



FONDATION
IMPACT HOPE

Skills development for school-leavers from disadvantaged areas to obtain well-paid and fulfilling jobs (Western Cape – South Africa)

Context

According to President Cyril Ramaphosa, “Six million young people out of work is a crisis for South Africa; our future workforce is not being educated, trained or employed. Compounding this, the longer people are out of work, the harder it is for them to re-enter the workforce... this makes our most grave and most pressing challenge to be youth unemployment.”

Long-Term Consequences of Unemployment are :

- Social alienation and depression

Unemployed people experience higher levels of stress-related anxiety, alienation and depression;

- Loss of social capital and skills being acquired

The unemployed must endure the stigma that comes with being out of work, and idle skills quickly lose relevance in an ever-evolving job market;

- Social problems

Areas in which high rates of unemployment exist, also experience increased homelessness, crime, drug use and gang activity;

- Increased difficulty of re-entering the job market

Studies show that the longer a person is unemployed, the less likely they are to find new work;

- Loss of tax money

Those who are unemployed are unable to contribute to infrastructure, healthcare and education;

- Loss of GDP

When consumers cannot afford goods, it contributes to lower spending and a lower output.

Brief summary of the project

The project addresses the IT skills shortage by using blended learning: a 6-month interactive course that combines lectures, online self-study and projects with a 6-month professional immersion in a company (paid internships). The intervention combines lessons in computer science, programming and computer graphics with personal/professional development training during the first 6 months. The young person is then oriented towards a practical internship in a company where he will be able to implement what he has learned and discover the reality of a professional job. Having already a foot in a company, he will have a better chance of being hired, as the internship is a kind of trial period. During this period, he will continue to be supported by the project team in his personal development.

There is an urgent need to create Innovative models to educate and equip youth for employment in areas of high demand and decent earnings (*fast*).

The Life Choices Academy programme began in 2017, with the goal of developing school-leavers' skills, so that they can obtain well-paid and fulfilling jobs. Each year, Life Choices Academy provides web development & programming bootcamps to 120 youth from low-income communities around Cape Town. We aim in a few years' time to have developed an evidence-based intervention that is self-sustained so the model becomes easily replicated in other parts of South Africa and Africa.

Specific objective and expected results

The specific objective of the project is to develop the skills of school leavers so that they can obtain well-paid and interesting jobs within a period of 12 months.

Result 1: Emotional intelligence and resilience of students are developed

Result 2: Students are well prepared for the world of work

Result 3: Basic professional skills are developed

Result 4: Students gained work experience and found employment

Activities

R1 Emotional Intelligence and Resilience

- Leadership training
- Personal Development Sessions
- Life Coaching Sessions

R2 Preparation for work

Training courses for the preparation of a professional curriculum

R3 Professional skills

Encoding and programming training

R4 Work Experience and Employment

- Students participate in interviews
- They are supported and prepared to carry out 6-month internships in companies.

Contribution of the project to real change

The official unemployment rate for youth aged 15-34 is very high (it is estimated that there are over 3,600,000 unemployed youth in Western Cape province). The percentage of young people in the first waves of training who find stable and well-paid jobs reaches 82%. A young person who works and generates income for himself and his family makes a significant change in the socio-economic environment of his community.

Location of the project

Cape Flats is the most populated area in the Western Cape Province. It is a peri-urban area of Cape Town. The area is made up of 22 communities with an estimated population of one million people.

Local partner

In 2005, the Salesian Life Choices project was launched in South Africa with a five-year Presidential AIDS grant. The project has developed an innovative methodology and has become a key player in the youth field.

Since its inception, Salesian Life Choices has worked in partnership with communities to find solutions to poverty and social problems.

The organization's goal is to create an enabling environment for young people to develop and flourish. The organization has gradually increased its capacity and now provides services to more than 20,000 people each year.

Salesian Life Choices aspires to contribute to the long-term transformation of society. This goal cannot be achieved without a collaborative effort with government, business and civil society. The project works in partnership with 12 high schools, colleges and universities.

Direct and indirect beneficiaries

Each year, 120 youth will direct benefit from the 12-month course. The participants will have finished high school and are not working full time. They need to be South Africans and non-white. A minimum of 90% percent of participants will come from previously disadvantaged communities around Cape Town's peri-urban areas. Applicants must be interested in a career in information technology and pass two tests - one technical and one for aptitude for coding. For the technical tests we aim to recruit learners scoring 80% and above, for the aptitude test learners should have Information Technology as one of their top 3 most suited careers.

The family of the students will benefit indirectly from the project. When young people begin to work and earn a consistent income they always support their families as they stay with them at home. The project could benefit in this way an extra 3-4 people per student (a minimum of 360-480 extra people).

Sustainability of the project

Salesian Life Choices invests time and resources in developing broad international support.

The project also involves private individuals. Campaigns will be carried out among alumni, parishes, schools and companies.

Annual costs are kept to a minimum and donations in kind are regularly received (paper, stationery, petrol, food, clinic materials, etc.).

In 2017, Salesian Life Choices established a monitoring and evaluation consulting firm to assist other non-profit organizations. This helps to generate some reserve funds.

This vocational training and preparation for the world of work is viable as long as students become financially and morally self-sufficient fairly quickly. Through their success, they attract other young people to this type of program.

Monitoring and evaluation

Staff collect monitoring data on a daily basis. These are entered by the M&E team into the database. The quality of data entry is checked once a month. Reports and dashboards are generated for both internal programme staff and external stakeholders. The internal report allows staff to see where they are in achieving their objectives and results.

An evaluation of the process or implementation is also carried out to determine whether programme activities are being implemented as planned. At the end of the year, observational data are analysed and reported on by the monitoring and evaluation team.

Evaluation results are shared with staff and partners through interactive presentations by the M&E team. This ensures that staff commitment and understanding of the results is ensured and that the findings are used for project management.