

# The education, training and decent work Continuum



## Opportunities for transformative perspectives for inclusion

Initial evidence from the field: examples from five Swiss development cooperation projects

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## Partners

### NORRAG

NORRAG is a global network of 5,000 members for international policies and cooperation in education and training. NORRAG's core mandate is to produce, disseminate and broker critical knowledge and to build capacity for and with the wide range of stakeholders who constitute our network. Our stakeholders from academia, governments, NGOs, international organizations, foundations and the private sector inform and shape education policies and practice at national and international levels. Through our work, we seek to support our stakeholders with more accessible and improved knowledge, surfacing under-represented expertise, so that they can act in context-relevant ways. In these ways, NORRAG contributes to creating the conditions for more participatory, evidence-informed decisions that improve equal access to and quality of education and training.

### IPE/PHZH

The Department for International Projects in Education (IPE) of the Zurich University of Teacher Education (PH Zurich) has longstanding experience in educational development and cooperation and in knowledge exchange between universities. The focus is on contributing to pre-service training or professional development for teachers as well as school principals, parents and officials in the following areas: Teaching Methods, teaching of life skills, democracy education, job orientation, migration and education, transculturality. IPE works mostly with partner institutions in Southeastern and Eastern Europe, but also implement projects in the Caucasus, the MENA region as well as in Western Africa. In close cooperation with its partners, the department has developed teaching materials in the fields of job orientation (<https://ipe-textbooks.phzh.ch/de/job-orientation/>) and life skills/personal development (see <https://ipe-textbooks.phzh.ch/de/life-skills/>) and plans to continue work in this area in several countries.

### RECI

RECI, the Swiss Network for Education and International Cooperation, is an independent, non-profit network of 30 Swiss-based NGOs, academic institutions and individuals that promote the right to education for all. RECI brings together and promotes expertise in quality, inclusive and equitable education and lifelong learning for all. The network works within the framework of sustainable development and international cooperation to help strengthen the quality of educational practices and policies around the world.

## Foreword

This report examines the Continuum between education, training and work from a bottom-up perspective. It is based on the presentation and analysis of five projects by members of the Swiss Network for Education and International Cooperation (RECI).

The report starts with a brief introduction of the notion of Continuum, with a focus on the discontinuities that currently exist between its constituent entities<sup>1</sup>: education, training and decent work.<sup>2</sup> Existing discontinuities between these three fields appear to create and reinforce exclusion and inequality for marginalized segments of the population. We argue that treating the three fields as a continuum would allow for the re-integration of people who have been excluded from the “standard” journey between education, training and decent jobs. It then introduces and analyses five projects and draws lessons from across the five case studies.

The five projects are as follows:

- Social inclusion of Roma through education, employment and socio-economic support in Bosnia and Herzegovina (Caritas Switzerland)
- Education, work and peace: Promising opportunities for young adults in Soacha, Colombia (Vivamos Mejor)
- Alternative education programme for young people in Niger (Enfants du Monde with Swisscontact)
- Job orientation training in businesses and schools in Romania (Zürich University of Teacher Education (PHZH), Department of International Projects in Education)
- ON-D-GO: Developing the employability skills of displaced persons in Switzerland and six other European countries, (Swiss Federation for Adult Learning).

## Key lessons

### The nature of the education-training-work Continuum

Formal and non-formal learning; basic and vocational education and training in educational establishments and workplaces as well as working are complementary processes that interact independently of the sequential order in which they are undertaken. Knowledge and skills acquired along the diverse pathways followed can be recognised. Governance arrangements are needed to mediate between the different interests of stakeholders in education, training and work in order to fight against discontinuities. These arrangements must reflect a compromise for individuals between a) their needs in education and training and b) their right and needs to subsistence through work.

### For an efficient implementation of a Continuum

Developing connectivity between a Continuum’s stakeholders at the micro, meso and macro levels is critical in concretizing the vision of a Continuum. The consecutive and progressive development of interactions between the components of a Continuum can better be dealt with through a programme (rather than a project) which clearly defines the target population, alongside clear open-ended objectives. This co-creation process should allow the stakeholders to appropriate the Continuum perspectives. Efficient and participatory management facilitates Continuum programmes to cope with their embedded complexity and achieve quality output.

A combination of different evidence’s sources (research based, programme and project based, and participatory) is useful to address the diversity of evidence produced by disparate stakeholders.

### Broader implications for society

A Continuum approach goes beyond standard professional guidance to individuals regarding their education, training and employability. It demands a wide investment from organisations, governments and societies – in addition to the concerned individuals.

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<sup>1</sup> When discussing education, training and work, we use the terms entity, component, domain or field, not sector as this implies the notion of “silo”, and hence do not reflect the targeted interactive domains of a Continuum. The education, training and work Continuum will be referred to as “the Continuum” (with a capital C).

<sup>2</sup> Cf: <https://www.ilo.org/global/topics/decent-work/lang--en/index.htm> We use the term Work, that includes different dimensions such as income generating activities (whether employment or entrepreneurial activities), professional relations, and more.

Innovative perspectives are developing. An intergenerational vision of the Continuum is present in early childhood care that also supports parents' training and work, and in paid work that is invested by children back into their parents' or children's wellbeing. Short and long-term education, training and work solutions are required for refugees and migrants, potentially via corporate social responsibility financing, as well as integration through market-oriented training opportunities or community development projects. These actions can be complemented by the recognition of the migrant's prior learning. Urbanisation is accelerating worldwide and is linked to demographic migration shifts and increasing levels of both poverty and inequality, both for youth and adults. The concept of Learning Cities – proposed by UNESCO – lends itself well to a Continuum approach.

The Continuum perspective can't be subsumed to a mere "social" issue stemming from exclusion and inequality, being detached from any other consideration. A Continuum must be considered as a sum of interlinked economic, political and societal variables, articulated with key environmental and sustainable development consequences.

## Glossary

<b>CD</b>	Capacity development
<b>CSO</b>	Civil society organization
<b>GEMR</b>	Global education monitoring report
<b>GPE</b>	Global partnership for education
<b>IDP</b>	Internally displaced person
<b>LDC</b>	Least developed country
<b>LLL</b>	Lifelong learning
<b>NEET</b>	Not in education, employment, training
<b>NFE</b>	Non-formal education
<b>PASEC</b>	Programme d'analyse des systèmes éducatifs de la CONFEMEN (Conférence des ministres de l'éducation nationale des pays africains et malgache d'expression française)
<b>RPL</b>	Recognition of prior learning ( <i>Validation des acquis de l'expérience VAE</i> )
<b>SDC</b>	Swiss agency for development and cooperation
<b>SDGs</b>	Sustainable development goals
<b>TVSD</b>	Technical and vocational skills development
<b>TVET</b>	Technical and vocational education and training (part of TVSD)
<b>VET</b>	Vocational education and training (part of TVET)

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## The Continuum: concept or notion?

In their current formulation and practice, discontinuities between the fields of education, training and work create many problems for learners and workers of any age. Education, training and work systems operate on the assumption that an individual follows a straight and linear path from basic education, to professional training, and on to work; and that each of these processes takes place in places and spaces dedicated to either education or training or work alone. And yet, this path is far from the norm among marginalized populations in the South and North<sup>3</sup> and are particularly atypical of those who have never been to school or have left schooling: those without vocational training or employment opportunities, unemployed graduates, and youth and adults without basic education. These discontinuities thus create and reinforce exclusion and inequality<sup>4</sup> for already excluded groups.

To address these problems, we propose the notion<sup>5</sup> of a Continuum between education, training and work. In contrast to the discontinuities between the existing silos of education, training and work, a Continuum involves different types of transitions from one constituting field to others, regardless of the order they follow. This perspective is also relevant for each of the three domains individually since there might be some discontinuities between each sub-component of the domains e.g., between end of primary education and the next stages of child development. The situation is the same in the fields of training and work. The approach consisting to consider education, training and work as components of a Continuum should allow those currently excluded to “travel” between any component of the Continuum at any time and in any order. Hence the main objective of promoting a Continuum approach to education, training and work is the (re)-inclusion in society of these categories of people.

It means that they have the possibility to acquire values, skills and knowledge proposed by the multiplicity of public and private stakeholders and organizations potentially positioned on the Continuum. It consequently implies that the knowledge and skills acquired during their “journey” are recognized after any “stop overs” in any of the three fields of the Continuum. The prerequisite for that journey – and its recognition – is that bridges exist between these fields. This condition being fulfilled, the Continuum is the way to facilitate the (re)-inclusion of excluded youth and adults in their socio-economic environment.<sup>6</sup>

Such an approach disrupts the “traditional” straight, linear and chronological progression, in which an individual passes without discontinuities from education (mostly synonymous with schooling), to training (mostly reflecting the school model, but applied to youth and adults) and work (mostly based on a stable employment model). The limits of this model have progressively appeared in the South and North, resulting in dramatic consequences in terms of exclusion and increasing inequalities between individuals, within and between countries<sup>7</sup>. The existing discontinuous model has created problems that it is not capable of addressing.

Attempts have been made since the 60’s to counter the negative consequences of the discontinuities between the silos of education, training and work. Different concepts, policies and actions have been developed, including *transition*, *vocationalisation*, *employability*, *diversification*, *post-primary education*. Following the one of *permanent education*, the concept of *lifelong learning* appeared in the 70’s with a more individualized approach than the previous ones that were at sub-systems levels. Lifelong learning complements the continuum perspective we present but, being centred on individuals, it does not address the fact is that the parties at work in each component of a Continuum have partly diverging objectives, which is normal. The choke point lies then in the definition and implementation of strong public policies, implemented by public and/or private bodies at a decentralized level, proposing and supporting such a Continuum on a large scale. Thus, the key issue is governance arrangements to be put in place – an issue that is as important as financial, pedagogical, organizational aspects.

This report argues that treating the fields of education, training and work as discontinuous creates many problems which could be solved if they were rather understood as embedded within a Continuum. These discontinuities may create and reinforce social and economic exclusion and inequality for disadvantaged groups in society (in school and out of school youth, youths without vocational training or employment opportunities, unemployed graduates,

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<sup>3</sup> “North” and “South” will be used as an easy option, even though the authors are in agreement with their critic!

<sup>4</sup> Duru-Bellat M, (2015), *Social Inequality and Schooling*, International Encyclopaedia of the Social and Behavioural Sciences (second edition). Retrieved from <https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/B9780080970868920154>

<sup>5</sup> A concept is the output of an important elaboration process. A notion is still at a social representation stage under a refinement progress. The Continuum is at an intermediary stage of development.

<sup>6</sup> The notion of inclusion is central to the SDG ambition to Leave No One Behind (including SDG 10 dealing with the reduction of inequalities), as well as being the theme of the 2020 Global Education Monitoring Report.

<sup>7</sup> Ferreira, I-A, Gisselquist, R-M, Tarp, F. On the Impact of Inequality on Growth, Human Development, and Governance (2021), WIDER Working Paper 2021/14 ; 2019 Human Development Report to focus on Inequality: <https://www.wider.unu.edu/publication/impact-inequality-growth-human-development-and-governance>

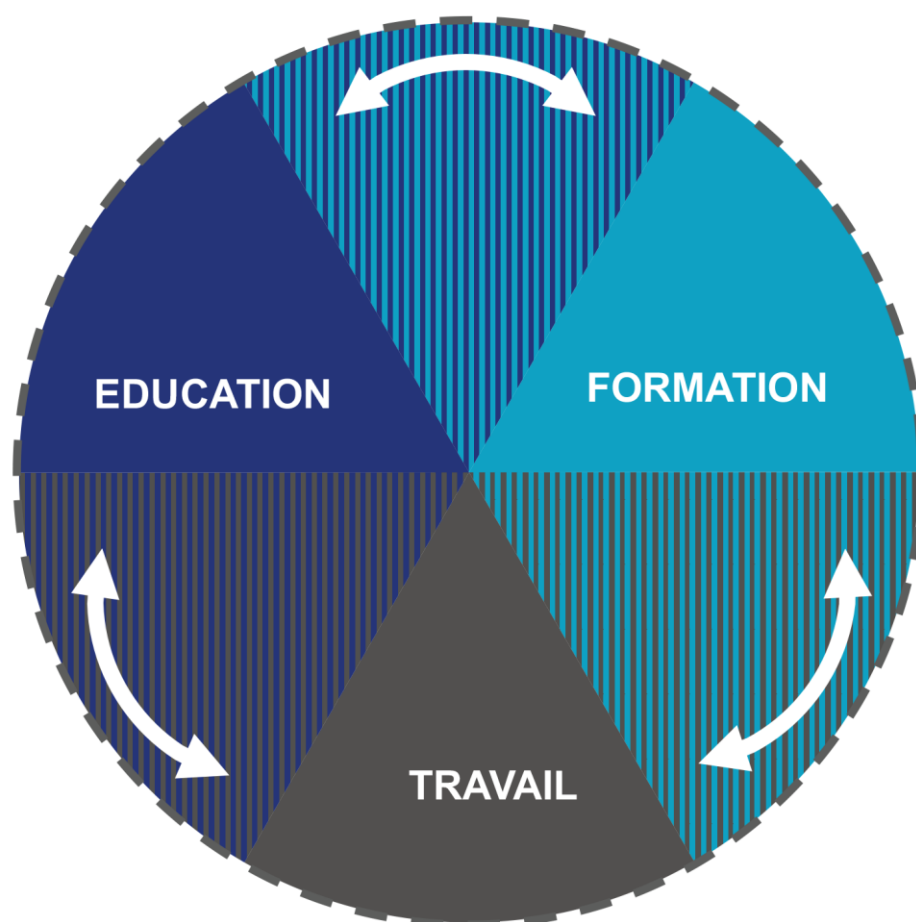
as well as youth and adults without basic education).<sup>8</sup> Hence the importance of embarking on a Continuum strategy.

### The education-training-work Nexus : A first step towards a Continuum?

The following Figure 1 reflects the situation towards which the Continuum stakeholders would ideally tend to evolve. Each of the three portions of the figure is divided in two parts: one specific to the field, the other shared with the proximate field. The shared part, reflecting the extended continuities that should exist between them, is flexible in practice in order to fit the needs and demands of the participants. This flexibility should also allow regulate the conflicting logics of the education, training and work domains (e.g., when business tries to collaborate with education - or the opposite - to create bridges between the two domains). One can then consider that continuities are built in the system, so that there is a possibility of passing from one component of the field to any of the other two ones, at any time and in any order.

This approach is also used, to a lesser extent, to build bridges between existing silos in humanitarian work where tensions between humanitarian, development and peace perspectives are even stronger than for a Continuum. In that case, the notion of nexus is used for defining the minimum dose of continuity that should/could be put in place to engage a dynamic change. This could be also be applied as the first progressive development stage towards a Continuum.

Figure 1:



Coming back to the education-training-work Continuum, people who could “travel” without friction between the previously discontinuous paths between these three components, because of the recognition of their prior learning, would then be able to avail themselves of possibilities for acquiring and developing the necessary skills, knowledge and values that are proposed by the multiplicity of public, private and voluntary sector stakeholders active in a Continuum. The Continuum is not a prerequisite for the socio-economic success of for this category of people. We argue that strengthening the relations between the different aspects of education, training and decent work, better serves those people who are not privileged in educational, financial or social capital. This reflection is timely, as it demonstrates the interactions between the United Nations’ Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) 4 (Quality education), 8 (Decent work and economic growth) and 10 (Reduced inequality).

<sup>8</sup> World Inequality Database in Education <https://www.education-inequalities.org/>;

## Objective of the Study

The objective of this study is to present five selected Swiss development cooperation projects run by RECI members, that might provide evidence that supports the use of a Continuum perspective across education, training, and work. To this end, the projects serve as case studies and are analysed in order to draw lessons that might be used in the development of the projects presented, and to learn across the cases.

RECI members know from experience that implementing an innovative vision like an education-training-work Continuum is difficult. Each of its constituent fields is embedded in institutions, organizations, norms and processes that tend to lock it off behind walls of a silo, each with their own financial, political and technical constraints, and which is inclined to become further shut into a self-protecting bureaucracy.

The presented case studies therefore aim to:

- identify existing discontinuities between the education, training and work fields (each field including formal and non-formal dimensions);
- point out the progressive steps towards achieving a Continuum, based on self (RECI members) and external (RECI Continuum Project team) analysis, (reflecting on some lessons learned from these varied experiences and identifying difficulties and progress);
- suggest innovations in order to find ways of solving the problems that stem from the identified discontinuities (especially exclusion and inequality);
- identify potential paths to reach the main objective of the Continuum (e.g., the socio-economic inclusion of children, youth and adults affected by the lack of continuities between the fields of education, training and work);
- open a reflection on the evolution of the notion of Continuum in the context of debates on the future of education, training and work, in addition to a lifelong learning approach.

## Methodology

In order to contribute to an important debate on the missing links and interactions between the education, training and work “silos” which often prevent the inclusion of marginalized populations, RECI members drew on their own experience and knowledge. We report on five cases that explore the innovative and transformative potential of developing interactions between these key areas.

Illustrative case studies from RECI members’ projects were selected based on their degree of proximity to an “ideal” Continuum presented above, as defined by the project team. The main criteria consisted of the presence of a minimum of two of the three fields (education, training and work) in the project, and the potential for the inclusion of “left behind” populations and individuals. A strong potential innovative or transformative dimension was an additional subjective criterion, added into the project as a complement to other aspects studied (e.g., professional orientation, income-generating activities) or as a stand-alone criterion.



**Table 1: Summary of case studies**

<b>RECI member</b>	Caritas Switzerland	Vivamos mejor	Enfants du Monde (in collaboration with Swisscontact)	Zurich University of Teacher Education (PHZH)	Swiss Federation for Adult Learning (SVEB)
<b>Country</b>	<b>Bosnia &amp; Herzegovina</b>	<b>Colombia</b>	<b>Niger</b>	<b>Romania</b>	<b>Switzerland</b>
<b>Project title</b>	Inclusion of Roma via education, employment/employability and socio-economic support	Education, work and peace: promising opportunities for young adults in Soacha	PEAJ - Alternative education programme for unschooled children and second-chance youth	JOBS - Job orientation training in businesses and schools	ON-D-GO – Developing the employability skills of displaced persons
<b>Dates</b>	2017-19	2018-21	1 <sup>st</sup> phase: 2015-2018	2009-2019	2017-19
<b>Target population</b>	Roma	IDPs	Mainly in rural and some urban settings: settled, nomadic and cross-border populations	semi-rural and urban regions; some Roma (incidental)	Migrants and refugees
<b>Project focus</b>	Reduce gap between Roma and non-Roma populations in education and training (and therefore employment)	bridge secondary school leavers and training to employment	Donor: Pathways to employment; education that fits with the social and economic realities of the participants	Develop the skills needed for the labour market in school settings in a dual system	Basic and entrepreneurial skills for migrants and refugees; professionalisation of trainers
<b>Continuum elements</b>	Education, training, self-employment	Formal training and employment	Bringing expertise in education together with complementary expertise in TVET and income generation	VET in school - develop dual system	Basic education in order to access TVET or entrepreneurship

The case study data were collected through a written questionnaire completed by the NGOs, followed by face-to-face interviews in Switzerland. Three Northern and two Southern-based projects were selected on the assumption that a knowledge and skill cross-fertilization process could develop given that exclusion and social inequality are found everywhere in the world. The first preparatory phase of the study ran from September 2018 to March 2019 and focused on developing the case studies and reflecting on those experiences. The second phase was carried out in June 2019 and consisted of a broader consultation with stakeholders in Switzerland - such as public and private development cooperation organizations active in the fields of basic education and vocational skills development, policy makers and practitioners from the worlds of education, training and work, as well as IOs and academia.

The lessons learned, suggestions and highlights that resonate with some of the key characteristics of a Continuum are presented in Chapter 6. They should neither be considered as evaluative, nor do they implicitly refer to an “ideal type” or “one size fits all” vision of a Continuum. Given the complexity and diversity of the case studies, building a model for identifying concrete objectives, strategies and policies for implementation falls out of the scope of this document, as it only focuses on experience, information, and analysis of RECI members (mostly based in the North) and of institutional partners in the field. That is why, it is necessary to further collect the understandings of local stakeholders (administrators, parents, teachers, youth, entrepreneurs) and their translations of the Continuum notion in their specific context. This contextualised perspective is reflected in the text by the distinction being made between THE Continuum as a notion and A Continuum as the framework for experimenting/deepening the notion in the field. This can only be achieved through a further data collection via a participatory research. Such a progressive iterative process for capacity development could in turn contribute to cross-fertilizing knowledge from different projects and develop specific contextualized visions for the future. Finally, this could lead to the creation of a core knowledge and skills package about the Continuum.

# Chapter 1: Inclusion of Roma in Bosnia and Herzegovina

Organization: Caritas Switzerland

## Brief description of the project

### Context

From the end of the armed conflict and the first reconstruction activities in 1995, Bosnia and Herzegovina (BiH) went through a period of sustained steady growth until it was halted by the global financial crisis, leading to a period of stagnation between 2008 and 2012. The country underwent a modest recovery in 2013, followed by a series of natural disasters in 2014, when floods and landslides left a devastating impact on the country's population and infrastructure. Currently, BiH faces major socio-economic challenges, with extremely high unemployment rates, especially for the country's youth. According to the ILO,<sup>9</sup> 2017 figures show that the overall unemployment rate reached approximately 20.5%, while the youth unemployment rate (aged 15-24) hit 45.8%. Throughout 2014 and 2015, this rate peaked at nearly 63%. The share of youth classed as "Not in Employment, Education, or Training" (NEET) in 2017 was estimated at 24.3% of the total youth population.

BiH has a complex governance system, with several levels of political structures arising from the signature of the Dayton Agreement in December 1995. The country is composed of two constitutional and legal entities - the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina and the Republica Srpska. In addition, there is the self-governing Brcko District. The entity Federation BiH is divided into ten cantons, which are then divided further into municipalities. The entity Republica Srpska has a different, more centralised structure.

The project under consideration is being implemented in the cantons of Sarajevo and Zenica-Doboj, both part of the Federation of BiH. In the Federation, the Ministry of Education exists at the entity level. However, the main responsibility for compulsory and tertiary education — including budgeting and financing, management and curricula — lies with the cantons. Professional education in BiH takes place at professional schools and is mostly theory-based. Consequently, many graduates are missing the necessary practical skills to find a job.

Minority groups face persistent structural discrimination in areas of employment, education, and representation. Roma are considered one of the most vulnerable groups and are subject to widespread discrimination in all spheres of life. Almost 80% of Roma children live in poverty and their level of school enrolment is significantly lower than the national average<sup>10</sup>. Nearly 60% of adult Roma are unemployed<sup>11</sup> and many have low levels of professional expertise. BiH has taken part in the international intergovernmental initiatives "Decade of Roma Inclusion 2005 – 2015", and the "Roma Integration 2020"<sup>12</sup> through which governments were obliged to guarantee funds for better living conditions of Roma.

Roma parents migrate frequently to other countries or seasonally within BiH to seek asylum, for begging or temporary work opportunities. During these longer absences, families also usually take their school-aged children with them, even in the middle of the school year. Longer-term absence from both classes and exams often prevents the children from attending the next school year.

Caritas Switzerland (hereinafter Caritas) has been present in BiH since 1993, originally providing humanitarian assistance during the conflict, then shifting to a more development and cooperation-style approach. The organization is well known and has earned a certain reputation, mainly for long-term pillar activities in agriculture, education and income generation, and more recently with projects tackling climate change.

### Main objectives and participants of the project

The project "Inclusion of Roma via Education, Employment/Employability and Socio-Economic Support, 2017-2019" is the continuation of a project launched in 2010 to improve the educational prospects of Roma in the country. It builds upon a well-established approach for the inclusion of Roma and other vulnerable groups in BiH through the provision of quality primary and secondary education, technical and vocational education and training (TVET),

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<sup>9</sup> ILO Stat, Country Profile: Bosnia and Herzegovina [https://www.ilo.org/shinyapps/bulkexplorer18/?lang=en&segment=indicator&id=UNE\\_DEAP\\_SEX\\_AGE\\_RT\\_A](https://www.ilo.org/shinyapps/bulkexplorer18/?lang=en&segment=indicator&id=UNE_DEAP_SEX_AGE_RT_A) This link provides the 2020 figures. The 2017 figures appear in the BH GO TO EXPLORER sub-component of the table

<sup>10</sup> Caritas. (n.d.). *Country programme of Bosnia and Herzegovina*. Retrieved 2020, from <https://www.caritas.ch/en/what-we-do/worldwide/country-programmes/country-programme-of-bosnia-herzegovina.html>

<sup>11</sup> UNDP. (2018, April 8). *Regional Roma Survey 2017: Country fact sheets*. Retrieved 2020, from <http://www.eurasia.undp.org/content/rbec/en/home/library/roma/regional-roma-survey-2017-country-fact-sheets.html>

<sup>12</sup> Regional Cooperation Council. (n.d.). *Home*. Retrieved 2020, from <https://www.rcc.int/romaintegration2020/pages/4/roma-decade-and-the-eu> AND <https://www.rcc.int/romaintegration2020/home>

as well as both employment and socio-economic support. In terms of needs, Caritas identifies participants by going to municipalities where there is a clearly identified marginalized group belonging to the poorest strata of the population. This is in line with Caritas' vision to eradicate poverty. The project mostly targets Roma families but also addresses other vulnerable groups.

The overall goal of the project is to enhance the socio-economic inclusion of Roma into the Bosniak society. To this end, the project is looking to reduce the gap between Roma (and other vulnerable groups) and the non-Roma majority population through the promotion of equal access to quality education and training opportunities. The project is directed at three target groups: the schooling part of the project targets pupils from elementary schools (aged 6-15) and secondary schools (aged 15-19), while the VET part of the project targets adults. Additionally, the project enables teaching staff, Roma mediators and social workers involved in the project's activities.

The schooling part of the project is implemented across seven schools (five elementary schools and two secondary schools) in the Cantons of Sarajevo and Zenica-Doboj. It also includes the monitoring of eight primary schools from previous project phases. The focus is placed on increasing enrolment of vulnerable children in elementary and secondary schools, while paying particular attention to the transition from elementary to secondary education and early orientation for later professional training. After completing school, the participants should be in the same position as other children and have equal chances for accessing the job market.

The idea is that, in addition to academic skills, they will also have acquired new social skills that will empower and enable them to interact with most of the society in a meaningful way. Support is mainly provided through scholarships, additional tuition classes, professional orientation training, provision of school material, and provision of food and hygienic packages for the most vulnerable families.

For a better outreach to the targeted Roma households and their community, Roma mediators and social workers are working in close cooperation with the collaborating schools. Being usually ethnic Roma themselves, the mediators are uniquely familiar with these communities and understand their needs. They facilitate communication and exchange between the different stakeholders involved, helping to build trust, mediating conflicts, raising awareness for the importance of schooling and addressing socio-economic challenges within certain families. They also address issues that might prevent school attendance, such as missing civil registry documents or insufficient hygiene practices at home. A campaign for raising awareness on human trafficking has also been included in the project, as children of vulnerable families are particularly prone to becoming victims of criminal activities.

While various groups face discrimination across BiH, discrimination against Roma may be the most frequent and visible. But a mid-term evaluation of the project demonstrated that the activities implemented had significantly contributed to enrolling and retaining more Roma students in the schooling system. As a result of the additional classes, students' self-confidence had increased, and they achieved higher grades. Parents' attitudes towards schooling had become more positive and cooperation had improved. The TVET part of the project, aimed at young adults without a professional education or who cannot find jobs in their field of education, were given opportunities for accessing the labour market through training, whether pre-qualification or certification. This has facilitated interactions with some firms that have recruited some of the young adults coming from the project.

## Partners

Caritas implements the project with two local NGOs:

- Centre for Educational Initiatives Step by Step in Sarajevo Canton
- Association for Development LEDA in Zenica-Doboj Canton

In addition, the following stakeholders are involved in the implementation of the project:

- **State level:** Ministry for Human Rights and Refugees.
- **Cantonal level:** Ministry for Education, Science and Youth of Canton Sarajevo and Pedagogical Institute Sarajevo, Centre for Social work of Canton Sarajevo; Ministry for Education, Science and Culture of Zenica-Doboj Canton and Pedagogical Institute Zenica-Doboj Canton.
- **Municipality level:** Partnering schools and other institutions such as the Centre for Social work of Zenica, the Centre of Social work of Kakanj and the Centre of Social work of Zavidovići.

## The project as seen through the Continuum lens

### Connection between education, training and work

The notion of Continuum can be illustrated at different levels within the Caritas project. The first one is within the area of schooling. One of the project's goals is to achieve higher enrolment and reduced dropout rates amongst Roma pupils. To this end, a special focus is put on children who have dropped out, but who are ready to attend school again. Through collaboration with school directors and based on national and state legislation, they try to find the best solution to re-enrol children and, upon re-enrolment, to provide students with support such as additional tuition so that they can catch up. Social workers and Roma mediators also provide assistance with getting to know the school environment and enhancing the children's' understanding of their rights and responsibilities as students. Furthermore, Caritas recently added an additional Continuum component by launching a preschool education project with the objective of preparing children from vulnerable Roma families for entering the school system<sup>13</sup>.

A second layer looks at improving the employability of the target population. The term "employability" refers to the pre-conditions that allow for future employment. In the regular schooling system, the approach is to provide holistic support to keep Roma children, as well as children from other vulnerable groups, in education. This would then facilitate the transition to professional training and support them in finding employment afterwards. In parallel, the Roma mediators and partnering NGOs pay close attention to what is going on in the municipalities. For instance, if a young adult has returned (or been expelled) from a different country, they will seek to include them into the regular school system, formal or non-formal VET activities, or other ongoing activities. This reflects the high level of flexibility between the different components of the project.

One of Caritas' flagship activities in BiH is supporting smallholder farmers. In brief, this income-generation project initially targeted the most marginalized strata of society in structurally weak regions of BiH and regions that had been particularly affected by armed conflict. Caritas identified a sector of activity that could not be replaced by automation and which did not require much input in terms of resources. The choice fell on the cultivation of raspberries as soil conditions were good, it entailed manual work that could not be replaced by mechanization, there was no need for educational qualifications, it offered the possibility for training people within a very short time, and it secured a relatively good income with relatively low input. The project started small and targeted people living in poverty. It succeeded in creating over 2,000 jobs and has now become a business project whose initial participants have become small entrepreneurs. With the same rationale, about eight participants have been engaged in the production of pickled cucumbers since 2017.

This example illustrates how a project addressing the exclusion of a vulnerable group can be implemented through education, skills development and income generation components. It is a way to concretely connect the participants with the producers for both their training and employment in order to relate the world of work. These different layers function in parallel. This is by no means a closed approach, and pupils and young adults can enter and exit different components of the project, depending on their life situation. It happens that some families suddenly leave, and nobody knows where they went, not even the Roma mediator. Tracer studies and monitoring data exist and helps Caritas to keep track of migration figures<sup>14</sup>. By adjusting to the mobility dimensions of the Roma population, the project reflects the lifelong learning dimension of the notion of Continuum, allowing participants to re-connect to education, training and/or work at any time. This is a significant difference from the linear vision that imposes the progressive passing from education to training and work as a pre-condition for quality and efficient employability.

Finally, the notion of Continuum is envisaged in an integrated approach that goes beyond the project. Caritas seeks to make its activities interact and avoid functioning in silos. Their work in education could be defined as an intra-school continuum, aimed at securing for all children the best conditions for moving productively within and across all aspects of Education-Training-Work. Furthermore, individuals may be included in whichever part of the project best suits their needs, and income generation activities are supported independent of the mainstream that tends to exclude this population.

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<sup>13</sup> Primary Education for all Children (PEACH), launched over the summer of 2018.

<sup>14</sup> Keeping track of children and youth migration patterns is not always possible. In practice, school management is not always familiar with the reasons why an individual child has left the school system. This often happens when parents decide to leave, and do not explain why and where they are going. Roma mediators and project social workers must then go out into the field and try to find reasons for dropping out from school.

## Governance / Scaling Up / Sustainability

The project fosters cooperation between the above-mentioned ministries, the cantonal and municipal centres for social work, teaching institutes, municipal services and the targeted schools. At the national level, Caritas has developed a strong working relationship over the years with the Ministry for Human Rights and Refugees. This cooperation has led to two key outcomes: not only has the Ministry become a co-founder of the Caritas project, but Caritas is also actively engaged in the process of drafting and commenting on national action plans for the inclusion of Roma. This positions Caritas not only as a provider of aid and assistance, but also as an active participant in advocacy and policy work.

At both the cantonal and municipality levels, the project foresees the inclusion of the position of Roma mediator in the schools' staff structure and payroll as an integral part of the cantonal teaching standards. A Memorandum of Understanding was signed with the cantonal authorities with the understanding that Caritas would plan for an initial financing of the Roma mediators and then the local authorities would take over the financing by including key positions into their staffing plan.

This was the initial exit strategy for a sustainable enhanced participation of Roma children in the Bosniak school system. However, some mediators are already now active and on the payroll in some but not all cantons, and not in the numbers that Caritas had expected. Moreover, mediator positions are activated on a yearly basis, which proves to be rather inefficient, since the process must start all over again every twelve months. This thinking is mainly due to the impact of the financial crisis on both state and cantonal budgets.

However, the positions have been re-introduced in the new Education National Strategy and in the revised Action Plans on Educational Needs of Roma in the Cantons of Sarajevo and Zenica-Doboj. Caritas has strongly advocated for these positions as they are essential in improving the inclusion of Roma. Furthermore, once these plans of action are adopted, they should stand as the point of reference for both the municipalities' as well as Caritas' initiatives. In fact, one of the first obstacles in terms of governance and sustainability is the ability to transform political will into concrete actions, and not merely stated as a declaration. Where mediators have been included at both municipality and school level in the planning and hiring process, we can see that some cantons/municipalities are really invested in the project and are driven to succeed.

## Lessons Learned, Questions and Highlights

### National context issues pertaining to a Continuum

- Crisis contexts (natural disasters, armed conflicts):
  - **Highlight:** Despite the importance of education and training for the development of a country, these fields are often neglected in crisis contexts, as they are considered low priority compared with survival issues → Necessity to be innovative.
- High youth unemployment, including an important share of NEETs.
- Child poverty and discriminations (Roma).
- Parents and children migration and mobility (Roma).
  - **Highlight:** Mobility is a universal problem, which requires more flexible approaches to education, training and decent jobs, such as that offered by the Continuum.

### Key Specificities of the project

- Project builds on lessons learned from a previous project.
  - **Highlight:** Projects with expected interactions between components are even more lengthy and complex to implement and manage than single “block” projects. Hence the relevance of building on lessons learned.
- Decentralized governance (Cantons) of compulsory education.
- Title of the project clearly reflects an integrated Continuum perspective in a socio-economic context where a specific population is excluded.
- Relevant Inner characteristics of the project

- Identification of target groups through needs analysis, including for dropouts.
  - **Suggestion:** It would be useful to detail whether it is an analysis of the aspirations or of specific demands from the “target groups”.
- Development of social skills and confidence skills.
- Promotion of equal access to education and training programmes, in addition to employment opportunities.
- Facilitation of transitions between primary and secondary education and TVSD.
- Flexibility/Mobility for entering and exiting the project’s components depending on the life circumstances of both parents and children (lifelong learning perspective with tracer studies as monitoring instrument).
  - **Suggestion:** As flexibility and mobility are becoming universal issues, lessons can be drawn from the project and transferred to situations that tend to be applicable for most people.
- Technical and Vocational Skills Development for youth pre-qualifications.
  - **Highlight:** Education-training two component’s continuum, as a building block for a full-fledged Continuum to be developed next.
- Market analysis in view of proposing appropriate vocational skills for non-automated economic production.
  - **Suggestion:** Develop an income-generation dimension for youth integration and/or self-financing of the project.

Capacity development (CD) of local agents (mediators) leading to a direct impact on both parental and community attitudes.

- **Highlight:** CD of local/national staff is a key success element for any project.

### Importance of Governance, Scaling Up, Sustainability

- Ministry of Education is now co-founder of the next phase of the project with Caritas for advocacy and policy work.
- Mediators are now involved in the work of the Cantonal Teaching Standards Agency.
  - **Highlight:** Reflective of a relevant scaling up perspective, dating from the beginning of the first project in 2010.
- Some TVSD activities have now been certified.
  - **Suggestion:** Since certification is usually the first step towards official recognition, some scenarios for mid-/long-term recognition of prior learning (RPL) would be an asset.
- Developing financial crisis in the country.
  - **Suggestion:** Given the expected return to a financial crisis, some self-financing possibilities would be worthwhile developing and combining through (i) diaspora remittances, (ii) with public resources, and with (iii) with private international resources.

### Knowledge production

- Tracer studies.
  - **Highlight:** Costly, but with more dynamic medium-/long-term perspectives than the ones provided by an impact evaluation.

## Chapter 2: Education, Work and Peace in Colombia

Organization: Vivamos Mejor

### Brief description of the project

#### Context

With the signature of the November 2016 Peace Agreement, Colombia took a major step towards ending an internal conflict that had been raging for over 50 years. It is estimated that the armed conflict has produced over seven million internally displaced persons (IDPs)<sup>15</sup>, the majority of which were displaced from rural to urban environments. Despite its classification as an upper middle-income country, Colombia is a highly unequal society, as shown by its Gini coefficient of 50.8 (2016)<sup>16</sup>. According to the ILO, in 2017, the unemployment rate as a percentage of the total labour force stood at 8.9%, while youth (aged 15-24) unemployment stood at 17.8%<sup>17</sup>. In the same year, the share of youth not in employment, education or training (NEET) was estimated at 21.8% of the total youth population, fuelling consistent gang and drug-related problems.<sup>18</sup>

The project is being implemented in the municipality of Soacha which neighbours the capital city of Bogotá. Soacha's population is characterized by a large percentage of inhabitants living in extreme poverty and the highest percentage of IDPs in the department of Cundinamarca.<sup>19</sup> Figures indicate that the local unemployment rate reaches 15.4%, clearly over the national average, while approximately 59% of the employed population work in the informal sector<sup>20</sup>. Young adults aged between 14 and 29 represent most of the population, however estimates show that only 33% of young adults have access to public education and the majority of those do not continue further schooling. Soacha used to be an industrial centre and today the municipality has 10,446 registered companies, of which 35% have specific programmes for people with special needs. There is a clear potential for the provision of job opportunities in the municipality.

IDPs in Soacha have experienced conflict and violence, not only at their places of origin but also in their host areas. These are marginalized areas with high levels of violence and the presence of drug gangs. The project features a peace component that is mainly driven by local partners aimed at training young adults as “peace multipliers”. We chose not to address this point in the present case study as it does not strictly relate to the Continuum approach.

#### Main objectives and participants of the project

The project is aimed at vulnerable young adults aged between 18 and 25 from the south-eastern part of the municipality of Soacha (communes 4, 5 and 6). These young adults either do not work at all, or work informally, meaning that they have neither a labour contract nor any form of social security. Their earnings also fall below the minimum wage. Many of them work as flying vendors or participate in waste and garbage collection activities, and at least 60% of them are registered as IDPs.

The project's objective is to enable participants to access formal VET, and then to provide them with assistance in finding employment them get a job in the formal market to obtain at least a minimum wage and social security benefits. This project builds on the results of past projects implemented in neighbouring Bogotá<sup>21</sup>. The project provides participants with a one-year, tailor-made VET complemented by soft skills training (SST), psycho-social support (PS) and integration into the formal labour market. The project takes advantage of the existing well-functioning Colombian VET system which allows private institutions to issue state-recognized professional certificates<sup>22</sup>. VET offerings are well-defined and adapted each year to match with local labour market needs. In the current project phase that runs between January 2018 and December 2021, 120 young adults will benefit from the integrated one-year VET, SST, PS and LMP components. Another 60 young adults will benefit from a shorter VET training (including SST, PS and integration into the labour market components), since some of the participants cannot afford to study throughout a whole year due to their need to earn money more quickly. The shorter crash courses are also complemented by SST and PS components and the participants receive support for job

<sup>15</sup> International Displacement Monitoring Centre. (n.d.). *Colombia*. Retrieved 2020, from <http://www.internal-displacement.org/countries/colombia> (end of 2017 figures).

<sup>16</sup> The World Bank. (n.d.). *Gini index (World Bank estimate) – Colombia*. Retrieved 2020, from <https://data.worldbank.org/indicator/SI.POV.GINI?locations=CO>

<sup>17</sup> ILO Stat, Country Profile: Colombia, <https://bit.ly/2RGNoNH>

<sup>18</sup> Idem.

<sup>19</sup> Figures describing the situation in Soacha are based on Vivamos Mejor's document.

<sup>20</sup> Vivamos Mejor considers as “informal” any employment that doesn't include social security, not formalized by the state and where workers do not complete any tax return documentation (i.e., undocumented labour). Informal work can be for a company.

<sup>21</sup> «Work for Internally Displaced Women» (2012-2014), «Vocational Training for Young People» (2014-2016), «New Perspectives for Young on the Run» (2015-2017), and «Fit for the Job» (2017-2019).

<sup>22</sup> Through the 'Servicio Nacional de Aprendizaje' (SENA).



placement. Examples of such courses include security guard training and training in assistance to ambulance and hospital staff delivered by the Colombian Red Cross.

One feature of the project is its rather selective recruitment process which also due to financial restrictions. It starts with a local advertisement. Young adults can then submit a form, together with their documents and motivation statement. This step is then followed by an interview process and a visit to their families to ensure they have the backing needed to help them complete the programme. In order to be eligible for the programme, applicants must have completed secondary school, but would not normally have access to formal VET, so they can read, write and have the basic skills to enter VET. They also need to demonstrate a strong motivation to get out of their own current situation. Once they have completed VET training, participants receive a nationally recognized diploma. They are directed to ASOCEDT, the local partner employment agency that will connect them with employers and support them into entering their first formal employment experience.

## Partners

The project is implemented by Fundación Apoyar, the direct partner of Vivamos Mejor in Colombia. The foundation is well known in the area of Bogotá and Soacha and its work is recognized by the local population. The project is also delivered in cooperation with a variety of local, national and international partners:

- Centro de Educación para el Trabajo y el Desarrollo Humano (CEDEP): private TVET institution providing VET training and nationally recognized certification.
- Servicio Nacional de Aprendizaje (SENA): business supported organization, implementation of soft-skill courses and workshops.
- ASOCEDT: local social job placement agency in charge of the portfolio of companies that will provide first formal employment opportunities to the participants.
- Soacha City Youth Council: The municipal youth council is a consultative body to formulate and execute public policies at the municipal level.
- Casa de Igualdad de Oportunidades: A local structure from the Ministry for Women that runs workshops for participants about women's rights and sexual health and offers shelter in cases of domestic violence.
- Hospital Mario Yanguas: state hospital performing health checks and offering psychological therapies.
- 40 Mil Primeros Empleos: The Ministry of Labour's programme encouraging young adult's work integration with the takeover of 6 monthly wages when a young adult with no work experience is employed.
- Mesa de Empleabilidad: A mechanism where governmental institutions, UN bodies and civil society actors (including Fundación Apoyar) discuss labour integration policies for vulnerable young adults in Soacha.
- The Department of Economics of Universidad de los Andes and the Faculty of Business and Economics (HEC) of the University of Lausanne: collaborating to conduct the planned impact study.

## The project through the Continuum lenses

### Connection between education and training

This project is aimed at young adults who have completed secondary education but who would normally not have access to formal VET. In addition to schooling fees, one of the barriers the project seeks to overcome is physical access to educational facilities, since the VET institute is in the city centre of Bogotá, and participants do not have the financial means to commute. Moreover, since they live in highly violent areas, it would be deemed dangerous for them to go home after class in the dark. Vivamos Mejor has negotiated with the VET institute to send their teachers to the project area and to deliver the training within Soacha.

### Connection between training and entry to the formal job market

The project works with one VET institute - the CEDEP. This is a private institute that normally delivers a wide range of training programmes and, in the case of this project, only a selection of programmes is open to the participants. This selection is based on a market study carried out each year by the social job placement agency ASOCEDT under the supervision of Fundación Apoyar in order to assess the kind of VET courses that would be considered useful for bringing potential job integration. In practical terms, the analysis is carried out through a review of the national labour statistics published by the Ministry of Labour. It also falls back on interviews with employers actively engaged in the project in order to understand their future needs and the skills they are looking for in employees.

There is an assumption that the participants have experienced high levels of trauma which may impede their ability not only to learn but also get through a whole year of VET course. In addition, many young adults do not have a future-oriented perspective and may find it difficult to finish what they start. Given these assumptions, the project also provides psychosocial support (PS) as a concrete way to address potential trauma without going too far into the psychological aspect. This is carried out through the elaboration of a plan called “Proyecto de Vida”.

In this approach, participants attend workshops that are run in parallel to the VET course, where they work on elaborating a five-year plan for their future. They also work on social skills, on their own competencies, on how and what they are feeling, and on life experiences they have gone through in order to set goals and identify means to achieve them. The objective of this component is for the applicant to stand out as an attractive candidate for a potential employer. The partner providing the workshop is also engaged in expectations management in order to ensure the five-year plan will be realistic and consistent with the means and skills of each participant.

To address the specific context and needs of post-conflict situations and IDPs, these interactions are complemented by the provision of courses on developing and strengthening participants’ soft skills, such as reliability and punctuality. Subject matter experts deliver workshops where young adults discuss the issues of self-competence, social behaviour, feelings of self-worth and how to deal with negative feelings. Psychologists also identify participants who are not able to deal with their traumatic experiences and cross-refer them to public institutions such as the Casa de Igualdad de Oportunidades or the Hospital Mario Yanguas, both of which provide one-on-one psychological support.

Once participants have completed their VET course, they receive their diploma and are then referred to ASOCEDT, which is one of the project’s partners. As a job placement agency with a social orientation, ASOCEDT works with a portfolio of companies where participants will be placed, providing support to young adults in their application and interview process. It is interesting to highlight that ASOCEDT was founded by a former participant of one of Vivamos Mejor’s projects out of her motivations to help young adults living in vulnerable areas. What the project provides is the first critical steppingstone from secondary school into formal professional experience with a diploma and a work certificate. As presented in this project, the Continuum is not linear since participants also have the possibility to continue their studies after achieving their VET degrees.

Monitoring data shows a high success rate of the project, with over 90% of the participants finding a job on completion of their VET course, in which they stay for at least 6 months. These achievements can be attributed to a range of factors including a thorough selection process of the participants and an annual job market analysis of the type described earlier. The strong integration and engagement of the project partners into the social and economic fabric of the region plays a significant role. For instance, if a participant is recorded as absent, a follow-up visit is made to her/his family. No monitoring data is available to assess the development of the young adults over the longer term. While Vivamos Mejor is aware of some success stories, an impact study has been planned with the objective of examining the medium-term effects of their intervention and identifying all critical and decisive elements.

It is also important to underline the time factor in the Continuum approach of the project. The strong connection between training and work is a process that has developed over time and is based on the success of similar previous projects that have been implemented in the Bogotá region since 2012. This has resulted in strong visibility of Vivamos Mejor’s projects and Fundación Apoyar’s activities at a local level. What they are currently missing is an entry point in order to extend that visibility at a national level.

### **Governance / Scaling Up / Sustainability**

At a local level, the project relies upon the main partners ensuring the identification and selection of participants; the provision of hard-skills technical VET; and job placement for a first 6-month entry job in the formal sector. In addition to CEDEP and ASCODET, Fundación Apoyar is well known in the region, has a good understanding of the social and economic situation of the local communities and maintains the ability to build enough trust with local families that they can enter their home. As such, it can implement and monitor the project at street level.

Finally, Vivamos Mejor is currently looking at several additional sustainability and scaling-up aspects. One option is to foster project sustainability through advocacy and lobbying at a national level, as Colombia has put in place mechanisms and initiatives to support economic development and equal opportunities across the education and labour markets.

A comprehensive cost-benefit analysis will be integrated into the forthcoming impact study with the aim of gathering the requisite information for lobbying policy makers. A second aspect is ensuring ASOCEDT’s financial

independence through direct financial contributions from employers, since Vivamos Mejor is still contributing to about 20-25% of the total budget.

## Lessons Learned, Questions and Highlights

### National context issues pertaining to a Continuum

- Internal conflicts with 7M of Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs).
- High level of inequalities (Gini coefficient: 50.8).
- Important youth unemployment (+ gangs and drugs).
- National policies for economic development, good opportunities for accessing education and labour market, recognition of certificates in VET.
  - **Highlight:** Balance between negative trends and positive dynamics from the Continuum point of view. At the same time, the unpredictable rapid changes facing societies make it necessary to develop a range of “no harm” contingency plans and exit scenarios.

### Key features of the project

- Extreme poverty, importance of the Informal sector, 60% IDPs.
  - **Suggestion:** Considering both the economic and political importance of the informal sector, a strategic reflection on the ongoing debate about the formalization of this sector would be interesting to share with all the project’s stakeholders.
- Majority population not continuing in further education.
- 10,000 companies reserve 35% of their job allocations as opportunities to those parts of the population with special needs, such as IDPs.
  - **Suggestion:** An exploration with business partners of the affirmative action and corporate social responsibility programmes<sup>23</sup> that are currently being developing in Colombia.
- Project builds on lessons learned from previous projects in Bogotá since 2010.
  - **Highlight: The** multi-year pre-investment indicates good sustainability perspectives – as is the case in Romanian case below.
- Title of the project clearly reflecting an integrated Continuum perspective.

### Inner characteristics of the project

- Objectives: access to formal VET programmes for young adults who have completed secondary education but do not have access to formal VET, providing assistance with access to the formal job market.
- Selective recruitment: secondary education and motivation to change.
- Selection of programmes based on job market analysis by placement agency.
- Five-year individual plan for future, elaborated by students (incl. expectations management).
- Facilitated physical access to training facilities,
  - **Highlight:** The spatial dimension of the Continuum, often ignored in projects’ design, leading to added value,
- Provision of social skills and psycho-social support for IDPs (incl. training of peace multipliers).

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<sup>23</sup> Lindgreen, A., Córdoba, J.-R., and Mendoza, J. M. (2010). Corporate Social Responsibility in Colombia: Making Sense of Social Strategies. *Journal of Business Ethics*, 91(S2), 229-242. <https://link.springer.com/article/10.1007/s10551-010-0616-9>

- Project is the first steppingstone into formal professional experience with VET diploma and work certificate.
- High success rate (90% of participants found job) for 120 full programme and 60 shorter programme participants.
  - **Suggestion:** An interesting development would be to organize a mid-term tracer study into follow-on employment stages after initial job inclusion, from a lifelong learning perspective.

### Governance, Scaling Up, Sustainability

- Connection with employers via local partner employment agency.
- Collaboration with private training programme providers.
- Vivamos and numerous national partners recognized by local population
  - **Highlight:** Efficient interactions and complementarities with public and private partners.
- Necessity of increasing advocacy and lobbying at a national level to take advantage of above-mentioned national policies.
- Importance of ensuring financial independence through employers' contributions to the scheme.

### Knowledge production and Capacity Development

- Research dimension by Universidad Los Andes and Université de Lausanne (impact analysis).
  - **Suggestion:** Assessment of a scientific partnership between the two universities would allow consideration of other potential areas of collaborations. An assessment would be a critical determinant for the quality of such complex projects.

## Chapter 3: Alternative education (PEAJ) in Niger

Organisation: Enfants du Monde with Swisscontact: Programme d'éducation alternative des jeunes - PEAJ

Enfants du Monde and Swisscontact, the two organizations driving this project, are engaged in a consortium project, although this stage of the case study is based on Enfants du Monde's (EDM) perspective. As such, what follows here is a focus on the educational aspects of the project that fall within the key competency areas Enfants du Monde: textbooks, teaching methodology and the "training of trainers" of teachers and teacher supervisors.

### Brief description of the project

#### Context

In terms of human development, the country of Niger ranks 189<sup>th</sup> in terms of human development<sup>24</sup> and is considered one of the world's least-developed countries. The landlocked country has a history of political instability and natural disasters, amplified by climate change and chronic food insecurity. The economy is heavily dependent on uranium exports, while most of the population lives on subsistence farming and artisanal trade, mainly in the informal sector.<sup>25</sup> Its economy is characterized by low levels of diversification and competitiveness and is essentially based on the primary sector. To compound matter, 50% of the country's population was under 15 in 2018, and the fertility rate of 7.1 remains one of the highest in the world<sup>26</sup>.

While significant progress has been made in terms of access to education in recent years, a substantial number of children remain out of school. The primary education gross enrolment rate grew from 56% in 2008 to 69% in 2012 and 75% in 2017<sup>27</sup>. 2018 figures show a gross enrolment rate of 24% for secondary school, and 2% for tertiary education<sup>28</sup>. The quality of education remains low: according to the results from Programme d'Appui aux Systèmes Educatifs de la Confemen PASEC<sup>29</sup>, 85% of the students who completed primary school do not have the required skills for basic read and texts comprehension. One might then hypothesize that many families and communities do not consider education as relevant to cope with day-to-day realities, driving a significant percentage of children to contribute directly to the economic welfare of the family instead. Data from the Human Development Report 2018 estimates the percentage of child labour at 34.4%<sup>30</sup>.

#### Main objectives and participants of the project

In this context, the Alternative Education Programme for young People (PEAJ) aims at providing quality education to children and youth with no schooling at all, and early school leavers aged 9 to 14. The main objective is to set up an education that fits with the social and economic realities of the participants, thereby helping them to rapidly enter the labour market. The project is implemented in the areas of Maradi and Dosso, where 200 Community Centres for Alternative Education for young People (CCEAJ) were established. Each of these centres can host about 30 students, mobilizing a total of 200 teachers who have all been recruited by the state and trained through national institutes. The project endeavours to create pathways towards further schooling in formal education, access to vocational and training centres or entry to the job market, depending on participants' age, capacities and expectations.

The duration of schooling within the CCEAJ varies according to the participants' background. Depending on their level and previous schooling experience, they will remain in the Centre for up to three years. The vision is a balanced bilingual education carried out in both French and the local languages of Fulfulde, Zarma and Hausa. Classrooms are multi-grade.

The first phase of the project ran between 2015 and 2018 and provided schooling to 11,600 children in ten municipalities (the initial objective was 12,000). While most participants live in rural communities, CCEAJ are also implemented in urban settings and in areas where settled, nomadic and cross-border populations co-exist.

<sup>24</sup> United Nations Development Programme. (n.d.). *Human Development Indicators*. Niger. Human development reports. Retrieved 2020, from <http://hdr.undp.org/en/countries/profiles/NER>

<sup>25</sup> International Labour Organization. (n.d.). *Niger*. Retrieved 2020, from [https://www.ilo.org/integration/themes/mdw/map/countries/WCMS\\_170055/lang--en/index.htm](https://www.ilo.org/integration/themes/mdw/map/countries/WCMS_170055/lang--en/index.htm)

<sup>26</sup> United Nations Population Fund. (n.d.). *World population dashboard: Niger*. Retrieved 2020, from <https://www.unfpa.org/data/world-population/NE>

<sup>27</sup> United Nations Development Programme. (n.d.). *Gross enrolment ratio, primary (% of primary school-age population)*. Human development reports. Retrieved 2020, from <http://www.hdr.undp.org/en/indicators/63206#>

<sup>28</sup> United Nations Development Programme. (n.d.). *Gross enrolment ratio, primary (% of primary school-age population)*. Human development reports. Retrieved 2020, from <http://www.hdr.undp.org/en/indicators/63206#>

<sup>29</sup> PASEC (2016). *PASEC2014 – Performances du système éducatif nigérien : Compétences et facteurs de réussite au primaire*. Pasec, Confemen, Dakar. [http://www.pasec.confemen.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/01/PASEC2014\\_Rapport-Niger\\_Final.pdf](http://www.pasec.confemen.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/01/PASEC2014_Rapport-Niger_Final.pdf)

<sup>30</sup> United Nations Development Programme. (n.d.). *Human Development Indicators*. Niger. Human development reports. Retrieved 2020, from <http://www.hdr.undp.org/en/countries/profiles/NER>

Funded by SDC with an initial injection of CHF 4 million, Swisscontact and Enfants du Monde have formed a consortium to drive the project. This consortium collaborates closely with the Government of Niger which matches the funding of the implementation of the PEAJ at the same budgetary level as Switzerland in terms of teachers' salaries and infrastructure costs.

Enfants du Monde brings its expertise in quality education by focusing on the pedagogical aspects of the project. Swisscontact has strong experience in the fields of skills development and income generation. It is also able to bring know-how on issues linked to community mobilization, local governance and capacity building of local and state actors, use of practical activities (e.g., school garden plots) in the learning process and the professionalization of the participants.

## Partners

International:

- Donor: Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC)
- Consortium of implementing organisations:
- Swisscontact (lead), Switzerland
- Enfants du Monde, Switzerland

National:

- Ministère de l'Enseignement Primaire, de l'Alphabétisation, de la Promotion des Langues Nationales et de l'Education Civique):
- Direction Générale de l'Alphabétisation et de l'Education Non-Formelle: In charge of the elaboration of the curriculum and the study programme.
- Écoles Normales d'Instituteurs (ENI): In charge of initial training of teachers for formal and non-formal education.
- Institut de Formation en Alphabétisation et Education Non Formelle (IFAENF): Training supervisors and teachers in charge of literacy and non-formal education (national institute).

Regional:

- Direction Régionale de l'Enseignement Primaire (conseillers pédagogiques): Pedagogical supervision of the CCEAJ at regional level and delivery of continuing training to teachers

Local (municipalities and communities):

- Comités de Gestion de l'Education Non Formelle (CGENF) - municipality level: Role includes selecting communities that will host a CCEAJ, social mobilisation of actors, data collection and monitoring of CCEAJ, ongoing training of teachers.
- Comités de Gestion des Etablissements Scolaires (COGES) and Association de Parents d'Elèves (APE) at community level: Role includes building of classrooms, mobilization of parents, day-to-day monitoring of CCEAJ (including equipment), determining the school year calendar and schedule, monitoring of teacher and student attendance.
- School directors: Administration and supervision of the school and the hosted CCEAJ.
- Village communities play a role in the implementation of the PEAJ. For example, they are involved in the identification of children and young adults entitled to take part in the PEAJ. Their participation has been highlighted as a positive element in the evaluation of the first phase, which was conducted in 2018.

The PEAJ is included in the National Education Sector Plan 2014-2024. Ultimately it should be taken over by the State, which will oversee scaling up its scope to cover the whole country.

## The project through the Continuum lenses

### Connection between education and training and entry to the job market

The project illustrates an original approach to the Continuum. The donor had clear expectations and criteria in terms of the type of project they wanted to support, with the overall objective of developing relevant education opportunities for the participants in order to facilitate pathways to vocational training and income generating opportunities. The developing connections between Swisscontact and Enfants du Monde through this consortium enhance their ability to develop and implement a project based on the quality of the pedagogical approach and on

community mobilization. These are pre-conditions to facilitating pathways through education and training to work for its participants.

This systemic vision is enhanced by the existence of another project implemented by Swisscontact in the same areas of Dosso and Maradi: the FOPROR (2017-2021), or Programme d'appui à la Formation Professionnelle Rurale au Niger<sup>31</sup>. FOPROR provides vocational training programmes to rural youth with limited or no schooling in key activities of the local economy such as agriculture, livestock, poultry, veterinary assistant, gardening, as well as jobs related to hydraulic and rural mechanics.

It provides one of the pathways that participants can follow after they have completed the programme with the CCEAJ, depending on their skills and motivation. Incidentally, the current FOPROR phase (2017-2021) is extending its training offer to geographical areas where CCEAJs are available, with the aim of providing short-term professional training opportunities for PEAJ participants after they exit the programme. The rationale behind this articulation is to mitigate transportation and accommodation issues, which are regarded as major obstacles for young adults when pursuing further training, for young women. The project is also supported financially by the SDC.

Moving to a different sub-level of the Continuum, the intra-educational, we highlight two key elements. The first element is spatial - the CCEAJ are located within the premises of formal schools. This allows not only for the centres to use existing infrastructure and logistics<sup>32</sup>, but also to build bridges between formal and non-formal education. The actors taking care of both the administrative and educational monitoring of formal schools and the CCEAJ are the same. Moreover, some continuing training modules are run jointly, bringing together teachers from both formal education and from the CCEAJ. Over time, the objective is to capitalize on these connections in order to foster skills transfer from the non-formal to the formal sector.

Secondly, educational methodology and textbooks will be developed in the next phase of the project. In this new phase, a revision of the existing textbooks used for the PEAJ is planned. Based on a situational approach and in accordance with Niger's learning system, one goal is to acquire literacy and numeracy through studying themes directly related to a selection of jobs. The objective is to move away from traditional rote learning methods and towards situational exercises that should help participants to better understand their direct environment. For instance, mathematics could be taught through real life situations linked to gardening, which could also foster discussion and practical exercises on the protection of the environment, soil issues, land tenure, etc. In addition, teaching methods fostering the active participation of the participants should help to develop qualities such as individual independence, critical thinking and problem-solving skills all of which will be instrumental in building their professional futures.

### **Governance / Scaling Up / Sustainability**

At the governance level, the PEAJ is based on Enfants du Monde's characteristic approach: the organisation supports the Ministry of Education in revising and implementing national policies and practices in education and learning. To this aim, Enfants du Monde seeks to step in at every level of the chain of education participants, from ministry level down to the school level, directly or indirectly. In the case of the PEAJ, Enfants du Monde trains education officers who oversee developing and implementing training programmes for teachers, inspectors and teaching advisers. Enfants du Monde is also strongly involved in the process of revising the PEAJ curriculum and textbooks, in collaboration with officials at national level.

This ongoing collaboration with both national and local authorities in charge of education should facilitate a future scaling up of the PEAJ. A second phase was launched in January 2019 and will run until December 2022. In this new phase, the scope of the project should be extended to 15 municipalities, aiming at providing schooling to 15,000 children and revising the existing PEAJ textbooks (acquisition of literacy and numeracy through study of themes related to a selection of jobs). The Swiss contribution to this second phase is 50% higher than during the first phase. It is expected that the national contribution would confirm the very positive signals given during the first phase.

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<sup>31</sup> <https://www.swisscontact.org/nc/en/projects-and-countries/search-projects/project-finder/project/-/show/rural-skills-development-support-program-in-niger-foprpr.html>

<sup>32</sup> Separate classrooms are built for CCEAJ pupils in formal schools' premises but use of lavatories for example is shared.

## Lessons Learned, Questions and Highlights

### National context issues pertaining to a Continuum

- Least Developed Countries (LDC) and political instability, climate change, food insecurity.
- Economy: uranium export; dominant primary sector (subsistence farming and artisanal trade - informal sector).
  - **Suggestion:** It would be interesting for a wider public to summarize <sup>33</sup>the visions and strategies of stakeholders (government, NGOs, Civil Society Organisations CSOs, donors) for the economic development of the country's young population.
- Young population (2018: 50% under 15 years of age).
- Gross Enrolment Rate (GER): Primary education 75% (2017); secondary 24%.
- 85% of students in primary school can't read and understand basic texts.
- Child labour is currently at 34.4%.

### Key features of the project

- Objective: Relevant alternative quality education for unschooled children and youth, and early school leavers aged 9 to 14, to facilitate pathways to vocational training and income generating opportunities, depending on participants' age, capabilities and motivations.

### Inner characteristics of the project

- Duration of schooling varies according to the participants' background.
- Most participants in rural communities and urban settings.
- PEAJ as an intra-educational continuum: activities in schools, sharing of administrative facilities, interactions between informal and formal education (teachers, modules) aiming at skills transfer between non-formal and formal education.
  - **Highlight:** Intra-Education continuum as a building block for a Continuum to be developed later.
- PEAJ as a development aid – national stakeholders' partnership. model
  - **Highlight:** political and financial partnership feasible in one of the poorest countries in the world.

### Governance / Scaling Up / Sustainability

- Funded by SDC, which had clear expectations and criteria in terms of the type of project they wanted to support.
  - **Suggestion:** In the context of a complex multi-stakeholder project, it would be interesting to clearly articulate the government's, parents', communities', businesses and other donors' understanding of the notion of Continuum.
- Numerous partners at national, regional and local levels (government, regional, municipal, school).
- Close collaboration with the government which oversees the operationalization of the PEAJ.
  - **Suggestion:** Encourage parties at a national level to "publicize" their technical and financial partnership in a project with tremendous potential, developed within a Continuum perspective by the EDM-Swisscontact consortium.

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<sup>33</sup> <https://www.swisscontact.org/en>



- Systemic vision of the project objective enhanced through developing cooperation via the EDM – Swisscontact (SC) consortium, during the second phase of EDM's and the third phase of Swisscontact's projects.
  - **Highlight and Suggestion:** illustration of aid complementarities. It would be interesting to engage with Swisscontact to gain a more comprehensive picture of their FOPROR vision with the PEAJ. A better understanding of the role and involvement of the economic stakeholders and of the communities would shed further light on the linkages as well as the possibilities for securing the feasibility, sustainability and impact of a Continuum in the future.
- PEAJ in the National Education Sector Plan 2014-2024: the project should be taken over by the State for a potential scaled up programme at a national level.
  - **Highlight and Suggestion:** State commitment for the second phase is good news as it stimulates the widening search for external support including for national capacity development private funds and other forms of multi-level cooperation (including Global Partnership for Education GPE).

## Chapter 4: Job Orientation Training in Businesses and Schools (JOBS) in Romania

Organization: Zurich University of Teacher Education (PHZH) – Department of International Projects in Education

### Brief description of the project

#### Context

The Job Orientation Training in Businesses and Schools (JOBS) project was implemented in Romania in 2009<sup>34</sup> during a period of important economic and educational change. For over 20 years, the country has been in the process of transitioning from a communist regime to a democratic system. Romania submitted its application to join the European Union (EU) in 1995 and implemented several reforms throughout the 2000s to prepare for the accession to the bloc, including the consolidation of its democratic systems, the institution of the rule of law, the acknowledgement of respect for human rights, the commitment to personal freedom of expression and the implementation of a functioning free-market economy. In 2007, Romania became an EU member state.

All these changes called for a modernization of the country's education and training system. Its 1995 Education Law was the first attempt in this direction, marking the beginning of a continuous process of reform. The educational system is regulated by the country's Ministry of National Education (MNE). Each level has its own form of organization and is subject to different legislations. Compulsory education is determined for a period of ten years. Higher secondary education encompasses theoretical, vocational (sports, art, theological etc.) and technology pathways. This technology pathway includes the provision of programmes by vocational schools lasting between six months and two years, and programmes by a technology institute providing four-year programmes. Higher education is aligned with Europe-wide higher education spans.

The accession of Romania to the EU has had an impact on the employment-related outlook of students as the country transitioned from a planned economy to a market-based economy and the demand for skilled workers and trained professionals increased. In parallel, school and teaching methods have had to adapt to this situation, leading to a demand for qualified workers with competences and skills in the management and implementation of projects, and who can apply their knowledge and skills in a variety of situations. Workers also must be ready to constantly develop their skills over the course of their lives.

Since both technical high schools and vocational schools are regarded as rather low prestige institutions, they are usually picked as second choice options by many students. Consequently, these institutions have attracted less successful students. Therefore, one important goal of the JOBS project is to show students that technical high school represents a valid alternative to the more classic and theoretical academic streams, and valuable. Students can learn a profession that could not only provide a regular income but also give them access to the broader European labour market. On the other hand, while the number of university graduates has increased worldwide and the chances for these young graduates to find a job has diminished, there is a significant lack of well-qualified artisans in many European countries.

Figures from the Global Education Monitoring Report 2019 (GEMR) indicate that the share of technical and vocational education in Romania accounted for 28% of the total enrolment by level in 2017<sup>35</sup>. In 2016, the government approved a national strategy for vocational education and training which covered the period between 2016 and 2020. The government also implemented a JOBS Unit and Training Centre, which is now part of the MNE. However, given the frequent change within the political system, the Ministries are in constant flux, thereby hindering any concrete operational steps toward the implementation of the dual system in the country.

In other words, the government started from job orientation at basic education level to come to vocational education and training, through elaborating their 2016-2020 Strategy for VET. Although the process is still at an early stage, the Strategy document investigates the introduction of the dual system in the country, starting from the education side. However, no collaboration with the private sector exists at this stage. This is a disconnect that is accentuated by a general mistrust of the private sector by the government.

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<sup>34</sup> The first phase of the project was launched in July 2012, following a pilot phase held in two schools between January 2009 and June 2012. See <https://phzh.ch/en/Services/IPE/Projects-and-Mandates/Romania/>

<sup>35</sup> UNESCO. (2019). *Global Education Monitoring Report: Migration, displacement, and education*. Paris: UNESCO. See Statistical Tables (PDF): <https://en.unesco.org/gem-report/report/2019/migration>

In sharp contrast, across the border in neighbouring Bulgaria, another project financed by the SDC is implementing a dual system through businesses and vocational schools<sup>36</sup>. It starts on the business side, and students are immersed without any preparation in a work environment, since exposure is a key experience before entering in career guidance process.

Knowing that the introduction of a dual system is a long-term process, these examples illustrate interesting questions related to the various entry points (education or vocational training) of a Continuum, and to the challenges of connecting the worlds of education and business.

### **Main objectives and participants of the project**

The JOBS approach links basic education with the world of work by developing the skills needed for the labour market. This approach helps students to prepare for the demands of the working world, not with the primary aim of giving advice about the “right” or wrong career, but by improving and exploring one’s own competences and job opportunities.

JOBS prepares students for life and the world of employment by helping them learn how to gather information, share experiences, explore the labour market and gaining exposure to employment experiences. The approach includes the development of self-competences and life skills such as teamwork, communication skills, empathy and critical thinking. The JOBS learning and teaching approach is cross curricular and can be applied across wide range of subjects.

Within the project frame, 180 schools participated across four semi-rural and urban regions of Romania. The project is implemented at the level of basic education, targeting young people aged between 14 and 16 years, and at the level of general post-basic or vocational upper secondary education in Technical Colleges. Financed by the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC), the project began in 2009 with a pilot phase and is due to finish in June 2019.

### **Partners**

Implementing partners:

- In Switzerland: Zurich University of Teacher Education (PHZH), Department of International Projects in Education (IPE).
- In Romania: Ministry of National Education (MNE), JOBS Unit and Training Centre at the National Centre for Technical and Vocational Education and Training Development (NCTVETD).
- Foundation Go for Jobs, Bucharest: The foundation, established by the MNE and PZH/IPE, provides technical assistance for the implementation of the project.
- Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC) in Bucharest and Bern.

Other partners:

- 180 schools offering the JOBS project to their students.
- Teachers’ Training Houses affiliated to the County School Inspectorates (CSIs) deliver most of the continuing professional development for teachers.
- University of Brasov: Partner of the research component, and upcoming provider of JOBS training as part of their programme for future teachers (as of 2019).
- University of Bucharest: Research partner.

The MNE is responsible for all areas and stages of education regarding educational policies, programmes, curricula, financing of education, management of education, national and international educational initiatives as well as legal issues and human resources. Within the Ministry, there are several General Directorates responsible for the various stages or content areas of all educational issues.

The Romanian Ministry of National Education, in cooperation with the Department of International Projects in Education at the Zurich University of Teacher Education implemented the project co-financed by Switzerland through a grant from the Swiss Enlargement Contribution (total budget CHF 2.4 million). Additional in-kind contributions towards working hours of teachers in partner schools and universities, for project management and for the development of author materials were made by both partner countries and institutions.

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<sup>36</sup> See the Domino Project, also financed by the SDC: <http://dominoproject.bg/en/>

## The project through the Continuum lenses

### Connection between education and training and entry to the job market

The Continuum approach requires the development of students' ability to be conscious of their strengths, abilities and their motivations, and to prepare them for their future training and job orientation choices. Students' development within society and their contributions to both the formal and informal world of work are seen as vital to the country's economy. Therefore, the JOBS project seeks to develop, through basic education, knowledge and competences that can be directly linked to the needs of the labour market. Such competences are relevant to all areas of life and they include accepting challenges and finding solutions, searching for opportunities, analysing the environment, critical thinking, decision making and communication skills, teamwork and empathy.

A second form of entry to the Continuum is the direct connection with the local job market. Since businesses are considered as key participants in the project, students are required to get out of the school building and explore job opportunities within their local environment. It's not simply about finding a job or training opportunity after school, but about getting to know themselves and gaining experience in working life. This is regarded as a central element, where students gain experience in businesses and then return to the classroom where they discuss those experiences. The idea of "exchange" lies at the core of the project – it's about exchanging what they have experienced and what jobs they like or don't like.

More concretely, students start by preparing themselves at school through self-reflection in order to discover their own strengths. Then they prepare for company visits by tackling questions such as how to call a business, how to write a letter of application and what to wear. The next step involves contacting the business – a key step which pupils must take by themselves. Originally, the project was planned as a three-day training project, however finding companies proved difficult.

Consequently, the experience now ranges between a one-week work experience project during the summer break to a one-hour class visit to a large company. Some students also spend two days in small businesses, such as bakeries, flower shops, restaurants, hairdressers, nail businesses or cleaning businesses. This approach ensures that students gain an insight into the real-life labour market, collect the necessary information themselves, and then acquire and develop the requisite life skills. In this sense, JOBS links basic education and vocational training by developing skills and self-competences that are needed for a self-determined life and career choice.

In parallel, implementing JOBS as a school subject or even as a transversal teaching approach demands a shift in the teaching framework, structure and design of lessons. The tasks aim at learners gaining knowledge and skills as well as reflecting through shared discussions, and solution seeking. In this process, the focus is not on the right or wrong answers, but on logical argumentation, based on a wide range of different facts and experiences. Students learn to present their insights logically and comprehensibly and then discuss them in classroom environments. As a result, the teacher's job is to stimulate students by encouraging pertinent questions in order to foster further reflection. This method of teaching demands a change of perspective, away from the traditional classroom roles of teachers simply providing knowledge to students.

In relation to resources, the project is based on the idea that students receive individual materials. The approach is embedded into six booklets, together with a toolbox and a teacher's manual. A student evaluation is included at the end of each chapter within the booklets, based on the following logic: students give themselves self-feedback and in parallel teachers give feedback to each student. However, teachers sometimes assist students in the self-evaluation process or in other cases, teacher feedback might not be evident. In addition, most schools do not have the means to print individual materials. To overcome this issue, the JOBS project team has produced a JOBS book of tasks that schools can put in their library, together with an e-version that can be downloaded and printed at home.

### Governance / Scaling Up / Sustainability

At the national level, the MNE implemented a JOBS Unit and Training Centre which has now become part of the NCTVET with its own office in the Ministry of Education. In addition, the MNE has integrated the JOBS approach into the national curricula of compulsory education as well as into technical upper secondary schools. This is based on JOBS' many years of experience in teaching and learning material development, professional teacher training and intensive cooperation with the MNE and the NCTVET as part of the curriculum revision. The JOBS Unit and Training Centre took over the JOBS teacher training - securing the sustainability of the activities - extending its scope to all regions of Romania. While training is not mandatory, interested teachers can apply to participate.

## Family involvement processes

An additional outcome of the JOBS project is that it contributes to opening the discussion about training and career expectations within the family. As part of the programme, students are assigned the task of discussing with their parents, relatives and others available opportunities, gathering opinions and collecting information on their professional experiences. Traditionally, parents have a strong influence on the job orientation process. However, it is not usual for families to talk about budgets, the labour market, expectations and wishes, especially in the case of minorities such as Roma families.

Lastly, in schools hosting minorities such as Roma communities, disadvantaged young people or vulnerable groups, some students have difficulties in understanding the tasks proposed by the JOBS project. This resulted in the launch of a new project named Families and Children in Education (FACE), which aims at improving the self-competences and life skills for vulnerable children<sup>37</sup>. PHZH developed training materials for kindergarten and teaching materials for 4 to 12-year-olds. This material is also tackling core skills development, such as how to play with each other or how to communicate but is based on games. Although the project was originally designed for vulnerable children, it is now widely used in the school system.

## Knowledge production

A team from the University of Brasov was engaged in the JOBS project, including in the research aspect. This team is now implementing a pre-service teacher training programme with the help of PHZH/IPE. This initiative can be considered as a third element of sustainability, as the University of Brasov will be training a new generation of teachers.

## Lessons Learned, Questions and Highlights

### National context issues pertaining to a Continuum

- Transition period: political, economic and educational – from a planned to more market economy.
- High demand for skilled workers and technicians in the country and across Europe.
- Modernization of the Education and Training system.
- TVET = 28% of total enrolment in Education.
- National Strategy for TVET (2016-2020).
- Difficult prospects of developing a dual system due to the disconnect with business and mistrust in the government.
  - **Highlights:** Situation different to many other countries were changing the image of TVET is economically "imposed" and politically desired.
- Debates on the introduction of dual system reflect the various entry points (education or vocational training) of the Continuum and the challenges of connecting the education and business worlds.

### Key features of the project

- The objective is not to counsel for the "right" career, but to help students in constructing their own pathways and gaining their own experience.
  - **Suggestion:** Reflections on ways to secure the right balance between "imposed" and the student's own decisions about a professional future within a rapidly changing world.
- Businesses play a key role in the project, given their direct connection with the local job market.

### Inner characteristics of the project

- Balance between professional skills and life skills

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<sup>37</sup> PHZH. (n.d). *Entschuldigung*. Retrieved 2020, from <https://phzh.ch/en/Services/IPE/Projects-and-Mandates/europe-wide-projects/Self-competence-and-life-skills-for-Roma-children/>

- **Suggestion:** Lessons might be learned from the wide array of literature and numerous projects around the world on critical life skills, such as critical thinking, decision making, communication, teamwork, empathy etc.
- The forging of links between basic education and vocational training through skills and self-competency development required for career choices and life in a rapidly changing world.
- JOBS as a school curriculum subject.

#### **Governance / Scaling Up / Sustainability**

- Institutional and pedagogical integration of JOBS in MNE
- New project Families and Children in Education (FACE)
  - **Highlight:** Articulating scaling up and diversification ► increased sustainability prospects.

#### **Knowledge Production**

- Applied research project with Brasov University, leading to teacher training programme.
  - **Highlight:** Managing the complexity of a Continuum needs to be supported by action research.

## Chapter 5: ON-D-GO – Developing the Employability of Displaced Persons in Switzerland

Organization: Swiss Federation for Adult Learning (SVEB)

ON-D-GO is a transnational project that addresses the economic integration of migrants in European societies. Although the project has been implemented in seven European countries, the present case study focuses on the activities developed in Switzerland. However, a brief contextualisation of the project at a European level is included as an introduction to frame the discussion.

### Brief description of the project

#### Context

ON-D-GO was conceived in the aftermath of the so-called European migrant crisis which peaked in 2015. Based on the assumption that a successful integration of migrant communities into civic and political life is essential to achieving a cohesive and inclusive society<sup>38</sup>, ON-D-GO aims at promoting basic and entrepreneurial skills for migrants and refugees. To achieve this goal, the project is focused on the development of learning and teaching materials to support entrepreneurship education of adult migrant populations and the professionalization of national trainers in this field. These materials will be proposed to the ON-D-GO organizations who will then adapt them to their national context and engage some of their experienced partners for implementation.

ON-D-GO is driven and implemented by a consortium of seven organizations located in seven European countries:

- Austria: BEST Institut für Berufsbezogene Weiterbildung und Personaltraining GmbH.
- Cyprus: Centre for the Advancement of Research and Development in Educational Technology CARDET.
- Great Britain: Small Firms Enterprise Development Initiative.
- Ireland: Meath Partnership.
- Italy: Oxfam Italia Onlus.
- Lithuania: Vytauto Didžiojo universitetas.
- Switzerland: Swiss Federation for Adult Learning (SVEB).

The project ran between September 2017 and September 2019 (Modules to be ready by that time). It is part of the European Commission (EC) Erasmus+ programme and is co-financed by the EC and the Swiss National Agency for Exchange and Mobility (Movetia), which supports the participation of the seven organizations, including SVEB, with a budget of CHF51,000 allocated to each organization. The transnational nature of the project results in the need to cater for varying contexts. In addition to the development of general resources, based on general standards and the greatest common denominator between contexts, each partner organisation will elaborate country-specific material to fit the reality of their labour market.

As previously highlighted, this case study focuses on the implementation of the project by SVEB in Switzerland in terms of producing teaching and learning materials. In Switzerland, it was estimated that foreign nationals accounted for about 25% of the permanent resident population at the end of 2017<sup>39</sup>. This rate varies significantly across cantons. Looking at the number of refugees and asylum seekers, figures for 2017 indicate that the number of applications for asylum in Switzerland represented 2.5% of total asylum applications across the European territory. At the national level, the proportion was estimated at 2.2 applications per 1,000 inhabitants<sup>40</sup>.

Asylum seekers are forbidden to work during the first three months following their arrival in the country. Once this period has expired, each canton then implements its own regulations. Some extend this period to six months, whilst other cantons grant work permits for certain areas of the labour market. Consequently, the situation of asylum seekers and refugees regarding employment differs from one canton to another.

Recent initiatives to facilitate the integration of asylum seekers and refugees into the labour market have been introduced. For example, the canton of Grisons has implemented a system called “Teillohn”, or “partial salary”,

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<sup>38</sup> UNDGO. (n.d.). *About*. Retrieved 2020, from <http://learnonthego.eu/en/about>

<sup>39</sup> Schweizerische Confederation Suisse Confederazione Svizzera Confederaziun Svizra. (n.d.). *Population*. Federal Statistical Office. Retrieved 2020, from <https://www.bfs.admin.ch/bfs/en/home/statistics/population/effectif-change/population.html>

<sup>40</sup> Schweizerische Confederation Suisse Confederazione Svizzera Confederaziun Svizra. (2017). *L'asile 2017 en chiffres*. <https://www.sem.admin.ch/dam/data/sem/publiservice/statistik/asylstatistik/2017/faktenblatt-asylstatistik-2017-f.pdf>

aimed at individuals who lack qualifications to find a job, develop language skills, or access apprenticeships. Over a period of 18 months, individuals work and earn a salary below the minimum level enforced in the corresponding sector until such time that they are fully qualified<sup>41</sup> under industry regulations and can apply for a full-salary position. Another pilot project, initiated in August 2018, is a one-year integration pre-apprenticeship aimed at young adults aged between 16 and 35. Based on the dual system model, two days of the week are dedicated to schooling, while the other three days are spent embedded within a company. The objective of this project is to enable participants to catch up on the skills they will need to enter formal VET training<sup>42</sup>.

### **Main objectives and participants of the project**

The ON-D-GO project is in line with SVEB's focus on work, namely the training of trainers and basic skills promotion. SVEB is not a provider of education but an umbrella organization, responsible for developing training modules customized to fit the Swiss context and for finding providers who will offer this training. In other words, the direct participants of the project are Swiss education providers actively involved in the integration of refugees and migrants. The target groups of these providers, i.e., indirect participants of ON-D-GO, vary accordingly. For the most part, educational initiatives will be directed at literate adult migrants and refugees who are eager to start their own business. Use of ON-D-GO resources will require a sufficient level of the local languages of the partner countries.

The novelty of the ON-D-GO project is the focus on entrepreneurship and employability, and the modular, bite-sized learning resources supporting self-directed learning. Migrant and refugees will be able to choose the modules based on their own needs. Moreover, by supporting education providers to promote entrepreneurship as a means for integration, the project should enlarge the use of this approach. Currently such opportunities are available at micro-level – the project aims for a multiplier effect.

The curriculum and modules to be developed follow a problem-based learning approach and seek to improve information and communication technologies (ICT) skills. As the demand for high-level ICT skills is increasing in the labour market, the project develops learning and teaching resources responding to this demand. The curriculum combines basic education and vocational education and training (VET) components. In terms of basic education, modules will address different levels of basic skills such as financial literacy or learning and organizational skills. VET is considered in the broader sense of “employability education”, which is to say promoting skills that prepare migrants and refugees for the labour market. The curriculum will also foster entrepreneurial skills.

### **The project through the Continuum lenses**

One of the main issues faced by migrants and refugees when they arrive in a host country relates to the recognition of academic or vocational qualifications acquired in their country of origin. The project starts from the premise that migrants and refugees arrive with strong potential, and the aim is to build on their aptitudes. ON-D-GO has a very practical approach, and the training material that is provided to the education providers starts with an assessment of the existing competences and learning needs of the participants.

The curriculum is flexible, and modules do not follow a linear progression. The project fosters self-assessment and recognition in the sense that participants can pick and choose what they need to learn. At the end of the training, they receive a badge to recognize their learning achievements. In this project, the starting point is not the formalization of skills recognition (recognition of prior learning, or RPL), but the motivations, the goals, and the career and life potential of migrants and refugees.

Another interesting feature of this project is the bottom-up approach. The conceptualization of training material starts from assessing the needs of education providers. In practice, SVEB's rationale has been to connect with education providers in order to better understand their key requirements for building a curriculum adapted to the needs of their trainees. This was achieved through an informal need's assessment with selected Swiss adult education providers and was supplemented by an inventory of the various measures already in place in Switzerland.

In parallel, SVEB is collaborating closely with one provider – Capacity Zurich – which has extensive experience in the area of entrepreneurship training for migrants and refugees. Through this collaboration, SVEB learns from this experienced provider about the specific needs of migrants and refugees, as well as the challenges they face when

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<sup>41</sup> Zünd, C., (2018, July 27). *In Graubünden, the keys to refugee employment*. Le Temps. <https://www.letemps.ch/suisse/grisons-cles-lemploi-refugies>

<sup>42</sup> Schweizerische Confederation Suisse Confederazione Svizzera Confederaziun Svizra. (n.d.). *Integration pre-apprenticeship for refugees this summer in 18 cantons*. State Secretariat for Migration SEM. Retrieved 2020, from <https://www.sem.admin.ch/sem/fr/home/aktuell/news/2018/2018-05-17.html>



they build a business in Switzerland. As a result, SVEB can adjust its training materials to the participants' learning needs. This understanding of the demand side is essential to designing focused practical training. It is also key in terms of sustainability, as SVEB identifies, and can better serve, those institutions that will use the resources they have developed. This approach provides an interesting illustration of the careful balance between supply and demand.

Finally, it is difficult to assess the importance of the education factor in the motivations and possibilities for migrants to effectively become successful entrepreneurs in Switzerland. Studies conducted at the level of the “pre-apprenticeship for integration” programmes tend to indicate that it is extremely difficult for young people with no formal education to participate in formal VET. In similar fashion, there is a sense that the entrepreneurship path could turn out to prove difficult for those people with no or little schooling.

However, one important component which is part of the programmes delivered by Capacity Zurich and its sister organization, Singa Zurich, is the connection with a mentor. This raises an interesting question when we refer to entrepreneurship training: to what extent is the balance between education and a training package, and the informal connection with professionals from a similar work branch a critical element for success? It also raises the question of financial means, since one-to-one mentoring requires substantial financial resources as well as the will and capacity to build concrete interactions between education and/or training actors and stakeholders anchored in the entrepreneurship and business fields.

## Lessons Learned, Questions and Highlights

### National context issues pertaining to a Continuum

- Migrant and refugee crisis in Europe in 2015, with limited impact in Switzerland: Asylum seekers in Switzerland comprise only 2.5% of total applications in Europe.
- Swiss “Adult Education” federal organization created content and pedagogy (basic and entrepreneurial skills) to be proposed to training providers targeting migrants and refugees in seven European countries.

### Key features of the project

- Target group: literate adult migrants and refugees eager to start their own business.
- Curriculum: basic “employability” skills.
- Modular resources supporting self-directed learning.
- Problem-based learning, emphasis on ICTs.
  - **Highlight:** On-D-Go as a reflection of upcoming challenges in the fields of education, training and work - North and South: individualized learning, recognition of prior learning, lifelong learning interactions with the economic world.

### Inner characteristics of the project

- Starting point: assessing providers' demands for a curriculum that fits those needs already identified with their incoming trainees; reflecting the challenges facing migrants wishing to develop their business in Switzerland.
- Providers' recognition of academic or vocational qualifications gained in country of origin, based on participants' self-assessment.
  - **Highlight:** innovative breakthrough in the Swiss context.
  - **Suggestion:** Knowledge and experience sharing with Global South countries where the recognition of refugees' informal qualifications could be considered as a Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) that officially recognize informal skills.
- Flexible curriculum through modules,
  - **Highlight:** No fixed curriculum allows for flexibility in meeting trainees' requirements and needs.

- **Suggestion:** Launch a study with Swiss adult education organizations on how to switch to more formal recognition.

Mentors being used as interface between trainees, trainees' area of study and the training provider.

- **Highlight:** Original perspective connecting individuals' situation, needs, projects with individualized support (mentors) and specialized providers.
- **Suggestion:** Incorporate peer-to-peer learning and social support.

### Governance/ Scaling Up / Sustainability

- **Highlight:** High individual impact to be expected
- **Suggestion:** Launch of a range of studies (tracer or impact studies, life stories, data concerning refugees' and migrants' business development activities, costs-benefit analyses) for winning political support for the project in Switzerland at a local and federal level (sustainability).
- The future of the On – D – Go project must be placed in this larger context, which includes rapidly changing development cooperation policies, as is the case in Switzerland.<sup>43</sup> This evolution emphasizes investment into policies and programmes aimed at fixing development issues in refugees' regions of origin through training, in order to reduce refugee movement to the North. It also insists on the responsibility of the business world: "The donor community has a responsibility to set incentives so that more companies will invest," said the former president of the World Bank.<sup>44</sup>

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<sup>43</sup> Switzerland's international cooperation strategy 2021-24, available in various languages here: <https://www.fdfa.admin.ch/IC2021-2024>.

<sup>44</sup> Martinez. M. (2018, September 26). *More businesses commit to helping refugees thrive with new jobs, trainings, investment*. UNCHR. <https://www.unhcr.org/news/latest/2018/9/5babbecf4/businesses-commit-helping-refugees-thrive-new-jobs-trainings-investment.html>

## Chapter 6: What are we learning across cases?

### Reducing discontinuities in a Continuum: via a project or a programme?

Reducing discontinuities and envisioning an evolving perspective for the interactions between the actors of a Continuum – whether from the stakeholder “offer” side (e.g., the state, business) or from the participant’s demand side (e.g., disadvantaged youth) – needs a reasonable amount of time to kick off due to the burden of discontinuities between the various structures, stakeholders and processes involved in a Continuum. Consequently, success in the Caritas project in Bosnia and Herzegovina came from a combination of a clearly defined target population who should benefit from all Continuum activities, alongside a set of clear global objectives that reflect this direction with a set of open-ended scenarios (including an exit strategy) for the evolution of these objectives.

For this reason, the progressive qualitative and quantitative development of interactions between the components of a multi-faceted Continuum is going to be a challenge. This challenge can be better dealt with through a programme that reflects the required flexibility in a way that a conventional project usually does not allow. Such a perspective questions the project approach that traditional international and national economic development organizations have been using for decades.

### Balancing the needs of the learner-worker in the Continuum: a condition for success?

An illustration of the debate about the *vocationalisation* of societies lies in the recurrent emergence of projects, programmes and policies aiming at integrating work into one or two of the other areas of the Continuum (Education, training) from the very outset. This approach is different from the ones which consist of putting in place some transition instruments aiming at creating interactions between the education, training and work fields as a reaction to the problems stemming from the silos these fields are locked in.

In the field of education, quite a few countries in the South have developed ambitious projects such as *School Production* (crafts or agriculture). This refers to policies and programmes developed in the 70’s and 80’s whereby production units were embedded in schools with the aims of a) illustrating the use of the knowledge and skills taught in classrooms, b) facilitating the youth’s job acquisition in craft’s production units and c) eventually creating revenues for the schools by selling the products on the market. They consist of workshops or gardens aiming at combining general education (from primary level) with basic trade, crafts or agricultural skills. In the field of training, dually alternating training systems are based on variable combinations of education, training and work in the learning process (Germany and Switzerland have “sold” numerous dual apprenticeship projects in the South). This is reflected in employment-cum-income generating activities – the income of which benefiting the trainees and/or the company’s production unit/training centre. In the field of work and depending on the national TVSD governance policy in which they are embedded, some modern firms develop their own training/education facilities across a range of different financial and technical public/private partnerships.

There are common points between these scenarios: they focus on the learner’s needs while at the same time increasing their concerns about the relevance of that learning to employment and income-generation. They also try to partly self-finance their education and training by in-house productive work revenues.

### Can we scale up a Continuum, while keeping the richness of its complexity?

In the 1970s, an “integrated development” perspective was presented as the way to articulate the (too) numerous components of ideal development projects. At that time, development planners, NGOs and social engineers made attempts to conceptualize, outline and sketch two-dimensional integrated development projects, many of which included participatory processes for demands and needs analysis as well as qualitative self-assessment instruments. Some projects of that type such as in rural development were run across different continents, but were difficult to implement and achieve any level of impact due to the increasingly complex environment, that these projects’ objectives and means were endlessly chasing after. More than 40 years later, it seems that some Continuum programmes can cope with their embedded complexity as well as achieving quality output, thanks to highly sophisticated management instruments. Nevertheless, maintaining the same level of quality when scaling up becomes a key policy demand, is a challenge that might put at risk the very nature of the Continuum notion.

It seems nevertheless that this challenge can be overcome even within a fragile context of armed conflict, drugs, violence and youth unemployment, as in the *Vivamos Mejor* project in Colombia, when economic development is

booming, a vibrant civil society is developing, while post-conflict situations and inequality are expanding at the same time. Tensions between economic, political and social rationales are being added to the ones embedded in a Continuum, but are they may be a stimulus for innovation?

### **Business and the Continuum: a must, an opportunity or a risk?**

Many educationists have realized that business involvement in a Continuum could be interesting. The rationale of such an involvement reflects the challenges as well as the difficulties for governing a Continuum, in which interactions between a Continuum's stakeholders are determined by conflicting as well as complementary stakeholders' interests – that leads to the definition of compromises determined by location, sector/branch, social relations at work....

By way of example, increased involvement of employers in education and training can be interpreted by educationists either as an opportunity for learners or as a process of ideological change to serve business interests above those of the learner. In contrast, the same polarized attitudes can be expected from business vis-a-vis education, with education being considered either as irrelevant to business needs, or an instrument for the development of human capital. This explains the importance of governance arrangements, which need to be progressively and systematically put in place in order to define the crossover of interests among potential stakeholders. Incrementally, this could also lead to defining management tools, based on explicit compromises that reflect a minimum level of trust between actors who could then accept what has been called a mid-term Educational Pact<sup>45</sup> in Latin America.

### **The Continuum as a component of a Learning City?**

Cities worldwide are experiencing accelerated urbanization, which is linked to demographic migration shifts and increasing levels of both poverty and inequality. Considering this situation, different initiatives have been implemented, such as UNESCO's Global Network of Learning Cities hosted by the UNESCO Institute for Lifelong Learning<sup>46</sup>. Furthermore, there are also calls to both local and regional educational planning authorities for the design of appropriate LLL implementation instruments.

Today's increasingly complex urban environments bring unique challenges (especially for young people on every continent). These have not yet sufficiently been considered when reflecting on the Continuum. Today's Learning Cities perspective includes concepts such as equity, inclusion, equitable work and entrepreneurship that are particularly meaningful for youth – especially in the post (?) covid 19 period. Lessons could be drawn – with limitations - from the experience of the 1970's rural integrated development programmes.

### **From alternative to complementary: ways to consider links more than discontinuities?**

Between the mid-1960's and mid-1970's, there was wide debate about ways to position Non-Formal Education (NFE) vs. Formal Education (FE). On the one hand, NFE was seen as a revolutionary alternative to FE,<sup>47</sup> or, both fields somehow needed to be more closely associated. 50 years later, some progress can be seen in terms of the Continuum, as observed in the case of Enfants du Monde and Swisscontact in Niger. If the notion of 'alternative' refers to the choice of one of two elements, and the notion of 'revolution' implies that the choice of one lead to the destruction of the other, then the notion of Continuum carries the possibility of moving in a continuous, possibly non-linear sequential fashion between two adjacent components that are not perceived to be that different from each other, but where the extremes are quite different. For example, one can refer to an "intra-educational" continuum where FE and NFE are both interacting and where, independent of the sequential order, the values, knowledge and skills acquired along the followed pathways are cross recognized. Such a situation can be considered as a potential initial step towards a full-fledged Continuum. That is the case for the EDM Programme.

### **Creating a product or stimulating a process?**

A Continuum can be compared to a continuous organic developmental process the stages of which can't be planned. It cannot be implemented following top-down decisions, since these would be disconnected from the context and stakeholders' visions, representations, problems, demands, objectives and actions in the fields –

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<sup>45</sup> Tedesco, C. (1997). *The new educational pact: education, competitiveness and citizenship in modern society* UNESCO, Paris.  
<https://www.gcedclearinghouse.org/sites/default/files/resources/110663eo.pdf>

<sup>46</sup> UNESCO Institute for Lifelong Learning. (2017, November). *Learning cities and the SDGs: A guide to action*. <http://uil.unesco.org/lifelong-learning/learning-cities/learning-cities-and-sdgs-guide-action>

<sup>47</sup> One sometimes says: «Choosing between two alternatives; taking the first/second alternative». Only one alternative can exist, composed of two elements.

education, training and work – they are dealing with. Thus, a Continuum can't be “launched” in the same way as a development project because it is a process rather than a product. It can stem from initiatives being taken by any category of potential stakeholders (e.g., teachers/trainers, parents, local/national administration, public/private sector, NGOs, CSOs, employers, and professional associations) who consider that developing interactions between Education, Training and Work might contribute to solving some of the problems of their public (such as NEETs, illiterate adults, unqualified apprentices' masters or unemployed graduates.....).

Such a process that is based on specific requirements often needs to be supported to stimulate representations, knowledge and objective sharing between the concerned stakeholders, as well as through a series of experimentation stages. For example, employers are not very familiar with the world of education, and vice versa. This explains why the conception, objectives, definitions of a potential Continuum must be co-created with directly impacted stakeholders in order to secure empowerment and ownership of a programme.

### **Dialogic micro-level platforms as a base for an evolving education and work Continuum?**

Developing connectivity between the micro, meso and macro levels at which the different categories of potential Continuum stakeholders might possibly be involved is a key instrument for testing the feasibility of a Continuum. For example, if the collaboration between a teacher and an artisan potentially resonates with experts as a positive element for children's development, this practice might be considered as irrelevant by parents for whom schooling is an instrument for gaining social status rather than a way of introducing children to a craft, or even by teachers who might undervalue crafters' skills. Therefore, many *vocationalisation* and above-mentioned *school production* programmes in the 1980's and 1990's failed – simply due to the lack of understanding of the nature and role of any contextualized social demand for education. At the opposite end of the scale, other experts have tried to incentivize artisans to return to school and have encouraged pupils to work with artisans. These examples of expert knowledge, which fails to recognize or consider the real social impact of the topic they address, reflect the same patterns of “siloes” knowledge which the Continuum approach seeks to connect. In order to achieve maximum impact, it is key to draw on diverse types of expertise, on participants' social contexts and on their perceptions and wishes.

### **Responsibility for employability: the individual and/or the organization and society?**

Vocational/professional guidance has for some time been the main public or private instrument for helping individuals take decisions about their initial professional activity. The limits of such an instrument were reached when the rapid transformations of work and employment revealed the gap between what was offered by guidance and the needs stemming from these transformations.

The various enlarged Education and Training scenarios proposed in the 80's and 90's attempted make a step further in the interactions between education and training by adding transitions programmes between the two worlds, in order to reach better socio-professional inclusion or employability. The debates around these terms were all proposed by education and training stakeholders so that the word “employability” became a compelling term, since it suggested an explicit connection between the worlds of education and training with work. Nevertheless, “employability” concerns individual responsibility first, then education and training organizations and finally, indirectly, enterprises and society that define the context that determine which people are employable (the micro, meso, macro levels referred to in the above paragraph).

In this sense, the individual's decision to pursue a specific education and/or training pathway relies entirely on their own perceptions, representations and knowledge of the world of work. That is why offering different levels of support and instruments aimed at acquiring core skills and at facilitating self-determined career decisions goes beyond standard professional guidance. It also demands more than beforehand from organizations, governments and societies – in addition to the individuals concerned.

### **The Continuum: an extended intergenerational vision?**

Early childhood care and education has become a key concern at international, regional and national levels in the South and North since the launch of Education For All (EFA-1990) then the MDGs (2000-2015) and even more with the SDGs (2015-2030). This rising concern is explicitly related to the phenomenon of exclusion and inequality in different fields: employment and income, resources such as access to water and land. The absence of early childhood care and education affects parents' ability to take up opportunities for education, training or jobs. In addition, there is an increased risk for the children of excluded segments of the population if they do not receive special attention during the early childhood period.

These concerns have led some Continuum supporters to put in place parallel projects to specifically address the issue. These are specific, multi-purpose projects targeting child-care and socialization on the one hand, and parental integration into an intergenerational perspective on the other hand. This is potentially achieved through an ad hoc Continuum's dimension that also targets parents with specific education and training needs. In order to avoid the creation of a new silo – early/pre-school education -, pre-school champions could support children in preparing for school, and take advantage of the existing lessons in building institutionalized continuities between early childhood activities and basic education.

### **The Continuum and evidence-informed decision making**

Each of the five projects presented refers to research and knowledge as key instruments in the preparation and management of these projects. Debates around the use of research-based knowledge for decision making, whatever the level (macro, meso, micro) and the field, have been ongoing for decades. These debates need to broaden in scope, as research is not the only mode of knowledge production. There are different types of knowledge:

- Research-based knowledge:
  - It can be of a scientific-academic nature, produced in a supply-driven perspective by researchers who may retain more autonomy than if they produce only demand-driven knowledge. But this type of knowledge is often too far from the objectives and constraints of decision-makers at any of the above-mentioned levels in terms of both timescale and scope.
  - It can be policy-oriented and use systematic methods to examine problems for formulating and implementing strategies. Public bodies as well as NGOs and CSOs can call upon consultancy-based knowledge viewed as less autonomous than the previously mentioned type, but is often closer to the requirements of decision-makers.
- Project and programme knowledge:
  - This type of knowledge is generated during the development of projects – as in the case of JOBS in Romania – with a view to either monitoring progress or to generating solutions to a problem. Knowledge producers can either be the stakeholders in a project or external bodies from the academic and/or consultancy worlds. The issue of autonomy, in relation to the potential vested interests between knowledge producers and knowledge-based change implementers (as highlighted in the previous category of knowledge production) would then come under scrutiny because of any power play that can serve to undermine any project.
- Participatory knowledge:
  - The participation of people in the policy process is an ongoing matter of debate in the field of development. Participation is vital, since experiential knowledge can provide an important insight into issues, and a street-level understanding is crucial to effective interventions. However, these objectives can be hindered by the power play that can often serve to undermine public involvement in deliberative policy making.

Faced with such a variety of knowledge and of output conditions, the only conclusion that can be drawn is that the use of the word “research” must be carefully monitored by any project's stakeholder. Any ad hoc combination of specific types of knowledge production must be implemented in order to secure a greater level of quality and efficiency in the decision-making process. Reflecting about a Continuum has to explicit the views of the initiators and stakeholders about the above-mentioned points.

### **Integrating migrants and refugees through vocational skills development**

During the 2018 UN General Assembly in New York, 20 companies including Microsoft, IKEA, H&M, Sodexo and Hilton renewed their commitments to help refugees by establishing partnerships with UNHCR and other humanitarian organizations<sup>48</sup>. The CEO of IKEA Foundation declared at the Concordia Global Summit that “refugees are people just like you and me. They want a purpose in life. They have goals and they have skills. All

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<sup>48</sup> Martinez. M. (2018, September 26). *More businesses commit to helping refugees thrive with new jobs, trainings, investment*. UNCHR. <https://www.unhcr.org/news/latest/2018/9/5babbecf4/businesses-commit-helping-refugees-thrive-new-jobs-trainings-investment.html>

they want is a job”<sup>49</sup>. The CEO of Hissho Sushi followed the same line: “Refugees are the hardest workers I have ever met. They are loyal and smart”. The sushi provider will help 1,250 refugees become franchise owners by 2023 as it expands its location around the USA. In the same vein, Sodexo committed to hiring 300 refugees in the USA, Canada and Brazil by 2020. “It’s the smart thing to do and it is in our business interest” said Sodexo’s senior VP for corporate social responsibility.<sup>50</sup>

These examples reflect economic and Corporate Social Responsibility rationales for engagement with refugees. Refugees remain displaced, whether in camps or not, for an average of 25 years, according to UNHCR, a long-term solution is required. “The private sector has an enormous contribution to make, not only in terms of financial resources, but also in proposing long-term business models that focus on integrating refugees into societies in an effective way”. This can be implemented through market-oriented training opportunities (e.g., Microsoft in Kenya), or community development projects (e.g., IKEA in Ethiopia). All these examples demonstrate that capitalizing in an ad hoc way on the migrant’s pre-existing knowledge and skills can lead to a shared continuous socio-economic development.

### **The Continuum and entrepreneurship education and mentoring in the South**

For Schumpeter (1883-1950), an entrepreneur takes risks, is an innovator and expects some results. This perspective is still valid today, particularly for marginalised populations who may have very few other income-generating options available to them. This raises the question about what form of training is best suited to encourage prudent risk taking and innovative behaviours and decisions. This then depends on the answer to the question about the real nature of entrepreneurship: is it an art and/or a science? If it is considered an art, the learning process must then be highly diversified with differently weighted combinations of informal (on the job), non-formal (short courses, coaching) and formal education/training with (specialized/general content). If it is considered a science, the focus might probably be on formal training, combined with non-formal and informal training. In both cases, the interactive and flexible characteristics of a Continuum approach seems relevant for entrepreneurship education.

Entrepreneurship for development in the South is gaining popularity. Several years ago, many economic development cooperation organizations were questioning whether entrepreneurship education, especially in relation to supporting the high growth potential of small and medium enterprises, was an area they should get involved in – as a sub-component of the business development services, they were already providing. Today, many of these organizations are active in entrepreneurship development – following in the economic and ideological wake of support to the private sector as a key development actor.

Reviewing many entrepreneurship development projects in the South indicates that the first issue to be faced is the local market situation, followed by the availability of mentors coming from established enterprises and specialized backstopping organizations<sup>51</sup>. Formal education and training interventions must be well articulated in such a process of entrepreneurship development. In the South, the limits of this approach lie in the costs of scaling up such individualized, tailored support – something which has only been seen to date in a limited number of small countries in the North.

### **Exclusion, inequality and the Continuum: towards an integrated socio-economic perspective?**

The Continuum objectives can’t be narrowed down to a “social” stand-alone issue that is linked to exclusion and inequality. The Continuum should rather be grasped as a set of interconnected national and even transnational economic, political and value-related variables. It has taken some time for educationists to acknowledge the relevance of casting their reflections further afield, through conviction and/or realism, towards more socio-economic realities. On the other hand, it has seemed even more difficult for businesses to open to considering the role of education from a broader perspective than the conventional generalist “soft skills” buzzword type approach. Any reflection or action towards a Continuum approach cannot be achieved without considering the debate between the educationist viewpoint of “excessive” and the business viewpoint of “insufficient” *vocationalisation* of societies. The next step in reflection could be to examine the ways the Continuum and lifelong learning (LLL) approaches may interact for their mutual benefit.

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<sup>49</sup> Concordia. (2018). *Annual summit*. <https://www.concordia.net/annualsummit/2018annualsummit/>

<sup>50</sup> Shittu, A-I, Promoting Youth Entrepreneurship: The Role of Mentoring (2017). IDS Bulletin Vol 48, No 3, Brighton (UK)