

Towards a better job matching for youth

“YouMatch” – A global initiative to improve the matching between demand and supply on the labour market for youth

The challenge: Bringing young people into employment

Bringing youth into employment is one of the central issues to be tackled worldwide, especially in countries with a high proportion of youth like in the MENA region (Middle East and North Africa) and in Sub-Saharan Africa.

Roughly one third of the world’s youth are unemployed, looking for work or they are discouraged and therefore inactive (NEET = not in employment, education or training). The unemployment rate of youth on average is twice as high as that of adults, with an even higher rate of unemployment among young women. In general, young people are more vulnerable in times of economic crises and are disadvantaged on the labour market because they have less working experience. The risk of losing their job is also significantly higher for youth than for adults.

Looking at labour markets, there are structural problems and a limited amount of decent and formal jobs on the one hand. On the other hand, the qualifications of youth often do not meet the requirements of the employers. Thus, vacant positions cannot be filled whereas at the same time a high number of young people do not find their way into employment. An important reason for this “mismatch” between labour demand and supply and likewise one cause for high unemployment rates among youth is the lack of effective job orientation and target group specific matching mechanisms on the labour market.

So far, a number of promising solutions for labour market services addressed to youth have already been developed in

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a number of countries in the focus regions. They bear significant potential for context-specific adaptation and sustainable implementation in other countries.

Our approach: Improving labour market services for youth

“YouMatch” focusses on the link between labour demand and supply with the key idea to improve job matching for youth. That way, the initiative addresses the challenge of bringing youth and especially young women into sustainable employment and offering them long term prospects through innovative solutions.

The particular emphasis of “YouMatch” is on the MENA region and Sub-Saharan Africa where youth unemployment respectively underemployment are the highest in the world. The initiative encourages and facilitates an ongoing regional and global dialogue on labour market services based on peer exchange. This dialogue includes the public and private sector as well as the civil society and youth themselves in order to identify solutions that really offer a potential for improvement.



Left: Kick-off Workshop
MENA, 14-16 October 2015

“YouMatch” offers stakeholders and practitioners from labour ministries, business associations, civil society organisations and employment promotion programmes the platform to discuss universal success factors of existing labour market services for young people. It helps to identify good examples, to further develop and implement innovative labour market solutions, to transfer adjusted models into different country contexts and to share lessons learnt. To support this process, a demand driven toolbox will be developed together with the participants on the platform.

Valuing existing knowledge and the experience of peers in both programme regions and beyond is crucial to achieve sustainable results. Throughout the process, expertise from international organisations and from countries which can provide good practices, e.g. Germany or other European countries, will be incorporated as and when required.

Results and recommendations of “YouMatch” will be shared on the platform of the global initiative and introduced in relevant discussions on the regional and global level.

The way forward: Teaming up for dialogue and knowledge sharing

In October 2015, the project “YouMatch” was launched in the MENA region. The kickoff marked the first step in an ongoing dialogue and was organised by GIZ in cooperation with the Union for the Mediterranean (UfM).

In a next step, priority areas for the further development and innovation of labour market services for youth are to be defined and stipulated on the political level in order to guarantee effective support and involvement.

For the first half of 2016, “YouMatch” plans to partner up with a key institution for Sub-Saharan Africa and facilitate a kickoff workshop for the region in order to build ties among the partner organisations and initiate the regional exchange.

Another milestone for “YouMatch” will be the launch of a virtual platform. The intended use of social media and mobile services corresponds with the purpose to develop innovative labour market solutions and address young people as the main target group and beneficiaries of these services.

Benefits of “YouMatch”

“YouMatch” creates added value by

- promoting innovative labour market services
- building on knowledge generated within the focus regions
- sharing good practices and lessons learnt
- increasing visibility of the own approach
- finding partners to advance on the adaptation and implementation of promising solutions

Following its global network approach, “YouMatch” builds equally on the experience of numerous practitioners in the focus regions and on the political support by key stakeholders.

Furthermore, “YouMatch” encourages young people to engage in the development and application of innovative matching services and to take their chance on the labour markets.

“YouMatch” is short for the *Global Initiative on Innovative Labour Market Services for Youth*.

“You” stands for youth, “Match” for the matching on the labour market. In a direct translation the project title says “You match!” as a key message to motivate young people who are looking for their place in the labour market. To offer young people long-term employment perspectives is the overall objective of the global initiative.

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