Only 27% of children aged 11 to 14 attend secondary school. 9% of 15 to 18 year-olds are in school, and only 0.35% are enrolled in vocational training programmes. The WLT aims to improve the literacy of particularly disadvantaged youths, and to introduce them to information technology.

#### Implementation methodologies

• Acting as an intermediary between people living in extreme poverty and the private employment sector: The project aims to examine the conditions under which a business approach and a human rights based approach can be complementary, and not in opposition to one another. To this end, it was necessary to create common language and objectives between two worlds with very different cultures: defining the basis for a common project with partners took a year.

One of the components of the proposed project was to offer computer training to young people, given the employment opportunities available in this sector of the economy. However, computer training alone is not enough for young people living in extreme poverty to succeed in the job market. Therefore, the training covers more than an introduction to NICT. It includes literacy, social skills and appropriate professional behaviour, French lessons and individual mentoring.

ATD Fourth World facilitates the project, involving trainers with the necessary skills to manage Internet access and to introduce the young participants to NICT, as well as looking for additional financial partners for the overall project. Alcatel-Lucent<sup>2</sup> freely supplied broadband telecommunications equipment and helped to install the system. DTS<sup>3</sup> covered all the connection costs and provided expertise, notably by contributing to the training of young people and providing them with work placements within their company.

• NICT training and integration – a pedagogy of "Leaving No One Behind":

A major challenge was to create enabling conditions for the very disadvantaged young people, as they had to overcome many obstacles in order to master the use of computers and establish long-term personal objectives. In order to address these obstacles, a number of measures were put into place:

- Each trainee receives a bursary of between 1000 and 3000 Ariary (USD 0.50-1.50) per day in order to compensate for their lack of earnings as a result of their participation. Though very small, this bursary proved indispensable in preventing the young people from being forced to drop out.
- Special attention is given to ensuring that everyone is able to follow the training, by encouraging the young people to support one another (eg. fast learners help others to understand the lessons).

The person responsible for the training works closely with each young person and takes into account the reality of their daily lives, giving support and encouragement through home visits. A partnership with parents is established by the trainers and parents are regularly informed of progress in the training.

Equally important is that NICT training ensures the equal intake of men and women.

Education for All Global Monitoring Report 2006. Regional Overview, Sub-Saharan Africa http://www.unesco.org/education/GMR2006/full/africa\_eng.pdf.

<sup>2</sup> A major international telecommunications company

<sup>3</sup> Data Telecom Service (DTS), developer of the MOOV brand and market leader for internet services in Madagascar

#### What is innovative about this approach/tool/project

1) Reaching and working with most disadvantaged people to achieve internationally agreed goals:

WLT was launched in the context of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), the UN Global Compact, and the Education for All (EFA) initiative. It corresponds to the Madagascar Action Plan (MAP), the development strategy which the government of Madagascar and the UN system designed to meet the MDGs.

Vocational and educational development projects have difficulties in reaching people living in extreme poverty because of the multiple obstacles they face: severe financial constraints, lack of education, poor health, inadequate or remote housing and threats of eviction. In addition, the stigmatization and discrimination to which they are subject tends to create fear and distrust towards people from other sectors of society. These barriers have a mutually reinforcing impact and their duration over time severely compromises people's chances of regaining their rights and of reassuming their responsibilities by themselves in the foreseeable future.

The project is carried out in an area where the living conditions of much of the population remain among the harshest in Antananarivo. The neighbourhood has a bad reputation with no state health clinic and, until 1991, no public primary school<sup>4</sup>. The project has demonstrated that it is possible for disadvantaged young people with as little as three years of schooling to successfully master computer and other business skills, if the training is combined with literacy and a supportive environment, as described above.

#### 2) Working in partnership with businesses and beyond

This project represents a successful partnership between an NGO working at the grass-root level, and both an international and a national corporation, in providing training and work opportunities for a sector of the population that is often stigmatized by the general population as lazy, incompetent, or untrustworthy. The local company was willing to provide internships to young people who did not have the qualifications that they normally required.

### Evidence of results and impact

NICT training has developed a formal training programme for disadvantaged young people, and provides work placement links with businesses. Over a hundred young people have been provided with the skills to enable them to secure a sustainable livelihood. From 2007 until now, 66 of the participants have acquired one or more recognized certificates, such as in Office Applications, Desktop Publishing, and French, and have received an initiation to the workplace (1-16 weeks). 16 have had professional work experience (2-12 weeks), 15 have had a fixed-term contract and 3 now have a permanent contract.

Testimonies from the young people themselves show growing self-confidence, trust in their own capacity and respect for others. The success of their first internships with the local company, DTS, and then their work placement in a job was due to the computer skills as well as the social skills and appropriate professional attitudes that they had acquired through the training. The attendance rate in the course is high, reflecting their level of motivation and trust in the training and trainers.

DTS staff provided feedback on the collaboration internally and externally, and their Director of Human Relations presented the project to their Board of Directors, confirming his commitment to it. The staff were pleasantly surprised by the ability of the young people to integrate with the rest of the staff and to fulfil the tasks with which they were entrusted. The project demonstrates the importance for companies to develop employment policies based on the applicants' skills rather than on academic qualifications.

Because of the high unemployment rates in Madagascar, it will take time for all of the participants in NICT training to find decent work. However, this investment in people remains crucial in enabling them to obtain a sustainable livelihood. It entails a long-term commitment and an ongoing dialogue with beneficiaries as well as other relevant sectors of society.

# Costs associated with the development and implementation of the activity

The estimated cost for a four-year introductory training for 60 young people (3 terms of 20 young people) is approximately 57,000 EURO (1 Euro = Ar 2,800)

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Public primary school was built in 2005 by an NGO with Canadian financing. The school uniforms are provided by the US Embassy. In order for the children to be granted admittance to the school, parents must pay a contribution to the cost. A school pack is provided by the Fokontany, administrative subdivision in Madagascar.