

**Youth Programs in Latin America. Assessment
Report.
Chile - Peru - Uruguay**

**Prepared for the ILO / CIDA / IDRC Initiative:
Building “Open Learning” Design & Assessments Tools for
Youth Livelihood and Enterprise Program**

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Executive Summary

Latin American and the Caribbean (LAC) have a unique development profile compared with other developing regions. Two main factors hamper development and equitable growth: inequality in the distribution of wealth and persistent poverty. Both lead to social exclusion, lack of opportunities, and human insecurity. These conditions affect the livelihood of the most vulnerable sectors of society, including children and youth.

Young men and women represent the larger proportion of the economically active population in LAC. However, they are severely limited in their employment and social mobility opportunities. A significant proportion of youth 15 -24 years of age live in poverty, have less than grade eight education, and lack relevant work skills suitable to rapidly changing labour markets.

Within the assessment framework developed for the project *Building “Open Learning” Design Tools for the More Effective Delivery of Youth Livelihood and Enterprise Policies & Programs* (ILO / CIDA / IDRC), this report reviews some efforts to enhance youth livelihood opportunities in LAC. It examines four youth programs: *Chile-Joven* in Chile; *PROJOVEN* and The Youth Patrols in Peru; and *PROJOVEN* in Uruguay. The review includes an examination of secondary data and analysis of direct interviews of key informants using the instrument designed by the project coordination, and translated and adapted to the conditions of the region.

The programs studied show a wide range of common characteristics and important differences in terms of government involvement, organization, reach, and resources available. They also offer relevant lessons for the assessment of initiatives intended to provide young people with job skills or to enhance their ability to seek self-employment and livelihood opportunities.

These experiences confirm that identifying innovations, promoting government commitment to youth issues, and developing public-private partnerships are critical. Equally important to success is raising awareness, facilitating civil society involvement, and ensuring coordination among actors working with youths.

A number of lessons can be drawn from the review. One important dimension of the current approaches is that governments are no longer the main actors in social welfare provision. The private sector, civil society organizations, and market institutions are playing a greater role in social service delivery. This also applies to youth livelihood initiatives. At the same time, the persistency and internal dynamics of youth unemployment problems show that despite their relative success micro approaches, interventions driven by governments alone, or sectoral interventions are not enough in themselves. There is a realization that the root causes of youth poverty, unemployment and exclusion are directly related to structural factors and not only to the availability of training mechanisms or the provision of remedial assistance.

Many factors seem to interact in making youth programs effective. The decentralization of public actions and the involvement of local governments add a new dimension. Adjustment policies, market liberalization, economic integration, and globalization impinge more directly on the

capacity of government, NGOs, and private sector actors to respond to the needs of youth. Youth themselves are becoming a more active political and social force. Comprehensive and complementary interventions are the avenues to address youth livelihood issues.

The review also shows that many areas could benefit from further attention. One of the weakest aspects is the lack of a systemic evaluation of what works, particularly for initiatives that are national in scope. The issue of resources, both human and financial, is central to the success of most programs, in terms of qualified human resources capable of working on cross-sectoral issues and with the capacity to generate and manage innovations. Availability of financial resources to make programs sustainable over time and allow them to achieve their objectives is a permanent concern. Dependency upon government funds alone could be as detrimental to long-term success as dependency upon international assistance or non-government sources. There is thus a need to diversify funding sources, develop expertise in revenue generation, and develop new forms of public-private partnerships.

Balancing remedial, responsive, pro-active and innovative approaches is an on-going challenge. In such a context, greater use of information and communication technologies (ICTs), for example, represent both a need, and a risk in that it creates the illusion of scope, while the reality is that these technologies are still unavailable to most people.

At a general level, and from the perspective of the assessment framework adopted for the study, what appears to have a stronger relevance in terms of goals, objectives, and general direction of the programs studied are the “higher level principles” (i.e., social, economic and youth focus), and the relationships among them. They determine the basic nature of the programs, their design, and their reach and impact. In a way, these “principles” define what these programs are and what they can become. The operational level “principles” are relevant to the extent that they are desirable aspects that impinge upon the program implementation. This may suggest the need for a careful re-assessment of the framework if it is to become a tool intended to respond to the needs of programs that operate under a wide range of circumstances, involving diverse actors, and responding to diverse cultural and social settings.

Acknowledgement

Research teams in each country carried out the gathering of information for the preparation of this report. Associates of the Social Development & Policy Group led the country teams. Dr. Sergio Martinic coordinated the data gathering process in Chile; Dr. Enrique Vasquez and Dr. Carlos Aramburu respectively coordinated the process in Peru; and Dr. Jorge Papadopoulos coordinated the data gathering in Uruguay. Dr. Mario Torres did the translation of the instrument.

Introduction

The Latin American and the Caribbean (LAC) region has a unique development profile compared with other developing areas. With differences among sub-regions and countries, two main factors hamper development and equitable growth: inequality in the distribution of wealth and persistent poverty. Both lead to social exclusion, lack of opportunities, and human insecurity. These conditions affect the most vulnerable sectors of society, including children and youth.

The region had a population of 519 million in the year 2000 which will rise to 631 million by 2015. Current estimates show that approximately 50% of the population is less than eighteen. Official unemployment rates remains high at 8.4% in 1998 compared to 5.1% in 1991. While the labour force grew 3.2% in the last decade; jobs increased only 2.9% per year. The earning gap between professional and technical workers and less skilled workers in low productivity jobs has widened by more than 4% per year. Wage differentials by age and gender remain unacceptably high. (Lusting and Arias, 2000)

Youth and women are often the most affected by poverty, unemployment, and exclusion, especially in urban areas. Youth in particular are severely limited in their livelihood and employment opportunities. A significant proportion of youth 15-24 years of age lack skills suitable to rapidly changing labour markets. This, in part, is due to poor quality and relevance of education and high dropout and repetition rates, as well as to a lack of job opportunities. Seeking to address these problems, countries across the region have undertaken the task of reforming their education and training systems, and developing more effective youth policies and programs.

The ILO Project

The International Labour Office (ILO), Small Enterprise Development Program, the Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA), and the International Development Research Centre (IDRC), launched the project *Building “Open Learning” Design Tools for the More Effective Delivery of Youth Livelihood and Enterprise Policies & Programs*. The project is expected to contribute to strengthening the UN Policy Network on Youth Employment.

The project includes the identification and profiling of innovative youth programs in Africa, Asia and Latin America. Studies have been carried out involving the application of an assessment framework designed by the project team. The objective is to distil information and knowledge about effective practices in youth livelihood and enterprise development initiatives.

According to its original design, the project aims to articulate knowledge generated by the studies and translate it “into guidelines and tools to support programs effectively to help young women and men generate viable livelihoods.” The studies also contribute to validating key concepts, principles, indicators, and critical factors in the project’s framework, as these relate to

successful innovations and to the development of supporting and enabling environments for effective youth livelihood programs.

This Report

This report is intended to complement the work carried out under the ILO / CIDA /IDRC project to date in Africa and Asia. It presents a review of selected youth programs in Latin America. Within the terms of reference for this activity, and in consultation with the project coordination, four programs were identified in three Latin American countries: Chile, Peru and Uruguay.

The selection of the programs was not intended to represent other initiatives that may exist across the region. The programs studied include *Chile-Joven* in Chile; *PROJOVEN* and The Youth Patrols in Peru; and *PROJOVEN* in Uruguay. They have characteristics relevant to the project framework in terms of mix of activities, target group, and lessons learned.

In each case, the review was based on the examination of secondary data and the application and analysis of direct interviews to key informants using the instrument designed by the project team, translated, and adapted to meet the conditions of the region. The key informants were selected to include members from the management and staff of the programs, and in one instance a member from the users. The gathering of information was carried out by research teams in each country, led by Associates of the *Social Development & Policy Group*. Dr. Sergio Martinic coordinated the data gathering process in Chile; Dr. Enrique Vasquez and Dr. Carlos Aramburu respectively coordinated the process in Peru; and Dr. Jorge Papadopoulos coordinated the data gathering in Uruguay. The translation of the instrument was done by Dr. Mario Torres.

This report presents a synthesis of findings based on the information collected. The report is not intended to provide an exhaustive examination of each program. Rather, it shows their relevance to the project assessment framework, keeping in mind that the project team originally developed the framework to assess the problematic in Africa and Asia. Considering the evolution and characteristics of youth programs in LAC, and the fact that there is extensive information already available about such experiences, the project coordinator agreed that the LAC could adapt the project framework to the conditions in the region.

The report presents, first, an overview of the LAC development environment in terms of the poverty and inequality factors that most directly affect the youth population. It also looks at some trends in addressing youth needs and demands as these help to understand the tendencies that can be observed in the region in terms of policies and programs. The main body of the report presents a synthesis and analysis of the findings and examines the factors helping or impeding the effective implementation of youth programs oriented to creating livelihood opportunities. The report concludes by identifying lessons learned and by suggesting areas in need of further research and action.

1. Setting the Context. Youth and Poverty in Latin America

Evidence the world over shows that creating an enabling environment and widening the range of opportunities available to young people have a positive impact on economic growth and poverty reduction. Equally important to reducing poverty are measures to strengthen equity and the capacity of social systems and services to better contribute to strengthening productive skills, raising levels of education, and helping youth socialization. (Gallart, 1994, 1995; Gitahy, 1994)

Identifying innovations, promoting government political commitment to youth issues, raising awareness, developing public-private partnerships, facilitating civil society involvement, and ensuring the coordination of the actors working with youth are added ingredients to enhancing the productive role of the younger population in economic growth. Building individual and institutional capacities among this population, fostering informed participation, and empowering young people are central strategic dimensions to put in place social and youth policies, programs and innovations. Nowhere is this more the case than in LAC.

1.1 Poverty. A Disabling Environment

Comparatively, LAC shows better economic performance than other developing regions. This, however, can be misleading. Growth in the region is marked by instability and recurrent volatility that slowed economic recovery at the end of the 1990s. High external debt, dependency on foreign investments and fluctuations in international capital flows are obstacles to reallocating resources and responding to the demands of particular social sectors.

In fact conditions of inequity are more extremes than in Africa or Asia. In absolute terms, more than 210 million people in the region are poor. Poverty in LAC is increasingly urban in nature as 65% of the poor are city dwellers. Poverty is a direct outcome of unequal income distribution. The ratio of income share in LAC is 46 to 1 when the richest 10% of households are matched to the poorest 10%. This is twice the next highest ratio of 24 to 1 in Sub-Saharan Africa and three times the rate of 15 to 1 in industrial countries. Between 1980-98, annual per capita GDP fell by 4% or more in more than forty episodes. In this context, the poor in Latin America are poorer than in any other region in the world. At the end of the 1990s, 17% of the region's households were living in extreme poverty. (CEPAL,1999:11)

Since 1998, regional economic trends have raised new concerns. In more than a decade, LAC faced a falling regional GDP. International volatility in finance and trade resulted in a descending average growth rate from 5.4% in 1997 to 2.1% in 1998 and zero in 1999, with a small improvement in 2000. Still, however, the region faces low export prices; growing current account deficits; falling short-term capital inflows, and rising unemployment. These effects are compounded in parts of the region by the impact of natural disasters (i.e., Central America) and growing rural-urban disparities. (IADB, 1997)

Because persistent poverty profoundly affects young people's chances of survival, there is a growing awareness that reducing poverty must begin by developing entrepreneurial skills at the

individual level as a base for economic growth at the macro level. Young people between the ages of 15-24 represent close to a quarter of the labour force in the region. However, the fragile economic environment is likely to continue making increasingly important the identification and replication of innovations that could contribute to expanded youth livelihood opportunities. (Gajardo and Milos, 1999; Jacinto and Gallart, 1998)

1.2 Poverty and the Lack of Opportunities

Young people under the age of 25 in LAC comprise the vast majority of the population, representing the largest proportion of the economically active population. A critical manifestation of poverty, however, is the lack of employment. Open unemployment affects more than 16% of those who are economically active overall, and employment in the informal sector of the economy is as high as 65% of non-farm workers in some countries.

The most perverse effects of this situation fall on the groups most at risk, in particular poor women, children and youth. Most of those living under the poverty line or under extreme poverty are youth. They are also the most affected by the lack of job opportunities, under-employment, lack of education, and risks of HIV/AIDS, drug consumption, prostitution, forced labour, and violence (CELADE / CEPAL, 2000; IADB, 1997). The present political economy of the region shows that traditional solutions focussing only on the macroeconomic levers of development are unlikely to bring the changes needed. (World Bank, 2001)

There are also important differences in terms of the type of jobs available to young people compared with the labour force as a whole. Youth employment in LAC tends to concentrate in commerce and services, and in the manufacturing sector, reaching up to 70% in some countries. In low-productivity urban sectors, young workers account for between 14% and 25% of the total workforce. Young people are also less successful in finding jobs than the rest of the labour force. The rate of unemployment of the active population between 15-24 years of age represents more than half of all unemployment in the urban areas. In 1997, this group accounted for up to 60% of unemployment in some countries. (ECLA / CEPAL, 1999)

Youth face unemployment because of a combination of factors. Among the most pressing is social exclusion, the small size of labour markets, and inadequate preparation by traditional educational systems for either wage employment or entrepreneurship (Rodgers et al., 1995). The educational profile of unemployed youth in LAC has been rising. In some instances, more than half have completed eight or more years of schooling. Young males from low-income families, with no employment prospects, are more likely to resort to crime, violence, and drug use.

A significant number of young people are seeking neither work nor going to school, discouraged after unsuccessful job searches. Often this leads them to securing income outside the labour market thereby becoming closely associated with the phenomena of urban marginality and illegal activities. (ECLA / CEPAL, 1999) The lack of job opportunities and unstable jobs for young people contribute to this phenomenon. On average, the duration of youth employment tends to be less than six months creating a highly dynamic situation.

The impact of these factors on the youth poor and on the institutional, political and productive capacity of the LAC countries adds to the structural problems leading to poverty and inequality. These include changes in traditional production patterns to meet the speed of globalization; segmented labour markets and an expanding informal sector; fragile democratic institutions and the lack of participation and citizens' rights; and patterns of discrimination based on class, gender and ethnicity.

1.3 Emerging New Efforts

Important steps are being taken to improving youth conditions and expanding their economic opportunities. Governments are making efforts to reform education systems. The 1990s saw increased political attention and investments to improving quality and relevance of education, teacher training, school facilities, technical-vocational training, and learning standards. However, across LAC, low student achievements, repetition and dropout continue to be leading factors negatively affecting those going through the school system.

There are also important efforts to design youth policies and national youth programs that are more comprehensive in nature, better targeted to those most in need, and based on expanded public-private partnerships. Despite these efforts, however, two related issues represent pressing concerns.

First, most countries have witnessed profound transformations in the organization of their labour markets and in the relations of production due to economic globalization and technological change. These changes directly affect the role of education and training systems, the demands for specific qualifications, and the type of employment opportunities available to those entering the world of work. Second, the conditions of social exclusion that most severely affect the younger generation often result in early school dropout. Youths leave schools with traditional or no problem-solving skills, and little understanding of a knowledge-based economy or a technology-based work environment. They often lack understanding of the operations of the private sector, or of how to respond to entrepreneurial opportunities that could lead to self-employment. These place added pressures on governments and civil society organizations to implement social programs that are holistic and sustainable.

As a result, new forms of partnership are emerging between governments, non-governmental organizations (NGOs), and the private sector. These actors now more readily recognize the challenges that youth exclusion poses for future economic and social development, and the great risks the region is likely to face because of a "lost generation". The responses, however, tend to emphasize public policy changes or one-time micro project approaches that are not sufficient to address the magnitude of the problem.

Increasing government participation in these efforts in many LAC countries is an important dimension. In many instances, government involvement has assisted in creating an overall environment of supportive policies and improved social sector systems (i.e., educational and

health). On other occasions, however, government interventions have created dependencies on limited public funding rather than opening opportunities to maximize the levels of technical or financial support from the private sector. The scale of government interventions is an important factor to consider when examining the successes and failures of programs designed to create livelihood opportunities for youth.

Equally mixed is the role of NGOs. Although there have been cases of great success, the impact of NGOs is often limited by their micro approach. They have a limited human and financial capacity to broaden their reach, and a lack of resources generally inhibits their ability to make their intervention sustainable over time.

Corporations and other private sector organizations are increasingly recognizing the need to intervene more directly, guided by philanthropic and self-interest concerns. Their contributions have made significant differences by improving training and opening opportunities for the larger pool of unskilled, unemployed youth. However, they have often encountered difficulties in generating avenues for practical, long-term collaboration with other sectors, and in at times have been severely affected by economic downturns.

An aspect that is receiving increasing attention, both at the policy and program level, is the realization that youth issues cut across traditional sectoral concerns (i.e., education, health, employment), and specific problem areas (i.e., poverty, social exclusion, drugs, violence). This is forcing government, private sector and civil society actors to look for more integrative approaches to addressing youth problems in a comprehensive manner.

2. The Programs under Study

The cases selected for this review in the LAC region include four youth programs in three countries: Chile, Peru and Uruguay. The selected programs are: *Chile-Joven* in Chile, *PROJOVEN* and *Youth Patrols* in Peru, and *PROJOVEN* in Uruguay.

In each case, the review was based on the analysis of available information and direct interviews with key informants (see Annex I) using the instrument designed by the project team and adapted to the region. This section presents an overview of different aspects of each of these programs.

2.1 The Chile Joven Program

2.1.1 Overview

The *Chile Joven Program* was created in 1991 to provide poor and out-of-school youth with skill development training and support for their integration into the labour market. Over the past ten years, the Program has trained 164,296 young people (61.2% males and 38.8% females).

The Program was created at a time when Chile was going through important transformations after an extended period under a military government, and profound structural social and economic reforms. Under the new democratic government, there was a shift in the understanding of the social role of the state which up to that point had reduced its social interventions. Democracy brought renewed efforts to re-integrate into the society those sectors that had remained excluded from the modernization process the country was undergoing since the mid 1980s.

These efforts translated into a number of initiatives to put into place policies and programs that could, on a larger scale, address the need for improving the country's competitive capacity through training, development of micro-enterprises, and job creation at all levels. A key consideration was the importance of developing and training new cadres of human resources as a means to enter a process of economic transformation balanced by social equity.

From a policy perspective, the Program corresponds to the government's attempts to framing public policies in a context of improved social equity by targeting the most vulnerable sectors. In this light, *Chile Joven* follows a government poverty reduction and equalization of opportunities strategy. The Program assumes that the conditions of poverty and inequality impacting on the poorest sectors of the society can be changed by giving special attention to the needs of the younger generation demanding job training and work experience as a means to expand their livelihood opportunities.

2.1.2 Objective and Structure

The objective of *Chile Joven* is to increase the opportunities for the integration of youth, primarily 18-24 years of age, into the labour market through skills development, training in specific trades, and on-the-job experience. It is focussed on youth from low-income families, outside the formal education system, and facing obstacles in their social and economic integration. The aim is to facilitate young people's access to the labour market or to jobs requiring higher qualifications.

The Program falls under the overall responsibility of the Ministry of Labour and Social Protection. Institutionally, it is organized around a Coordination Committee responsible for the executing agencies; an Analysis and Evaluation Committee overseeing the technical implementation, and the Executing Agencies responsible for administration and implementation. In its original phase, these included the National Service for Training and Employment, the Ministry of Planning and Cooperation, and the Solidarity and Social Investment Fund. In the second phase, the Ministry of Education was added to this group. These administrative and executing bodies operate through external public and private organizations offering the actual training through courses, and enterprises providing youth with job placements and practical work experience.

The courses comprising the formal training are delivered by a wide range of specialized training organizations that participate in an open tender system to become involved in the Program. They are selected based on criteria such as institutional capacity, technical quality, type of on-the-job experience they offer, and cost per student. Each institution is paid according to the number of participants they train and penalized in cases of dropout or failure. For the participants, the courses are free of charge and they receive financial assistance and accident insurance. Upon completion, successful participants receive a diploma accrediting their qualifications.

2.1.3 Coverage and Operations

The Program serves poor and disadvantaged youth between 18-24 years, both men and women, although in some specialties age can range between 16-30 years of age. The primary targets are individuals rather than organized youth groups. Geographically, it covers all regions of the country.

Family, social and economic factors often affect the youth sectors targeted by the Program and contribute to their vulnerability. This in turn has a direct impact on the “social resources” available to them in terms of community networks and relations of trust. Their “social capital” is low. This has direct implications on the self-esteem of these young people and on the perceptions and attitudes that exist toward them at different levels of society, and ultimately on the type of resources and opportunities available to them.

The Program is divided into four different sub-systems: “training and on-the-job experience in enterprises”; “training through alternate learning”; “training for independent work”; and “skills development and training for youth”. Each is oriented to respond to specific needs. The first three are administered by the National Service for Training and Employment (SENCE), while the Solidarity and Social Investment Fund administer the fourth.

The “training and on-the-job experience in enterprises” sub-program provides youths with training for formal employment with middle level qualifications through an elective curriculum of 200-250 hours, and a period of up to three months of on-the-job experience. Under this sub-program participants receive assistance to cover the costs of the course, meals, and transportation for the duration of the training.

The “training through alternate learning” sub-program trains youths for formal employment through a mix of training and work for those with some type of employment. Participants receive financial assistance to cover the costs of training and up to 40% of the participant’s salary, with the employer financing the other 60%.

The “training for independent work” sub-program prepares youths to work independently as self-employed, as part of a micro-enterprise alone or in association with others. The participants receive formal training, and assistance in the design and implementation of a project for independent work in a micro-enterprise. The Program covers the costs of training and participants receive financial assistance for meals and transportation.

The “skills development and training for youth” sub-program is directly oriented to service poor youth at risk. The curriculum includes 200-300 hours of training which combine skills development and rehabilitation, plus three months of on-the-job practice in an enterprise.

In each sub-program, they expose participants to three different learning modalities: a) skill development and training which develops the participant’s attitudes toward work and skills for specific occupations; b) practice on the job through local enterprises near where the participant resides; and c) follow-up which includes counselling to facilitate integration into the labour market after the participants have completed the training.

Given the scope and reach of the Programs, various mechanisms have been put in place for the evaluation of activities and the follow-up of users. These include a data base, extensive use of information and communication technologies (ICTs), and a team of Supervisors who, working in the field, contribute to overseeing the implementation of the Program by the training organizations and help to maintain performance and quality standards.

2.1.4 Financial and Human Resources

Now in its second phase, the Program is funded entirely by the government. This includes the costs of implementation and the costs of the human resources assigned to the Technical Secretariat of the Coordination Committee and to the Coordination Units of the Administrative and Executing Agencies.

The Program is led by a National Coordinator who works in collaboration with one regional supervisor in each of the thirteen regions of the country; a team of evaluators responsible for assessing the proposals submitted by training organizations interested in delivering the Program; and one person responsible for monitoring and management support. A support group comprising finances and support personnel complements this team.

2.1.5 Evolution and Innovations

Over its ten years in existence, the Program has been introduced in two phases. The current second phase, which is more decentralized, has moved toward institutionalizing the Program and securing its funding by making it part of the national budget.

Paying attention to the demands from this sector for qualified workers and developing more extensive networks of contacts have also strengthened the links with the private sector. The Program also improved its incentive system as a means to attract youth, reduce drop-out, and facilitate the integration of the youths into the world of work.

Perhaps one of the most marked innovations of the second phase is the use of ICTs. These include a database with information about the Program in general, the courses, and its

implementation. Software has also been developed to assist in the administration of social programs that generate the information for the data base, help in the allocation of resources, and facilitate monitoring.

Internet is used to reach users, produce and disseminate information, and maintain communications with a network of participant institutions across the country and internationally. A CD-Rom with instructions has been developed that young people can use to access job opportunities on line.

2.1.6 Lessons Learned

In general, the Program had considerable success as a model to reach poor, unskilled, unemployed youth as well as in its approach to bring different sectors of the society together around the issue of youth unemployment. In several instances, the Program has been used as a “model” for other similar programs by other countries in LAC. At the same time, however, several lessons have been learned thus far regarding areas that need improvement.

Youth unemployment in the country continues to persist. To many, this shows that the root causes of youth poverty, unemployment and exclusion are directly related to structural factors and not only to the availability of training mechanisms. Factors such as the characteristics of a changing labour market, the attitude of employers, financing opportunities; and the social conditions affecting youth in poverty are all contributing factors.

There is a growing consensus that addressing effectively the issue of youth unemployment and creating sustainable livelihood opportunities requires approaches that are more comprehensive and complementary interventions. These must take into account the on-going changes in the labour market, the attitudes and flexibility of the private sector toward young workers, the capacity of training institutions, and the understanding of the dynamics of the informal social networks to which young people belong.

The issue of resources available to young people is also critical. In many instances youths are considered a “high risk” sector thus limiting the initiatives and opportunities they have in terms of self-employment and entrepreneurship. Attempts to open opportunities for micro enterprise development, for example, have encountered obstacles due to the lack of private sector confidence and a lack of access to credit, particularly for the younger segment of the target group.

The institutional structure of the Program and the fact that it depends financially on the national budget permits the standardization and monitoring of activities across the country and enables the Program to reach a wide range of the youth population in need. At the same time, this approach limits both the flexibility to respond to rapidly changing conditions in the labour market, and the capacity to better target specific sectors or communities that may be affected by cyclical local unemployment.

The increased reliance on ICTs as a means to make the Program more effective has positive effects in facilitating administration and delivery, and in maintaining up-to-date information on users. It also assists in developing indicators of achievement to assess the performance of the training organizations. However, the use of ICTs has brought about some new obstacles. The most disadvantaged sector of the youth population has limited or no access to these technologies. This limits the effectiveness of the Program in reaching these groups, and transferring technologies, materials, and tools to the participants.

The experience over the years has brought about important changes in the perceptions toward youth development among organizations in the public and private sector as well as among training organizations. The Program has contributed to enhancing the understanding about the importance of skills development and training for youth without work experience, from poor sectors, or with difficulties in obtaining employment. The Program has also contributed to creating a more flexible environment toward youth in terms of job opportunities.

2.2 The PROJOVEN-Peru Program

2.2.1 Overview

During the 1990s, Peru implemented a series of structural reforms to stabilize its economy. The most radical was the liberalization of the labour market. One social cost related to these changes was the loss of employment for a number of workers. In fact, only few benefited from increased job opportunities. The most affected were poor or extremely poor youth between 16-24 years of age. Their low levels of education, health and nutrition severely affected their competitiveness and hiring opportunities.

The PROJOVEN Program was created in 1996 with an US\$1.5 million loan from the Inter-American Development Bank (IADB). The loan funded the design of the Program and a pilot plan. This first stage had a per capita cost of US\$ 750 and benefited more than 1,500 youth in the cities of Lima (the capital) and Callao. The Program emerged as an institutional government effort to transform itself into an “operating model” for the relief of youth unemployment and under-employment. By 2001, the per capita cost has been reduced to US \$520 and the aggregated number youth trained is approximately 25,000. Currently, the KFW of Germany under the “Conversion of Foreign Debt for Social Investment” scheme funds a large portion of the activities.

The Program has much strength. It is considered efficient, transparent, and a means to promote equal opportunities. It has developed well-crafted processes with tools for supervision, execution, monitoring, and impact measurement. An impressive result is that 70 % of the participants have been successful in becoming integrated into the labour market and in increasing their real income by 120%.

However, the fact that PROJOVEN has only benefited 7% of its original target population nationwide makes its presence limited. Furthermore, 21% of its budget goes into administration costs, ranking it above the ratio of more efficient and massive social programs.

2.2.2 Objective and Structure

The objective of PROJOVEN is twofold. It helps low income youth to access the labour market through a process of training and work experience that responds to the requirements of the productive sector. The Program is also conceived to raise the level of competition and efficiency in the training market.

These objectives are expected to contribute over time to achieving a higher degree of interaction between training agencies and the needs of the economy. In this light, the Program also supports the modernization of the production system of the country, particularly in terms of small and medium-size enterprise development.

In terms of its internal organization, the Department of Labour and Social Promotion is the government office responsible for the execution of PROJOVEN. Under the direct supervision of the Vice-Secretary of Social Promotion, a multi-disciplinary team of professionals forms a Coordination Unit in charge of implementation. Seven technical areas operate under the national coordination. These include: Pre-qualification and Registration, Technical Evaluation, Supervision, Targeting, Communications, Administration, and Information-Statistics.

2.2.3 Coverage and Operations

According to official projections up to 2001, the youth population between 16-24 years of age in the country reaches approximately 350,000. Out of this group, PROJOVEN targets youth in poverty (54%) or extreme poverty (15%) who have completed high school as the maximum level of education, belong to poor households, and are either unemployed, under-employed or forcefully inactive.

The Program is designed to reach youths whose employability can be improved through training and the enhancement of their skills when applying for work. To date the Program has provided training to 7% of the target population, through eight cohorts. This includes 24,288 youths, 55% of which are women. Based on the number of youths served in the capital city of Lima, it is estimated that 68% became successfully integrated into the labour market as salary workers. Recent estimates show that the growth rate in the sectors in which the program operates has reached 16.7% in manufacturing, particularly the textile industry; 27.2% in services and commerce; 10.7% in metal-mechanics; and 11.8% in agriculture, fisheries, and shoe production.

Although the statistics also show that more than 50% of the users are young women, there have been many barriers to developing more equal opportunities from a gender perspective. These include the residual perception that the basic role of women is domestic, the higher school dropout ratio among women, and the many roles that poor young women must assume as income

earners, family caregivers, students, and links in the community of social protection. With this in mind, a particular effort has been made to support women with children 5 years of age or younger. The purpose is to provide young mothers who have difficulties in participating because of their family burdens, with financial assistance to improve their chances of generating income.

In terms of its operations, the Program is organized around three types of activities. These are: training in job searching skills; identification of vocational skills; and tutoring and counselling.

Implementing the Program involves several steps. These include: the identification of the demand for labour; the definition of occupational skills in demand; the evaluation of the potential users; the assessment of the relationship between the supply for training and the demand for labour; the selection and approval of the training agencies; the provision of training; the monitoring of the training process; the control over the accreditation; the supervision of the process of placing participants into the labour market; and the measurement of the training impact.

PROJOVEN provides young people with free of charge training and work experience in specific occupations where semi-qualified labour is required. Training agencies, mainly from the private sector, participate in a public tender system to organize and implement the seminars and courses designed to respond to the needs of the corporate sector. The training agencies go through a pre-qualification process that takes into account their prior experience, administrative and management capabilities, and human resources. If the agencies meet the requirements, they are registered in a training agencies registry. Once in the registry they can propose courses to be included in the Program.

The courses are divided in two phases: technical education, taking place in the training agency, and practical training, taking place in companies. In the technical education phase, the youths learn trade-related activities during a 120-300 hour period over three months. A stipend covers transportation, food, and medical insurance costs. An extra subsidy is provided to women for each child less than five years of age. The practical training phase lasts at least three months and companies are committed to paying compensation at least equivalent to a minimum wage, and to providing the youth with medical and accident insurance.

To make this process efficient, the Program has developed various approaches. These include the use of networks to ensure a proper focus in the identification of the users; the establishment of interactive relationships with the private sector, training providers and the companies demanding skilled youth; ensuring a presence in the decision-making processes regarding policies and projects for poor youths; and carrying out analyses of personnel and institutional performance.

However, the actual implementation shows considerable differences between Lima and the rest of the country. There are, for example, abysmal disparities between institutional capabilities of the private and public sector that explains the progress achieved in Lima compared to other parts of the country. The Program was not only implemented faster in Lima, but there are also

important differences in the quality of the training agencies in the provinces, and in the willingness of companies to commit themselves to hiring youths. These differences have been compounded by an economic recession that since 1997 has impacted negatively on companies across the country.

2.2.4 Financial and Human Resources

Financially, PROJOVEN has functioned since its design and pilot phase with the assistance from international cooperation. It began its experimental phase (1996) with an US \$1.5 loan from the IADB (#944-OC-PE) of which US \$173,000 was assigned to the Program design, and US \$1,327,000 to the execution of the pilot phase.

Currently, international cooperation continues to be the most important source of funding through the ‘conversion of debt for social investment’ scheme. Germany forgave part of the Peruvian external debt and through the conversion agreement PROJOVEN received almost US \$8 million. Addition contributions were reported from UNDP and UNFPA, and contributions from the private sector (i.e., Employment Fund). Cost recovery efforts were reported to reach approximately 20% of the budget but at the same time self-financing was not considered a realistic objective.

Funding for the Program from the government comes from two sources, the Public Treasury (21%) and the Employment Fund (17%). This last source includes funds granted to the government by mining companies under a law that promotes employment. The Department of Labour manages the funds as “funds up for public tender”. Although the government covers an important portion of the resources, this does not necessarily translate in changes in the way the Program operates.

Under the current cost structure, training courses and seminars receive 60% of the funds; stipends and subsidy insurance represent 18%; communications 1%; and administration 21%. This high administrative cost is a concern, as it is almost three times the average of other government social programs. A contributing factor to the high administration costs is the development of systems, processes and sophisticated methods for the design, execution, and development of an information, monitoring and impact evaluation system. Another factor is salaries.

In terms of personnel, the Program staff includes 46 people. Comparatively, it is one of the few public sector programs with small personnel. However, the higher than average professional background and experience of the Area Managers requires higher salaries which raises administrative costs. Fifty percent are professionals in economic and administrative sciences, 25% have law degrees, and 25% studied careers related to the social sciences. In terms of prior work experience, 50% have more than 5 years of experience managing youth training programs, and 50% have more than 5 years of experience in the public sector. The most important personnel strengths are their flexibility to adapt to the changing environment and operating conditions, and their motivation.

2.2.5 Evolution and Innovations

Following the original agreement between the government and the IADB, the first experience of PROJOVEN included more than 30 training agencies offering up to 153 seminars. After a technical and financial evaluation, agencies were approved to offer 75 courses and seminars to serve 1,505 youth from Lima and Callao at a per capita cost of US\$ 750. In the year 2001, the Program benefits 5,157 youth from Lima, Callao and other provincial cities at a cost of US\$ 520 per student.

The goal of the Program is to obtain US\$ 23.4 million in additional funds to help 45,000 youth between the years 2002-04. Reaching this goal will depend on the response from international cooperation agencies to a request to double their funding. The government is currently going through a transition to a new administration whose biggest challenge is to reduce public spending without leaving the demands of a country in crisis unattended.

In terms of innovations, the aim has been to insert the most socially excluded youths into the labour market by articulating training needs and the demand for labour. Under this approach training is effective only if it is defined in view of the needs for qualified personnel coming from the private sector.

The current rate of youth unemployment (15.1%) and under-employment (50.7%) is a result not only of a decreasing demand for labour but also of a reduction in the number of poor youth being hired due to their low productivity. This is compounded by a lack of public and private opportunities to link socially excluded jobless youths with training alternatives that could allow them to compete for jobs in the short-term. Statistics show that overall job opportunities have increased by 32.5%, while those for poor youths increased only by 7.3%.

Youth in poverty have profound disadvantages in terms of qualifications and work experience. With this in mind, the Program addresses the problem of youth unemployment and under-employment by promoting private investment and a government policy of a market economy based on human consideration. PROJOVEN is oriented toward identifying mechanisms and developing a portfolio of training options with proven relations to the demand for workers. The Program spends 60% of its time looking for innovative forms of intervention. To achieve this, it focuses on promotion campaigns aimed at youths, orientation lectures for youths helping them to select the right training seminar, and contacts with training agencies.

2.2.6 Lessons Learned

Since its origin, PROJOVEN has become an 'institutional model' taken into account by both the government and the private sector as a means to offer solutions to youth unemployment and under-employment, and as an effective articulation between the supply for training and the demand for labour. Over the years, it has developed several strengths including a flexible organizational structure capable of responding to a changing environment, a high quality

professional staff that ensures optimal implementation, and a system of information, monitoring and impact measurement that allows the Program to receive timely feedback.

There are, however, some weaknesses. The fact that administrative costs account for 21% of its budget ranks above the average of other efficient social programs. The dependency on international funding and the obstacles for government to play a more important financing role make the Program unsustainable over the long-term. Additionally, the urban emphasis of the Program turns it into an initiative that is distant from the problems of poor and extremely poor youth in rural areas.

The country's economic circumstances have also affected the Program's performance. The economic recession has a negative affect. The excess youth labour supply was not alleviated but worsened and companies opted for not even offering practical training. As public spending is directly correlated to the GDP, the opportunities for increased public funding have decreased despite the funds received under the "conversion of debt for investment" scheme.

The Program management has been considered efficient, transparent, and successful in promoting equal opportunities. However, the size of the population benefited is barely perceptible at 7% of the target population. This means that more than 325,000 youths still cannot access training opportunities. Other weaknesses include the fact that the per capita cost (US\$ 520) is still relatively high for courses of semi-qualification. The Program has not been able to fully develop the capacity to generate its own resources, reduce its dependency on international cooperation, or access private resources. Similarly, the Program has not been successful in eliminating the perceptions that public spending in PROJOVEN is a way to subsidy private sector companies.

2.3 The Youth Patrols Program

2.3.1 Overview

The Patrullas Juveniles Program (Youth Patrols Program) is a relatively new initiative that began in Lima, Peru in early 2000. Burdened by demands from the local population of Lima's poorest districts, through their Neighbourhood Organizations (Juntas Vecinales), local police departments acknowledged the need for more effective actions to address a rising youth gang problem. In response, General Enrique Yopez, Director of a new National Police unit, the Department for Citizen Participation, began hosting meetings with community organizations that led to the creation of the Youth Patrols Program.

This is a unique program. It involves a partnership between the National Police, young people with a background of violence and law breaking behaviours, local community organizations, and a small number of concerned private firms and NGOs. The Program is funded locally and results after only 11 months are impressive. Forty of Lima's poorest districts currently participate in the "Patrullas Juveniles" Program. Approximately 1,200 young men and women are actively

involved, and the local communities feel that violence is starting to decline. A few youngsters, specially females, have been able to obtain jobs from local firms.

Most importantly, the perception among youngsters toward the police is changing. A former young gang member indicated that the police are now seen as friends and a resource and not as a threat. However, several areas are still developing. Job opportunities for youth are scarce, training for self-employment and for livelihood opportunities through small businesses is lacking, many gangs and gang members still refuse to join the Program, and public funding is limited.

2.3.2 Objective and Structure

The main purpose of the Program is the re-socialization of young delinquents. Its objectives are to reduce and control violence from youth gangs in the poorest districts of Lima; to provide young men and women in gangs with means and incentives for their re-integration into community life and for their successful transition to adulthood; and to expand, improve and replicate this program in other cities of Peru.

The Youth Patrols Program is under the coordination of the Department for Citizen Participation of the National Police. Its Director, a police General, works with a small staff of advisors and support personnel. The Program operates through local police departments in 40 of the poorest urban districts of Lima, the capital.

In each police station, a technical counsellor is responsible for the Program activities. This counsellor is the link between the police and the community and the youth gangs. The Program was built on the experience of “the school police” branch, an initiative created to protect school grounds and provide traffic control. Neighbourhood organizations collaborate with their local police units by identifying zones of violence and youngsters that could be eligible to participate in the Program. The community also supports the Youth Patrols through the organization of social functions, recreational events, sports, and opportunities for community works, such as gardening.

Support from NGOs involved with the Program is geared toward providing youths with training, seminars and counselling on issues such as drug abuse (CEDRO), and sex and health education (REDESS). Other government programs provide support in gender training and youth camps (PROMUDEH), and reading and math skills development (Ministry of Education).

A few private firms such as PROMPYME have offered training in job skills (i.e., shoe repair) and a textile firm has offered entry level jobs to a small group of women from the Program. CEDRO, a local NGO, is also funding an income earning initiative for fast food street vendors.

2.3.3 Coverage and Operations

Violence and crime are prevalent problems in some inner cities in Peru. Youngsters, specially males, are usually blamed for a large proportion of these crimes, not realizing that they are also frequently their victims. The Pan American Health Organization (PAHO) estimates that 20-25% of deaths among adolescents in the region are related to violence. A recent study by APOYO in Perú indicated that those aged 16-24, especially males, were the main victims and perpetrators of acts of violence and theft. Urban gangs (“barras bravas” or “pandillas”) that were rare or non-existent two or three decades ago, are now on the rise.

The local police jointly with the community held a series of meetings to assess the situation. District by district maps of the location, number and size of youth gangs were prepared, and youth gang leaders were identified by the local police and contacted to request their collaboration.

On July 2000, the National Police and several neighbourhood organizations formally convened a Youth Meeting. Youth gang leaders were invited by local police officers. A formal agreement was reached between the police, the community leaders, and the youth leaders. Among the issues included in this agreement was the need for a supportive role from the local police toward youth gangs through the creation of youth patrols as an approach to lure youth gangs into community affairs and lawfulness. The incentive was the creation of recreational and sport activities as well as the organization of orientation and training sessions for youths with the support of concerned NGOs, firms and the community organizations.

The Youth Patrols Program targets poor youth, men and women, aged between 12-22, who are involved in some form of unlawful behaviour, in particular gang violence, theft and disorderly conduct. To date, the program has reached over 1,200 young men and women in Lima with training, counselling and income generating opportunities.

Between 90-95% of those involved in the Program are young males. Women account for only 5-10% of the participants. This is not due to a gender selection biases but rather to the demographic profile of the problem. In fact, mostly young males are involved in violent conduct and youth gangs. The poor districts involved in the Program have staff in the local police stations to coordinate the activities. Estimates from a base line study by the Save the Children organization indicates that there are between 10-20 youth gangs in each district in Lima targeted by the Program.

Operationally, the Program has developed a step-by-step approach to transforming youth gangs into youth patrols as a strategy to avoid street violence, increase community security and support adolescents and young adults in a successful transition to adulthood. A first set of activities involves the collaboration between a local police station and a neighbourhood organization in assessing the incidence of gang violence in their district.

The police through a counsellor identify the gang leaders and invite them to participate. Many of these young offenders are willing to collaborate as they have been already brought to the police station on other occasions for different offences and they have been well treated and counselled. A key informant indicated that many young leaders are tired of their way of life, have a partner and sometimes children, and seek a way out. Thus, they see the Program as an opportunity and the police as a possible ally.

Once the leader agrees to become part of the Program, he is charged with convincing other members to join in. Youths are attracted through recreational activities, such as soccer matches, summer camps, and music and dance festivals. During these interactions, individual counselling and orientation sessions are offered. The role of the gang leader is crucial since gang members tend to imitate and follow closely their leaders. If the leader cannot be convinced to join, it is very unlikely that other members will become involved.

When the group joins the Program, the youth gang becomes a “Youth Patrol” and is recognized as such by the community leaders, the local police, and other youth groups. They become eligible for all the activities the Program offers and meet regularly with the local police counsellor and the community leaders. The counsellor is responsible for identifying demands and opportunities for the youth Patrols. Success seems to be based on personal relationships between the former gang leader and the counsellor. According to a young informant, the counsellor is “like the father he never had”.

The final step is opening income opportunities for the young men and women through training or placements in participating firms. To date, this aspect has been moderately successful with only a few firms offering jobs to these former offenders. A case in point is a textile firm that hired 10 young women previously involved in gangs for entry-level jobs. There are around 80 firms in Lima identified as potential employers but given the country’s economic recession and high unemployment, job opportunities are scarce.

Another approach provides youths with training and a small working capital for small business. PROPYME and CEDRO, two NGOs, joined efforts to launch the “sandwich trolleys” project. Funding is provided to youths to establish themselves as fast food street vendors with small carts. Male and female teams operate the carts after being trained in preparing and selling food. The carts are located in strategic street or public buildings with support from the local government and the police. The income generated accrues to the young workers who can eventually pay back part of the cart costs. However, they face fierce competition from other fast food vendors given the critical economic situation in Peru and the prevalence of informal sector activities.

Regarding other job opportunities, many youngsters feel ill prepared to apply for small loans as they feel lacking the credibility to obtain them or the capacity to manage them. One informant even suggested that the police counsellor should receive the credit and manage the funds. Besides objective barriers, this view reveals the low self-esteem among former gang members. A second obstacle frequently noted is that the youths feel ashamed to work in the streets of their

own neighbourhoods where people they know could see them. The status associated to being a former gang member still weighs more than the benefits of a job.

This issue and those relating to self-esteem and identity are areas that merit further attention. Another strong obstacle to the development of crafts or small businesses in their own community is the threat of violence from other gang members that have not joined the Program. This is an important issue as many of these gangs are fierce rivals in street fights, sports and other activities.

2.3.4 Financial and Human Resources

The Program is a regular activity of the Department for Citizen Participation. Its operational funds come from the National Police budget. The Director or the Senior Advisor on budget availability offered no exact figures. Additional funds, however, are scarce.

The Program receives support from CEDRO, an NGO that deals with drug prevention, the organization of motivational talks, summer camps, and the “sandwich trolleys” project for which around US\$15,000 are available. Other organizations give in kind support such as seminars, counselling, health services, (i.e., PROMUDEH; the Ministry of Women Affairs; the Ministry of Health and Education). The Save the Children organization supported a needs assessment on youth gangs.

The Program staff has little expertise in developing projects and in fund raising. This is an area where partnerships with specialized NGOs could play a strategic role. Private firms and businesses in the way of short-term training or entry-level jobs provide other resources. However, the demand for jobs is far greater than the availability.

Human resources are limited to four staff members and a counsellor in each of the 40 districts where the Program operates. The counsellors receive a short training course to perform their role and are members of the regular police force. Other important human resources are community volunteer members of neighbourhood organizations, especially the committees dealing with urban security. They are the main links between youth gangs and the Program. Gang leaders are also a key resource in making the Program work by bringing other youth into the activities.

2.3.5 Evolution and Innovations

Results after 11 months of operation are encouraging. Forty of Lima’s poorest districts participate in the Program with close to 1,200 young men and women actively involved. However, many aspects need improvement. Jobs are scarce, training for self-employment and for developing small businesses is still lacking, many gangs have refused to join, and public funding is limited.

One major challenge is how to provide livelihood opportunities for the former gang members. Training can help but is not enough, considering that most of these youth have no structured

families to provide for them or are already living independently with partners and children. A goal of the Program is to expand its activities to other districts and reach a larger proportion of the 18,000 youngsters estimated to be involved in gangs in Lima, and to expand to other major cities of Peru.

Both directors interviewed estimated that between 30-40% of their time is devoted to looking at innovative ways to promote and improve the Program. The Program has been successful in keeping track of new outbreaks of youth violence through their close contacts with the local community. However, information is not analysed systematically and the data are poor. Computers are only available at the central police office and they have no access to internet or to a communications network. There is no special software for monitoring or for the follow-up of the participants. A lack of financial resources and human capital are the main reasons for these shortcomings. An added weakness is the lack of expertise in developing, marketing and implementing new projects and in fund raising.

2.3.6 Lessons Learned

The efforts of the National Police and the Youth Patrols Program originally clashed with new legislation passed by Congress in 1999 regarding youth delinquency. This legislation was mainly repressive in nature. Fortunately, it has been revised under the new political climate of democratization, participation and transparency. The main political parties have expressed support for the participation of civil society and their concern for youth. In a mass event organized in mid 2001 by three local NGOs (CEDRO, REDESS and TRANSPARENCIA), leading politicians signed an agreement to support policies and programs for adolescents and young adults, including those related to drug prevention, sex and health education, and labour force participation and job creation.

The Program has maintained a healthy and close relationship with local community organizations. It is grounded in local life and can respond quickly to local demands. Many ex-gang leaders are now actively collaborating with the program in the 40 districts where it operates. What is missing are links with other government institutions.

An important issue is the expansion of the Program. Its activities are highly decentralized since the counsellor who is a regular staff member of the local police unit handles most of them. To achieve its goals of wider coverage a more pro-active role of its management will be required. However, the staffs involved does not have adequate training on critical areas such as project development, fund raising and other related activities. This highlights the importance of strengthening the network of organizations supporting the Program.

2.4 The PROJOVEN-Uruguay Program

2.4.1 Overview

The creation of employment and livelihood opportunities for underprivileged youth is of paramount importance in Uruguay. Over the past several years, youth unemployment has become an endemic problem. Several training programs are attempting to close the gap between the demands of the labour market and the skills of the younger population. One of the most important initiatives in this regard is the PROJOVEN or the Youth Option Program (Programa Opción Joven - PROJOVEN).

This Program is a public policy response to addressing the demands of youth in light of formal labour market demands, as well as the shortages in the supply of training skills for the underprivileged youth. PROJOVEN is an innovative program. It is one of the few initiatives in Uruguay that uses its technical autonomy articulates state and civil society efforts designing policies for the young poor and implemented by NGOs. It provides non-formal education in areas that are in demand in the labour market.

PROJOVEN is a public institution responsible for designing training and employment policies for poor youth, and for developing a strong networking strategy for their implementation. While it focuses primarily on policy and program design, NGOs and public and private partners are responsible for the implementation. The character of the network maintained by PROJOVEN allows the Program to incorporate innovations, promote cooperation between the state and the civil society, and facilitate the development of diversified skills among youths.

The aim of the Program is to encourage and facilitate greater correspondence between demand and supply for labour. It identifies these demands and trains the target population. Results to date show that more than half of the trainees have obtained jobs, although only half of these are in the formal labour market.

The investments of the Program in terms of personnel and infrastructure are considered low. However, the cost of the totality of the training process per student, which is under one thousand dollars, is higher than other similar programs in the region.

Perhaps one of the limitations of the Program is its lack of anticipation of the demands for qualified labour, as it concentrates on responding to current demands. As a result, the Program does not give enough emphasis to providing training on new information technologies. Overall, however, PROJEVEN-Uruguay is a successful program within the limitations under which it operates.

2.4.2 Objectives and Structure

The mission of PROJOVEN is threefold. The Program seeks to strengthen the links between youth professional training and the labour market; to support business enterprises in the recruiting of semi-qualified youth; and to support professional training institutions (public and

private) in their efforts to improve their management capabilities and their links with the productive sector.

The Program is highly decentralized as its mission is carried out through a network of public and private training institutions hired under tender. PROJOVEN puts emphasis on the social integration of youth and their integration into the labour market. This dual focus is one of the Program's strengths as well as one of its greater challenges. In achieving its goals, the Program acts as a link between the labour market and the training processes taking into account the demands coming from the productive sector.

The Program is run by a Program Coordination Unit and depends on several public institutions. It was founded by the Labour Reconversion Fund (Fondo de Reconversión Laboral) which depends on the National Board of Employment (Junta Nacional de Empleo, JUNAE) of the Ministry of Labour and Social Security.

Organizationally, the Program is under the National Youth Institute (Instituto Nacional de la Juventud - INJU) that in turn depends on the Ministry of Culture and Education. PROJOVEN has strong ties with both the business community and with socially excluded youths. One of the main groups involved in the Program is the training institution considered partners. Its decentralized organization encourages the development of job-hunting skills by the NGOs providing training. PROJOVEN also has logistic support from the National Directorate of Labour (which belongs to the Ministry of Labour and Social Security). Labour unions and business associations that are part and managers of the National Board of Employment and of the Labour Reconversion Fund provide funding to the Program and have a strong interest in the development of labour market policies. These relationships permit the Program to have a direct link with entrepreneur associations, labour unions, and state agencies.

2.4.3 Coverage and Operations

Four out of ten children in Uruguay are born into poverty. Later in life, these children lack adequate qualifications to get into the formal labour market.

Since 1995, Uruguay has gone through a deep reform of the secondary and primary levels of its education system. Despite this reform, unemployment among youth is larger than in any other age cohort. Most of the unemployed youth have incomplete secondary education, and lack the technical-vocational and social skills to become employed. There are growing indications that the problems affecting youth are structural in nature.

PROJOVEN's primary target population includes youth between 17-24 years old. There is, however, an exception for 15 year old youth who live under conditions of marginality and are institutionalized at the National Institute for Minors (INAME), a public agency devoted to the rehabilitation of marginal youth. The beneficiaries of the Program are selected based on their economic, working, and educational background. To determine their social and economic profile they are assessed through an interview using a simple index. This includes aspects such as

family income, parents' occupational status, and number of children under his/her responsibility. Special consideration is given to women living alone with children.

Under the first program, a pilot project, which led to what is now PROJOVEN, 9,891 youth received training (4,568 males and 5,323 females). Excluding those served under the pilot program and taking into account PROJOVEN alone, the group drops to approximately 4,500 youths (1,980 males and 2,520 females). During its first year of existence, PROJOVEN trained 1,400 young people (44.2% males and 55.8% females).

In terms of its operations, the Program has used various approaches in addition to formal training and technical education activities. One of these initiatives included the project "Taking Initiative" (Proyecto Emprender) which provided youth with business development skills. Although this project is going through a restructuring phase due to the lack of funding, it illustrates the type of service offered by PROJOVEN. The Program also helps youth in job hunting and in the identification of their vocational needs. Training institutions provide the trainees with additional assistance in the form of free transportation and lunch.

The training institutions trying to respond to the demands of different enterprises propose the curriculum and courses. These institutions are selected through a public tender process under the supervision of the Program Coordinating Unit using criteria such as quality of the proposals, relevance of the training to market demands, and flexibility to adjusting to particular needs.

PROJOVEN offers three different modalities of courses: CT1 Courses target youths with 3-4 years of completed high school education, and the courses last between 3-5 months. The CT2 Courses are offered to youths with less than 3 years of completed high school and last approximately 7 months. The CT3 Courses target young people under conditions of high exclusion or socio-economic marginality, and the courses last for one year. All the courses are organized into cumulative units according to the program offered by the training institution that is evaluated during the tender process.

The classroom workload is four hours per day, with a weekly workload of a no less than twenty hours. Each class has between 12 and 20 students. Participants are grouped into any of the three modalities based on the results of a standardized questionnaire or Selection Card (Ficha de Selección).

2.4.4 Financial and Human Resources

Funding for PROJOVEN comes from the National Board of Employment, an institution under the Ministry of Labour and Social Security. This Board is administered by a corporate body with representatives from the labour unions and the business community and has the responsibility of coordinating the reconversion employment policy in the country. The financial management of the Program is overseen by a Budget Court (Tribunal de Cuentas), which is an official state institution that serves as a financial comptroller of all national accounts.

The budget of the Program is based on resources provided by the Reconversion Fund. Seventy percent of this fund is drawn from deductions on workers' payroll and 30% from international cooperation. There is no indication of cost recovery, as self-financing it is not an objective of the program. There is no special budget for the personnel of the training institutions, as this staff is part of the regular personnel of these institutions.

The cost per trainee varies according the type of course, and the cost of a course depends on the number of units it has. The course CT1 has 2 units, CT2 has three units, and CT3 has five units. The cost per student per unit is US\$ 200.00.

The training institutions consider that overall, the budget is adequate, but a larger budget would allow them to implement more activities. The training institutions receive in advance 40% of the course cost and the other 60% after the end of the course. This implies that they must cover the difference while delivering the training. At the same time, training institutions do not receive the total amount of a course until they have 20 on-the-job training positions for the trainees of a course. Thus, training institutions are responsible for delivering training and also for the placement of the trainees. These conditions make the training institutions the weakest part of the Program as they depend on resources from PROJOVEN and other sources.

PROJOVEN does not supply micro financing to the students but establishes links with the local, regional and international business community for the provision of jobs and on-the-job training, while corporations provide 80% of a regular salary for the trainees. Relations with government agencies support the Program's policy initiatives and dialogue. Nevertheless, since PROJOVEN is a government agency, its actions have a mixed public-private nature. The government designs, and the NGOs or other training institutions execute the training programs. PROJOVEN involvement with other public institutions promotes the association between the private and the public sector to secure work positions for the trainees.

PROJOVEN has a small staff but highly qualified staff of 8 professionals and 4 administrative personnel. The administration of human resources and the decision making process is flexible. There is no a standardized performance evaluation system, but staff meets weekly to make decisions and adjustments that are decided collectively. This flexible approach permits the staff to adjust their work to new demands in a short period.

The staff from PROJOVEN and from the training institutions indicates that the Program is engaged in a continuous learning process. Staff members learn from the management and periodical evaluations of results. However, there are no indications that a formal evaluation system is in place.

The activities of the Program staff are assisted by a computerized local area network system to deal with the management of information and the monitoring of activities, and a data base with a registry of the beneficiaries. The information is available to the Program's funding and training institutions, and to supervisors and teachers. Training institutions have no formal monitoring systems although some have registries of trainees and internet access. The main use of these

resources is in teaching and management. PROJOVEN makes more intensive use of ICTs than the training providers. In addition to the system used for general management purposes, Internet access is used for internal and external communications.

2.4.5 Evolution and Innovations

PROJOVEN-Uruguay was born following the experience of youth employment projects supported by the Inter-American Development Bank (IADB) in Chile and Argentina. In 1994, the National Institute for the Youth, launched a project supported by the Multilateral Investment Fund from the IADB, the “Pilot Training Project for Labour Integration, Youth Option” (Proyecto Piloto de Capacitación para la Inserción Laboral Opción Joven). Later, between 1995-96, the Law N. 16,713 created PROJOVEN.

The program began in Montevideo and was expanded to the rest of the country. This expansion was based on an evaluation of different local labour market needs by the training institutions. Today, this type of evaluation is a requirement for opening of new courses.

The launching of PROJOVEN was preceded by a two-year pilot project (the Youth Option project). This project allowed designers to test the intervention methodologies and youth interest in and expectations of the Program. The launching of the Program was also discussed at a workshop supported by the IADB.

The Program is one among a series of formal and non-formal training mechanisms that exist in the country. Compared to PROJOVEN, the main characteristic of these professional training institutions is their flexibility in the continuum from education to the world of work. Some of them favour education while others promote training in the work place supervised by the training institutions.

The time devoted to the development of innovative practices is different in PROJOVEN than in the training institutions. PROJOVEN managers dedicate between 5-30% of their time to searching for innovative practices, while the training institutions allocate almost 50% of their time to searching for new training experiences and practices. It is clear that seeking teaching innovation is more important for the training institutions than for PROJOVEN, as they depend on innovations to submit successful proposals.

The Program managers promote study groups, research and new practices as a means to improve the Program. Although there are no special incentives for innovations among the staff, the Program promotes innovative practices among its executing partners. Positive incentives are given to the training institutions with the most innovative teaching practices, and not surprisingly, training institutions allocate almost 50% of their time to searching for and testing new training practices and experiences.

2.4.6 Lessons Learned

PROJOVEN measures its success at different levels and at different points in time. Data are collected on the number of students selected, the number of selected students who actually enrol, the number who complete the training, and the proportion of these students who find a job in the formal labour market. Overall, the Program has been able to obtain employment for almost 54% of its trainees (35.5% obtained a formal job, while 20.7% obtained a job in the informal labour market).

The Program also monitors the employment relations affecting the students once in the labour market as a means to protect the right of young workers. A Permanent Alumni Survey is applied at the eighth month after the training is over, regardless of whether or not the student completed training.

PROJOVEN-Uruguay works through formal and informal networks as well as a base of individual contacts. Although there is no specific budget for networking activities, they are considered an integral aspect of the Program strategy, and they play a central role in implementation. Networking activities focus on local, national and international “key actors”. Local actors are those involved with the Program’s target population, like NGOs working with poor children and youth; and public institutions carrying out youth interventions such as the National Youth Institute, and the municipality of Montevideo. International actors include organizations such as the International Labour Office through the Inter-American Centre for Documentation and Research on Professional Training (CINTERFOR - ILO), the Inter-American Development Bank; and the Ibero-American Institute of the Youth (OIJ).

Regarding the use of ICTs, PROJOVEN managers are divided in their opinion about the potential impact of these technologies on the target population. Some believe that lacking the skills to deal with new technologies diminishes the chances that young people have for getting good jobs. Others believe that the idea is to work with appropriate rather than new technologies in order to meet the needs of the labour market. This perception about what kind of technologies must be transferred to the trainees is shared with the training institutions that are concerned about the appropriate match between supply and demands of skills.

The review shows that PROJOVEN has had several achievements. It has created an impressive network of public and private institutions, and NGOs which constitutes an effective means to identifying current labour market demands and training needs for underprivileged youth. In so doing, it has contributed to reducing unemployment among poor youth by securing employment for an important percentage of its trainees. Its networking approach has also contributed to strengthening political support for the Program. The Program has also been successful in promoting innovation among its partners by encouraging training institutions that are submitting proposals, to include new training experiences and innovative practices as part of their offering.

There are, however, areas that could be further strengthened. The Program identifies current labour demands but it seems not to be interested in anticipating these demands. A consequence of this view is the apparent lack of interest in promoting new information and communication

technologies among students. This in turn raises a question about the extent in which the skills developed by the program are and will remain relevant in a changing labour market.

3. A Comparative Assessment

The assessment framework developed for the ILO-CIDA-IDRC project *Building “Open Learning” Design Tools for the More Effective Delivery of Youth Livelihood and Enterprise Policies & Programs* is intended to examine the extent to which the cases under study meet a series of “principles” which constitute “factors of success”. This section presents an overview of the extent to which the cases studied in the LAC region reflect these principles.

3.1 Principles for Sustainable Livelihood Development

The “principles” are grouped into six broad categories: social, economic, youth focus, organization and management, innovations, and policy. The instrument developed to gather data and assess the selected programs was organized according to these categories.

3.1.1 Social Principles

A number of aspects are included under this category. These are: supporting the growth and development of networks, the targeting of the programs, the perspectives of the programs in relation to specific risk areas (i.e., HIV-AIDS, drugs), gender equality, and community response. The assumption is that sustainable livelihood development must take place within and build upon support networks as a means to respond to specific needs identified by the community.

All the programs examined prioritize and rely on networking and on established networks of individuals and organizations to carry out their activities, maximize resources, and reach their target populations. The larger and better established programs, such as *Chile-Joven*, and PROJOVEN in Peru and Uruguay, which include government support, benefit from well developed public infrastructures, partnership arrangements with public and private organizations, and strong linkages with the community through NGOs and civil society organizations which facilitate networking. The *Youth Patrols* Program in Peru, relies heavily on community-base networks in the areas where it intervenes. In all cases, networking depends mostly on individual contacts with community leaders, policy makers, academics, key members of the NGO community, and private sector organizations. In some instances, (i.e., *Chile-Joven*), contacts are maintained with similar initiatives in other countries as a means to exchange experiences and methodologies.

In addition, among the better-established programs, networking activities are enhanced by information and communication technologies. ICTs provide the programs with a means to disseminate information, provide access to the program, do follow-up, and exchange information on innovations. These information systems have been set in place with sizable investments to create databases and develop Internet access to information. Where these resources do not exist, their absence is a limitation to the potential effectiveness of the programs in regard to reaching their target audience, attracting support, and following-up on users.

In terms of targeting, all programs focus on a sector of the youth population which on average is between 15-25 years of age, belong to poor sectors of the society, have a low educational background, and are unemployed or under-employed. A primary purpose in targeting is assisting youths to acquire skills and qualifications to allow them to obtain formal wage employment or develop alternative means for self-employment. A related purpose of the programs, particularly the *Youth Patrols* Program, is the re-habilitation of youths at risk and their integration into community and society. The larger programs, however, tend to focus on the job-related needs of the users.

A primary concern of the programs in terms of the needs of the beneficiaries is to address the effects of poverty and inequality on their economic and livelihood opportunities. Poverty and inequality are the main causes of crises faced by socially excluded youths in LAC. In the case of youths in extreme poverty or involved in criminal activities, exploitation, drugs and violence are also areas of concern. Some of the programs include activities to provide youths with general sex and health education, recreational activities, and seminars and workshops on life skills. Only marginally, these programs address issues such as the risks of HIV-AIDS or drugs despite the fact that these are underlining problems affecting their target populations.

All the programs give equal attention to both young men and women. In all cases there is explicit recognition of pervading gender inequalities limiting youth's livelihood opportunities. Such disparities respond, in part, to persistent gender stereotypes, discrimination in opportunities for women, and the differential roles that women play in society. In general, it was found that men tend to be favoured in terms of available job opportunities, except in cases where there is a criminal background.

Community involvement broadly understood has been a key to success in the implementation of the programs. In all cases, these programs emerged in response to demands identified over time by government, civil society organizations, or directly by neighbourhood organizations. In the case of the larger programs, demand from the youths themselves, from parents, the private sector, and from different civil society organizations working with youth put pressure on governments to create mechanisms that address youth unemployment and their lack of economic opportunities. In other cases (i.e., the *Youth Patrols* Program), the local communities and a small group of NGOs and private sector organizations play a direct role in establishing partnerships with the local authorities and in implementing the program.

3.1.2 Economic Principles

Economic principles in the assessment framework refer to sectoral areas that are a base for developing pro-poor livelihood initiatives, which in turn translate into opportunities for youth employment and enterprise development. Aspects included under this category are pro-poor growth, access to micro finances, linkages with business and government, responsiveness and capacity to anticipate demands, and responsiveness to market failures.

Pro-poor growth is central to all the programs. One of their points of departure is that persistent poverty and inequality are the root causes of youth unemployment, under-employment and social exclusion. The programs also acknowledge that structural reforms, economic instability, rapid changes in the labour market, and increasing demand from employers for higher qualifications among the work force have detrimental effects on the poorest youth sectors. Their focus is on developing productive skills for semi-qualified jobs in technical-vocational areas related to services, industrial production, and commerce. The programs also focus on developing entrepreneurial skills that could lead to self-employment. In all cases, the aim is to qualify youths through a mix of training and work experience to access paid occupations or to create small independent business.

The experiences in terms of opening job opportunities is mixed. There are indications that the rate of success of participants depends on a number of factors. These include their entry-level qualifications and education, the type of training program selected, the capacity of the program to generate support from the private sector, and the local economic situation. In most cases, there are indications that the lack of job opportunities in general, and for young people in particular, is a determinant factor. Differences were also found in the opportunities available to males and females.

The government supported programs show a higher rate of success as they often have more financial and social resources at their disposal. Their rate of success may be limited, however, to a small percentage of the target population (i.e., PROJOVEN-Peru). The community-based program that does not have strong public funding (i.e., *Youth Patrols*) has a narrower rate of success and depends heavily on private sector firms to accept young workers with low qualifications.

Access to micro finances is a difficult but critical area to implementing successful innovations. Important differences were found depending on the type of program and their geographic emphasis. The government-funded programs provide participants with different forms of financial assistance such as free enrolment, food and transportation stipends, and insurance. Some also assist young women with children as a means to address gender disparities.

The programs themselves do not provide formal financial credit to explore self-employment through the creation of micro enterprises. In some instances, they facilitate access to credit (i.e., *Chile-Joven*; PROJOVEN- Uruguay), in others they support self-employment initiatives (i.e., the *Youth Patrols* food trolleys) through small loans from private donations. In general, however,

access to credit for young people is not readily available, independently of the area of work. Credit institutions that could be a potential source are not willing to risk dealing with inexperienced youth, and even less so with youth who are school drop-outs or have a history of unlawful behaviour. These institutions often demand guarantees that youths cannot meet. Important differences were mentioned in terms of age and gender. Females and youngsters under 25 often encounter more difficulties in accessing credit opportunities.

Three of the programs studied are led by government and financed with public funds or by a mix of government funds and international cooperation (i.e., PROJOVEN-Peru). The fourth program receives funds from the National Police and grants from local organizations (i.e., *Youth Patrols*). All of them have developed various forms of partnership. Partnerships were observed between the government and international organizations, between the programs and other government departments and ministries, between the programs and the private sector, and with community and civil society organizations. In the larger programs, linkages with other government departments and ministries are often integrated into the program structure as a means to pull resources and expertise together and divide responsibility for implementation and monitoring.

Relationships with the private sector take many forms from technical assistance linkages with training agencies who compete to offer courses, to enterprises who provide on-the-job training and job opportunities, and with private organizations participating in various capacities. Linkages with the community often take the form of needs identification, field monitoring, and other forms of cooperation involving community-based activities and services (i.e., *Youth Patrols*).

For all the programs, links with the private sector are critical to their success, as private firms provide resources and job and training opportunities. However, the experience shows that building innovative partnerships with the private sector requires a carefully built network of contacts, and the right expertise in areas such as fund raising and inter-institutional cooperation.

In all cases, the programs' objective is to respond to demands at various levels. The main goal is to improve the qualifications of and broaden the opportunities for the target youth population. In different degrees, the larger programs also respond to demands for qualified workers from private firms. The programs carry out need assessments as an input into the selection of their activities. In other instances, the focus is on responding to demands from the local community. However, their capacity to respond quickly to demands depends on a number of factors, such as how flexible is their organization, their level of decentralization, the capacity of the training agencies, and the resources available. There are indications that the larger and more consolidated the program, the more difficulty it has in responding quickly to changes in demands.

Something similar occurs with the capacity to anticipate demands. However, in the case of the larger programs, advantages in terms of staff and resources makes them potentially more proactive in addressing changes coming from their target populations, their private sector partners, or from the labour market.

Despite the fact that the larger programs have well developed information systems, there is no clear indication that these play a central role in their ability to anticipate or assess demands, or to systematically follow-up users. No different from the situation in many other social programs, one of the weakest dimensions is monitoring and evaluation. The larger programs monitor their on going activities and carry out ex-ante evaluations mostly to assess the quality of courses of the training agencies. Little is done, however, in terms of systematic follow-up of participants. Efforts are being made to build and maintain databases, but except in a few cases, the right expertise is not available.

The programs fill a gap not being filled by other organizations serving the youth poor. Where training opportunities for youth exist, they are part of formal systems (i.e., education; technical-vocational training), small scale initiatives headed by NGOs, or services offered by for profit training organizations. In countries like Chile, for example, there is a private sector training industry offering degrees and qualifications for a fee. They target those who can pay, their quality is often questionable, and in many instances, they do not offer hands on experience. Their main contribution is the focus on the youth poor who cannot access other opportunities that may be available.

3.1.3 Youth Focus

Youth focus as a “principle” in the assessment framework refers to the orientation of the initiatives as “youth centred”, involving their direct input, and considering their circumstances in a comprehensive manner. In all cases, the target for intervention is young men and women, between 15-25 years of age on average, who live in poverty or extreme poverty, are currently unemployed or under-employed, and who are not in the formal school system. The aim is to help them to develop specific occupational and trade skills, and to assist them to become productive members of the society.

In principle, all programs claim to give priority attention to the needs and demands of their target populations. Differences do exist, however, in their approaches. In most instances, youths are involved in some form of needs identification, through direct consultations or indirectly through research carried out by partner organizations. In some instances (i.e., *Youth Patrols*), youths participate in designing activities, promoting the program, and providing feedback. Overall, however, youth involvement in systematic monitoring and evaluation is limited. Programs like *Chile-Joven* are making efforts to evaluate user satisfaction through selected samples but this is not done systematically and the information does not always contribute to direct changes.

The programs that are government sponsored and national in scope provide formally recognized certification to those who successfully complete the training. Employers who work with the programs often accept this certification as a proof of qualifications for hiring purposes. In general, however, the certification does not ensure access to jobs. It is often up to the employer to determine the value of the credentials, in light of supply and demand.

Where there is a strong training market there is also a higher competition among those holding credentials from different training institutions. Given this environment, an advantage of some of these programs rests on the type of partnerships they develop with private sector employers to give preference to those graduating from the programs in terms of employment opportunities.

All programs claim to improve the conditions of their target population by improving their employability. Except for the *Youth Patrols* Program, however, there are no clear indications that the services the programs provide have a comprehensive focus or address the wide range of circumstances affecting the youth's life beyond the lack of employment. An assumption seems to be that by improving the capacity of youth to access the labour market and have an occupation, all other aspects leading to the youth social exclusion will be overcome.

3.1.4 Management and Operational Principles

The “management and operational principles” in the assessment framework refer to the capacity of the programs to learn from experience. Several aspects are included in this category: learning organization, flexibility, scale, and capacity.

The larger programs studied have well established management systems and an organization allowing them to allocate responsibilities for different tasks based on the strengths and expertise of the participating departments. They also operate with qualified professional staff who are assisted by modern information and management systems. Various technical committees are responsible for different aspects of the programs and for the linkages between them and external partners.

These programs have invested substantial resources in setting up computer data management and information systems for their administrative and financial operations, to keep track of the courses and training organizations, and to carry out monitoring and follow-up during implementation. This information is often included in a database that contains information on users, their training preferences, their achievement, and the extent to which the program is reaching its target population. There are indications, however, that this area could be further developed in terms of usage of the information for monitoring and evaluation purposes. There is no clear indication, for example, of the extent to which these tools contribute to improving organizational learning in a systematic manner.

A different situation was found in the *Youth Patrols* Program, which is probably more typical of smaller community-based initiatives. Due mainly to the scale of activities and the resources available, the management infrastructure is minimum. It relies primarily on voluntary work, and has no access to computer technologies that could assist in management and follow-up. Organizational learning tends to take place through personal interactions between those coordinating the program and the members of the community involved.

The issue of human resources is critical in all cases, although for different reasons. Larger programs have the expertise and technical resources required for implementation, but in some

cases, (i.e., PROJOVEN-Peru) this results in high administrative costs. The number of personnel hired to work in the central operations of programs is comparatively small considering that these are part of the government system. When looking across departments, geographic areas where the programs are represented, and the people involved in different capacities, the numbers are larger, and constitute an extensive network.

The smaller program, on the other hand, has little or no technical expertise and relies heavily on volunteers. In all cases, no special provisions exist for training or re-training of staff in a systematic manner. Staff development is often an outcome of experience on the job rather than formal training. In government sponsored programs, when training does take place it occurs through the regular operations of the participant departments and is not necessarily related to the programs' main objectives. In general, however, it was indicated that staff are highly flexible and adapt to new circumstances, particularly in the case of the smaller program.

In terms of costs, the available information on government-sponsored programs indicates that they range between US\$ 450-550 dollars per participant. This is still considered relatively high when compared to other social programs targeting the poor. The community-based program presents a totally different profile as it operates with minimum financial resources and the scale of its activities is smaller and more localized.

Training costs, financial assistance to the participants and costs of administration (i.e., salaries, infrastructures, etc.) are the main expenditure categories among larger programs. The government plays an important role in their financing providing stability over time. In some instances, (i.e., PROJOVEN-Peru) government funding is heavily supplemented by international cooperation making the Program dependent upon the cycles and priorities of international aid. The small program depends almost completely on small grants and donations from NGOs.

In all cases, it was found that fund raising and diversification of their funding base are areas for which the programs have no expertise, specially the program that is community-based. Direct private sector funding often represents a small portion of the programs' budget or is non existent, except for those cases in which private sector firms have formal agreements with the programs and subsidize part of the participant costs when they are receiving on-the-job training. Most programs have no cost-recovery strategies as part of their operations. If they do, it is at a minimum scale (i.e., *Youth Patrols* food trolleys). A critical issue in all cases is the extent to which these programs are financially sustainable over time or can effectively expand their coverage both geographically and in terms of their target population.

The government-sponsored programs have gone through a systematic process of expansion since their origin. In principle, they operate as national programs and are expected to reach all communities in need across the country. In practice, they operate across the country but with a strong concentration in large urban areas or capital cities. The PROJOVEN-Peru Program, for example, has a heavy concentration in Lima the capital of the country. The *Youth Patrols* Program also concentrates in Lima, its place of origin, due its limited resources. In all cases, the possibilities of replication are directly linked to the availability of human and financial resources.

3.1.5 Innovation Principles

This “principle” as included in the assessment framework refers to the capacity to pursue innovations that can lead to new technologies that contribute to expanded livelihood opportunities. This category includes three aspects: innovation vis-avis the local context, dissemination of new technologies, and development of appropriate technologies.

In theory, all programs consider that capacity to innovate to be important. They see themselves as occupying a niche in terms of services to poor youth, and they see their approaches as holding a comparative advantage over other similar types of initiatives. In practice, however, in most cases it was difficult to quantify how their capacity to innovate translates into practice in terms of use of staff time or other resources.

The larger programs consider innovating as an integral dimension of their regular activities rather than as a discrete, specialized, effort to identify new approaches, methodologies, or opportunities different from those that are part of the program. There is no indication of systematic efforts to seek innovations pro-actively. The small program explicitly considers this as an important dimension but has no expertise in this area. It relies mostly on the practical experience of those working with the program in terms of seeking feedback and ideas.

The identification of opportunities, areas of intervention, or new working modalities seems to be seen as part and parcel of the extended networks of contacts with partner institutions, training agencies, and users. These networks provide general feedback on the activities that may indirectly translate into actual learning and change. In general, however, feedback seems to be linked to the on-going informal assessment of how discrete activities meet the intended objectives. No program has staff trained to pursue areas of innovation, specific resources allocated for such a purpose, or incentive mechanisms that promote innovative behaviours. Despite the fact that the larger programs are highly structured they do not seem to consider this as a discrete area of expertise or as a particular concern.

Stimulating innovation among the participants in the programs is also relative. The programs offer participants with incentives although these only indirectly can be considered as stimulating innovative behaviours, creativity, or innovative thinking. Perhaps the exception is found in the cases where the programs support self-employment initiatives and the participants develop their own small business project. In this instance, and as it is the case with the fast food trolleys, it is possible to find indications of innovation and use of appropriate technologies specifically related to the development of youth livelihood opportunities.

All the larger programs use information and communication technologies. They have well-established systems that include personal computers, local area networks, and Internet access. The main use of these technologies, however, seems to be for internal administrative and management purposes. In the case of *Chile-Joven*, ICTs have been used to reach the public and the users who through Internet access information about courses and about opportunities through

job pools. It was indicated, however, that these technologies do not necessarily improve efficiency or effectiveness as the target population often lack access to them.

3.1.6 Policy Issues

The “policy principle” refers to the extent to which the lessons learned through innovative development of livelihood opportunities contribute to bridging the gap between policy and practice. In most cases, policies that look at youth in an integrated manner and provide a framework for government actions have only recently been put in place.

The policy context within which youth programs operate is complex, differs from country to country, and depends on the nature and scope of the program. In most cases, youth livelihood programs respond to specific policy initiatives intended to address youth unemployment and to compensate for the lack of effectiveness of the education system. From a policy perspective, however, youth is a relatively new area of concern. Only recently have governments developed more comprehensive “youth policies” which are complementary but independent from other social policies such as education.

The government-sponsored programs studied, relate directly to the national policy framework guiding social and economic interventions. They tend to be mostly remedial in nature as they compensate for the gaps resulting from a combination of factors including persistent poverty, processes of radical macro economic reforms, and inefficiencies in the education and social protection systems.

The policy framework to which these programs respond often corresponds to the policies of the main government departments involved in their implementation (i.e., ministries of social affairs, ministries of labour, ministries of education). Depending on the level of government decentralization, the programs operate under national, provincial, and local (municipal) policies that are centrally coordinated. Given their explicit focus and target populations there is not a strong articulation with other social policy areas dealing with youth interventions, with the exception of education and in some instances sport and recreation. Policy linkages are often more directly with policy areas such as economics and labour as many programs reviewed are perceived to be addressing primarily an economic problem (i.e., unemployment).

3.2. Inter-relationships between Principles

The notion of “principles” as defined in the assessment framework encompasses a broad range of specific sets of factors. At one level, these “principles” represent categories of values that individually or as a group are desirable in achieving a specific goal, in this case the development of livelihood and enterprising capacities among youth. At another level, they represent specific operational dimensions in a program, which include a range of measurable factors leading to the production of particular results. To a certain extent, the assessment instrument assumes the former by focussing on the latter as a means to gather information. An important consideration to keep in mind, however, is the extent to which from the perspective of the programs studied, the factors

being assessed reflect the same value assumptions upon which the assessment framework has been built.

The review of the selected cases in LAC seems to show that the social, economic and youth focus principles are the driving considerations in the definition of the programs' immediate objectives, and in terms of the higher social and human development goals they try to achieve. By definition, and from the point of view of their focus and targeting, a "youth focus" is what defines the nature of the programs, their reach, and impact. Operationally, the youth focus is defined as a specific age group fitting into a particular social and economic profile: poor or extremely poor, sometimes socially excluded, often marginal in terms of social and economic background, with low levels of education, and low or no job skills.

From such a perspective, the youth focus is intimately linked to the capacity of and opportunities for young people to achieve minimum sustainable levels of social and economic well being. This is assessed in terms of their social integration into their immediate community and the society at large, and in terms of their productive integration into the world of work.

Operationally, the programs consider aspects such as networking and building networks as a necessary strategic approach to achieving their reach (i.e., their target group, the public) and impact (i.e., the extent to which livelihood and employment opportunities are actually created). This, however, is understood differently depending on the nature of the program (i.e., government versus community-based). Similar nuances are found in how the programs see their linkages to the community. In part due to their scope (i.e., national) and mandate, larger programs perceive their linkages to the community in a broader sense as the ability to "respond" to community needs, especially when their ultimate goals are framed in reference to social and economic inequality and poverty. The smaller program sees itself as responding directly to specific community needs, at times defined in narrow geographic terms, which translates into linkages and interactions with specific groups where the target population is one segment.

Although in different degrees, the "economic principle" is a key underlining consideration cutting across social and youth focus considerations. This is more evident among larger programs. By definition they see themselves as addressing a social and economic problem which expresses itself as youth unemployment and results from slow economic growth, labour market changes, and lack of job opportunities due to instability in the national or local economy.

The centrality of this principle also comes through as a criterion on several other fronts. Economic considerations are central in the targeting of the programs (i.e., pro-poor, youth poor); in the delineation of their operational focus on improving productive skills in response to labour market demands; in their partnership arrangements with the private sector; and their response to demands for a more highly qualified workforce. Differences do exist, however, between the larger programs which are more directly driven by economic considerations, and the community-based program that responds to a "social problem" using as an avenue the creation of economic opportunities.

The other group of “principles” included in the assessment framework (i.e., organization and management, innovation, and policy) seems to be of a different character when it comes to the strategic relevance they may have for the programs studied. In practice, they are perceived primarily as operational considerations rather than as categories of values.

Differences were found in this regard between the large government sponsored programs and the community-based program. For the latter, these “principles” are notional and perhaps desirable considerations in terms of being operationally relevant, but do not necessarily translate into significant actions. In part this is due to the scale of the program, to its limited human and financial resources, and to its structure. For the larger programs, organization and management considerations, for example, have a direct operational relevance in terms of the administration of activities, financial and human resources, and the way in which they fit in with and relate to the government machinery. They value management and organizational efficiency as a positive factor to meeting their objectives, and claim to have sufficient flexibility to adapt to change and respond to emerging demands.

In terms of the extent to which the programs constitute a “learning organization”, there are no strong indications of the centrality of this consideration. Programs do claim to learn from their experiences and promote learning. There are, however, no obvious mechanisms or systems set in place with this in mind, beyond what would be their routine operations. Neither are there resources specifically assigned for this purpose nor discrete activities that could be associated with a dynamic system that is energized by the feedback between operational and value “principles”, except on a minor scale linked more to administrative functioning.

Something similar was found about the “innovation principle”. In theory, all programs acknowledge that the capacity to innovate in terms of both adapting to change and generating novel means and tools to meet their objectives is desirable. In practice, however, there are only few indications that this is done in a systematic manner. At one end, the larger programs seem to perceive innovation as a feature integral to their activities that are part of the normal evolution and growth, but this does not seem to represent a distinct strategic dimension. For the community-based program, innovation is desirable as a means to better carry out their activities, but there is no capacity or expertise to do so systematically.

The “policy principle” is even less tangible as a program consideration. The community-based program does not see this as an immediate concern or to be of immediate relevance, except at a very general level of understanding. The larger programs seem to take the “policy principle” as a contextual consideration and a general guiding framework within which they operate.

At a general level, what appears to have a stronger relevance in terms of goals, objectives, and general direction of the programs studied are the “higher level principles” (i.e., social, economic and youth focus), and the relationships among them. They determine the basic nature of the programs, their design, and their reach and impact. In a way, these “principles” define what these programs are. The operational level “principles” are relevant to the extent that they are desirable aspects that impinge upon the program implementation.

The feedback received from the programs that were reviewed tends to indicate that there is a need to make a clear distinction between the levels of abstraction of the categories being applied to assess success and failure through an assessment framework. The review also indicates that sharpening the criteria that define a given activity within certain desirable parameters must be accompanied by consistent set of measurable indicators. These must allow programs to measure the performance of aspects such as organizational make-up, use of resources, capacities in place, organizational and program skills, delivery, reach, results, and impact.

4. Lessons and Implications. Conclusion

The success or failure of youth programs such as those reviewed in this report have important lessons and policy implications for the efforts underway from governments and civil society organizations to address youth unemployment and social exclusion in LAC. These experiences confirm that identifying innovations, promoting government political commitment to youth issues, developing public-private partnerships, raising awareness, facilitating civil society involvement, and ensuring coordination among actors working with youths are necessary ingredients to successful programs.

Youth programs often operate in a complex policy and socio-economic environment. In the LAC region, policy responses to the need to create youth livelihood opportunities have traditionally focussed on improving the performance of key social sectors. These attempts have been geared to improving access to education and health care services. Only lately, have policy reforms attempted to look at youth in a more integrated manner, linking education and health concerns to issues of employment, social justice, and democratic participation. Recent efforts to creating innovative targeted programs deal with areas as diverse as reproductive health, AIDS and drug use prevention, non-formal education, skills development, community participation, and vocational training.

One important dimension of the current approaches is the fact that governments are no longer the main actors in social welfare provision. The private sector, civil society organizations, and market institutions are all playing greater roles in social service delivery. In such a context, policies and programs intended to open-up youth livelihood opportunities must take into account a broader range of factors and actors.

The persistency and internal dynamics of youth unemployment problems have shown that, despite their relative success, micro approaches, interventions driven by governments alone, or sectoral interventions are not enough in themselves. There is a growing realization that the causes of youth poverty, unemployment and exclusion are rooted in structural factors, and that their solution does not only depend on the availability of or access to training mechanisms. Changing labour markets, the attitude of employers, financing opportunities; and the overall social conditions affecting youths in poverty are all contributing factors requiring comprehensive and coordinated actions.

Many factors interact in making youth programs effective. Decentralization of public actions and the involvement of local and municipal governments, for example, add a new dimension. Adjustment policies, market liberalization, economic integration, and globalization impinge upon the capacity of government, NGO, and private sector actors to respond to the needs of the youth population. And youth themselves are slowly becoming a more active political and social force.

These factors and the experiences to date have taught us that addressing effectively the issue of youth unemployment and creating sustainable livelihood opportunities also requires complementary interventions. These must take into account the on-going changes in the economy, the attitudes and flexibility of the private sector toward younger workers, the capacity of training institutions, and the dynamics of the informal social networks to which young people belong.

On-going experiences also show that there are still areas that could benefit from further attention. One of the weakest is the systematic evaluation of what works, particularly in the case of initiatives that are national in scope. Despite signs of success, experiences to date make it difficult to conclude whether the national policies and programs put in place have been successful. Programs that are narrower in scope and that depend more on community-based initiatives may show more obvious indications of relative success at the micro level, but their potential policy implications are largely unknown.

To no surprise, the issue of resources, both human and financial, is central to the success of most programs. Lessons in this regard point to some areas of concern. Qualified human resources capable of working across sectors are in many instances a scarce commodity, and even more so, are youth experts who can work outside sectoral or disciplinary boundaries and have a capacity to generate and manage innovations. This in turn, raises the importance of training for the personnel working in youth programs. There is a realization that learning on-the-job must be complemented with formal professional development, while keeping a balance in terms of administrative costs.

The availability of financial resources that ensures the programs' sustainability and allows them to achieve their ambitious objectives is a permanent concern. Lessons show that dependency upon government funds alone can be as detrimental to long-term success as dependency upon international assistance or non-government sources. In many instances youths are considered a "high risk" sector thus limiting the initiatives and opportunities they have in terms of self-employment and entrepreneurship. Attempts to open opportunities for micro enterprise development, for example, have encountered obstacles due to the lack of private sector confidence and a lack of opportunities to access credit, particularly for the younger segment of the target group.

There is thus a recognition of the need to build the programs' capacity to diversify their funding sources, develop expertise in revenue generation, develop new forms of public-private partnerships, and develop cost recovery approaches. Developing these capacities, however, goes hand in hand with strengthening the programs' capacity to assess their success and failures; enhance their means of public accountability; and develop marketing and dissemination

strategies. Government funded programs must balance their role as providers of public goods while responding to the diversity of demands from private sector partners which may rely more heavily on the capacity of the market to correct social ills. Community-based programs, must develop systems that make their operations more transparent to those outside their immediate circle of supporters, to attract resources and increase their potential for replication when successful.

Addressing the impact of globalization and the changes of productive systems into knowledge-based economies also poses new challenges. Balancing remedial, responsive, pro-active and innovative approaches is an on-going challenge. In such a context, using ICTs, for example, is a need but one which comes with risks. It may create the illusion of successful reach, while in fact the reality is that these technologies are still available to a small segment of the target population.

From the perspective of the assessment framework adopted for the study, what appears to have a stronger relevance in terms of goals, objectives, and general direction of the programs studied are the “higher level principles” (i.e., social, economic and youth focus), and the relationships among them. They determine the basic nature of the programs, their design, and their reach and impact. In a way, these “principles” define what these programs are. What this report identifies as “operational level principles” are relevant to the extent that they are desirable sets of factors which impinge upon program implementation. This may suggest the need for a careful re-assessment of the framework if this is to become a tool intended to respond to the needs of programs that operate under a wide range of circumstances, involve diverse actors, and respond to diverse cultural and social settings.

Considering the scope of this review, the experience with youth programs to date in LAC, and in particular the information from the cases that were studied, a number of aspects that need further consideration in terms of initiatives geared toward enhancing youth livelihood opportunities have been identified. The review shows that there is series of factors that have the potential to contribute to the success of future efforts.

- **Governments Remain a Key Actor.** The complex social, economic and policy environment in most countries of the region is likely to require the continuous involvement of governments in playing a key role in the development of youth programs. One strong lesson learned to date is that market mechanisms or NGO initiatives alone will not solve current youth problems. Social and economic inequalities as key factors in the reproduction of the conditions leading to youth unemployment and exclusion are structural and deeply rooted in society. The historical experience shows that market mechanisms tend to worsen rather than help overcome the social divide, with greater negative impact on the most vulnerable groups. Poor youth, and particularly young women, are too weak in terms of political and social participation to articulate or influence market demands in a significant fashion. At the same time, without government involvement, the magnitude of the problem is likely to surpass the capacity of civil society organizations. Despite their effectiveness at the micro level, these organizations are often fragmented and lack sufficient human and capital resources for large scale or sustained operations.

- **A Need for New Partnerships.** A lesson to be drawn from the review of government-sponsored programs is that despite the need for government involvement, this by itself is not sufficient. Other actors need to be involved such as the private sector, the NGO community, and international organizations. Establishing such networks, however, is not an easy task. The case studies indicated that actions must be taken on several fronts. These include steps such as establishing accountable financial mechanisms to create trust around initiatives aimed at solving youth problems; strengthening the means to develop public awareness about youth issues; building more effective bridges between social sectors and the world of work, between the enterprises and youth training institutions, between youth employment programs and youth organizations; and supporting NGOs working with youth.
- **Greater Coordination.** One of the greatest challenges of many youth programs is complementing efforts with other initiatives and avoiding duplication. At the policy level, the recent attempts to implement social policy reforms in education and health seek to address this issue. However, greater policy coordination is required at the sectoral level (macro level of ministries and regional directions). At the operational level, more program integration is needed at the local level (micro level of municipalities, NGOs and grass root organizations). These must translate into the creation of new forms of cooperation among programs, not only within the countries but also across countries and regions. Partnerships based on horizontal cooperation among institutions should be emphasized particularly for the transference of policy and program experiences and innovations.
- **Improving Program Performance.** Although the programs examined show an overall satisfactory performance, there are indications that effectiveness and efficiency can be improved further. Areas that merit particular attention include improving knowledge and information sharing across youth programs by facilitating the exchange of experiences through workshops, seminars and short-term exchanges of personnel that may contribute to promoting innovation and learning about more effective and efficient program operations. Knowledge dissemination about good practices and lessons learned among actual and potential partners at the national and regional level is another area. On-going monitoring and assessment of results and impact are central to improving performance.
- **Training of Human Resources.** One important gap identified through the review is the need for qualified human resources. Youth programs require knowledgeable personnel sensitive to youth needs in a vast range of areas related to the development of youth livelihood opportunities. In addition to the allocation of resources for this purpose, partnerships can be established among institutions for the development of training materials, organization of training seminars, and use of distance education that could assist program staff to further develop their skills. In this area, international cooperation and the use of ICTs can play an important role.
- **Developing Business Plans.** A critical issue to all programs is financial resources and their impact on sustainability. Common features found through the review was the dependence of

programs upon single funding sources (i.e. government; international cooperation), their lack of a strategic approach to revenue diversification, and their lack of in-house expertise in this area. In the case of small programs, this gap severely limits their capacity to innovate. There is a need for youth programs such as those studied to incorporate in their strategic approach the systematic development of alternative funding sources.

- **Improving Monitoring and Evaluation.** With some difference among programs, there is an important gap concerning their capacity to monitor and evaluate their activities in terms of reach and impact. This implies strengthening indicators and data collection systems where they exist; training personnel in data analysis and evaluation, and incorporating outcomes assessment as a feedback mechanism into their planning and programming processes. This area is perhaps one of the most critical to generating positive change, avoiding duplications, and attracting public support.

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