

# YouMatch

Global Initiative on Innovative  
Employment Services for Youth

## Knowledge products from the GIZ YouMatch network.

Collected experiences, recommendations and best practice  
on managing a global network and communities of practice.



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# List of Abbreviations

<b>ASPYEE</b>	African Skills Portal for Youth Employment and Entrepreneurship
<b>AUC</b>	African Union Commission
<b>AUDA-NEPAD</b>	African Union Development Agency – New Partnership for Africa's Development
<b>CoP</b>	Community of Practice
<b>ES</b>	Employment Services
<b>EU</b>	European Union
<b>ETF</b>	European Training Foundation
<b>GIZ</b>	Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit GmbH
<b>ILO</b>	International Labour Organization
<b>ISCO</b>	International Standard Classification of Occupations
<b>IT</b>	Information Technology
<b>KP</b>	Knowledge Product
<b>LMIS</b>	Labour Market Information System
<b>LMS</b>	Labour Market Service
<b>MENA</b>	Middle East and North Africa
<b>PPP</b>	Public Private Partnership
<b>SADC</b>	Southern African Development Community
<b>SteerCo</b>	Steering Committee
<b>TVET</b>	Technical and Vocational Education and Training
<b>UfMS</b>	Union for the Mediterranean Secretariat
<b>WAPES</b>	World Association for Public Employment Services
<b>YM</b>	YouMatch – Global Initiative on Innovative Employment Services

# Foreword

Youth unemployment is a major challenge for countries in the MENA region and sub-Saharan Africa. According to the International Labour Organization (ILO) sub-Saharan Africa has the world's second largest official youth unemployment rate. Young people find it particularly difficult to gain a foothold in the labour market. Lacking work experience and without the necessary networks and strategies to support their job search, finding a decent job becomes particularly challenging.

This is exactly where the Global Initiative on Innovative Employment Services for Youth – YouMatch, implemented by the Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ) GmbH on behalf of the German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ) between 2016–2021, comes in. In recent years, YouMatch has brought together around 100 employment service practitioners from 25 African and MENA countries. The transnational cooperation took place in Communities of Practice (CoP). A special feature of YouMatch is that the participating countries were involved in the design from the outset. The participants could decide for themselves on which topic and in which CoP they wanted to work, an approach that was rated very positively by all. The same applies to the fact that each CoP was able to develop and design its own action plan. This approach significantly promoted the intensive exchange of knowledge and experience within the CoPs, the participants were able to learn from each other and exchange innovative and inspiring ideas. The CoPs are a protected space that also makes it possible to discuss topics that have a certain sensitivity, for example the question regarding the role of public employment services following the Covid-19 pandemic.

This document is a compilation of the experiences from YouMatch on core processes and best practices, combined with practical recommendations on managing a network with CoPs and individual stories from nine member countries in the chapter “Voices from the YouMatch network”, page 50. We thank the network's members and stakeholders in sharing their experience and being available for interviews. This spirit of open dialogue contributed to the impact of the network and continuous collaboration of different stakeholders.

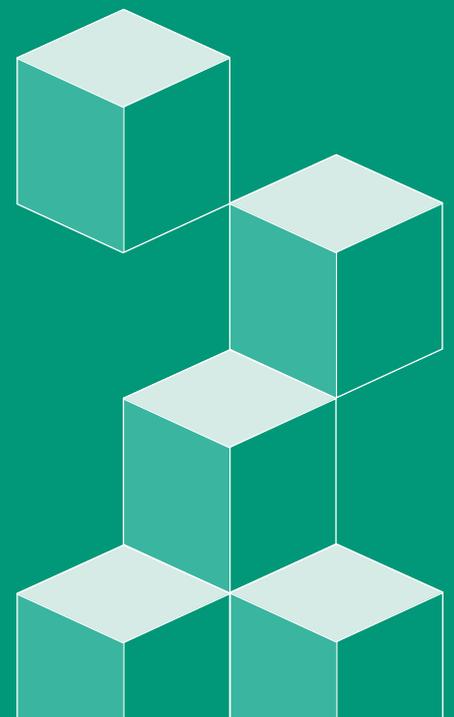
We would also like to thank all the countries participating in the YouMatch initiative and all the partners who participated in guiding the YouMatch activities through their active participation in the YouMatch Steering Committee: the African Union Commission (AUC), the African Union Development Agency (AUDA-NEPAD), the Union for the Mediterranean Secretariat (UfMS) and the World Association of Public Employment Services (WAPES). Furthermore, thanks should be attributed the European Training Foundation (ETF) and the International Labour Organization (ILO) for the fruitful cooperation and to all involved regional and bilateral German development cooperation programmes and their respective partners who are continuously engaged to sustain the YouMatch approaches on regional and national levels.

Pierre Lucante  
Head of YouMatch Initiative



# PROCESS DOCUMENTATION AND KNOWLEDGE PRODUCTS

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## 0.1 Introduction to the global initiative YouMatch

The Global Initiative on Innovative Employment Services for Youth – YouMatch – implemented by the Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ) GmbH on behalf of the German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ) between 2016–2021 improved employment services through an interregional dialogue between labour market practitioners and stakeholders. The YouMatch network consists of around 100 practitioners from public and private employment services, civil society organizations, education institutions and other key actors from 25 countries in sub-Saharan Africa and the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) regions. In needs-based, interregional thematic Communities of Practice (CoPs) they exchanged on experiences, technical solutions, lessons learned, best practices, and innovative approaches to promote youth employment.

YouMatch, the Global Initiative on Innovative Employment Services for Youth, addresses a key problem in many developing and transition countries: non-existent or qualitatively weak Employment Services (ES). The inadequate provision of job orientation, job preparation and placement services are mainly at the expense of young people. Innovative approaches to ES are not very widespread in many developing countries, as there is hardly potential for interregional exchange and joint development of ES oriented towards the concrete reality of the regions.

The YouMatch network, which is based in sub-Saharan Africa and the MENA regions, has laid the foundations for anchoring the issue of ES for young people more firmly at national and regional level. The YouMatch CoPs provide interregional forums on ES. The CoPs are theme-specific and address such topics as career guidance and soft skills, setting up effective job centres, labour market information systems, public private partnerships, and multi-stakeholder approaches in the field of ES as well as ES for rural youth.

The YouMatch programme receives financial funding in the framework of the German development cooperation until December 2021. To sustain parts of the YouMatch network and CoP approach, a Process Documentation and a set of Knowledge Products (KP) have been elaborated. The goals of this document are that potential future network hosts can draw on experience of managing the YouMatch network and run parts of it autonomously. Also, these products shall serve as guidance for setting up comparable networks in other sector areas.

The present KPs are comprised of the first part “Process Documentation and Knowledge Products” and looks at YM

key processes and learning experiences. The second part consists of three knowledge “packages” on 1) Community Management, 2) Elaboration of Guidelines and Policy Recommendations and 3) Transfer of CoP Learnings to National Levels. The first part shall give an overview of the setup of the network and summarize what YM has been doing and how. The second parts shall serve as guides on the above mentioned three knowledge formats, with clear recommendations and check lists for application of the YM networks’ experience. Starting from page 50, experience reports by YM network members – so to say, “Voices from the YouMatch network” – and good practices have been compiled to reflect on individual “user stories”.

This documentation presents explicitly a retrospective. Specifically, the contents look back at the experiences from the planning and implementation of the second YM network and project phase implemented between 2018-2021 and the details of the work of the CoPs.

The use of the results from the YouMatch results-based monitoring and an internal evaluation study, which was based on a preceding online survey in 2020, proved to be useful for the compilation of the learning experiences. Additionally, individual interviews with representatives from all stakeholder groups (CoP members, facilitators, YM project team, network partners and Steering Committee members, consultants) were conducted. While it is not the idea to ‘evaluate’ the network and CoPs, the character of this document is much more an aggregation of hands-on experiences, while identifying the positive and critical aspects for success and failure.

## 0.2 The Communities of Practice approach

The concept of a CoP was originally used by Lave and Wenger (1991) to denote a particular way in which professionals were inculcated with skills, knowledge and culture of their sector through legitimate peripheral participation alongside those who were more experienced.<sup>1</sup> One of the fundamental analyses on the topic of learning in CoP and the respective transformative dynamics was presented by Wenger-Trayner et al. in their 2015 publication *Learning in Landscapes of Practice: Boundaries, Identity, and Knowledgeability in Practice-Based Learning*.<sup>2</sup> In their study, the authors present “... a somewhat elaborated perspective on learning in communities of practice, one that still starts with the assumption that learning is an inherent dimension of everyday life and that it is fundamentally a social process, but is now conceptualized as a trajectory or journey through a landscape of different and complex practices. From this perspective, a living “body of knowledge” can be viewed as a collection of communities of practice. Learning is not merely the acquisition of a curriculum, but a self-transformative journey across this landscape of practices.”<sup>3</sup>

Based on the assumption of learning as a part of generating a so-called “productive identity”<sup>4</sup>, there is an essential difference between the mere acquisition of new knowledge, insights and competences and the ability to integrate these into a practice-relevant context, thereby bringing about processes of change as a result of the learning dynamics.

The CoP approach is based on the assumption of learning as part of generating a “productive identity”. The guiding principle of this approach is “Change through Cooperation” and goes beyond the mere acquisition of new knowledge and competences but integrates these into a practice-oriented structure, thereby producing change as an effect of learning processes. The multi-stakeholder approach (MSA) instead builds specifically on the coalition theory. Here, the guiding principle is “Consensus through Coalition”. Consensual decision gains more legitimacy and can be implemented more effectively than a traditional hierarchy-forced response.

**“... a somewhat elaborated perspective on learning in communities of practice, one that still starts with the assumption that learning is an inherent dimension of everyday life and that it is fundamentally a social process, but is now conceptualized as a trajectory or journey through a landscape of different and complex practices. From this perspective, a living “body of knowledge” can be viewed as a collection of communities of practice. Learning is not merely the acquisition of a curriculum, but a self-transformative journey across this landscape of practices.”<sup>3</sup>**

1 Welch, Christine (2017, October 17th). Re: What's the difference between collaboration and communities of practice in the context of teacher professional development?. ResearchGate Forum. [https://www.researchgate.net/post/Whats\\_the\\_difference\\_between\\_collaboration\\_and\\_communities\\_of\\_practice\\_in\\_the\\_context\\_of\\_teacher\\_professional\\_development](https://www.researchgate.net/post/Whats_the_difference_between_collaboration_and_communities_of_practice_in_the_context_of_teacher_professional_development). (accessed 04.11.2021, 21:07).

2 Wenger-Trayner et al. (2015). *Learning in Landscapes of Practice. Boundaries, identity, and knowledgeability in practice-based learning*. [https://www.researchgate.net/publication/279276319\\_Etienne\\_Wenger-Trayner\\_Mark\\_Fenton-O%27Creevy\\_Steven\\_Hutchinson\\_eds\\_LEARNING\\_IN\\_LANDSCAPES\\_OF\\_PRACTICE\\_BOUNDARIES\\_IDENTITY\\_AND\\_KNOWLEDGEABILITY\\_IN\\_PRACTICE-BASED\\_LEARNING\\_Routledge\\_2015](https://www.researchgate.net/publication/279276319_Etienne_Wenger-Trayner_Mark_Fenton-O%27Creevy_Steven_Hutchinson_eds_LEARNING_IN_LANDSCAPES_OF_PRACTICE_BOUNDARIES_IDENTITY_AND_KNOWLEDGEABILITY_IN_PRACTICE-BASED_LEARNING_Routledge_2015). (accessed 04.11.2021, 21:16).

3 Ibid.

4 Ibid.

## 0.3 Structure of the YouMatch network

The management structure of the YM CoP network comprises several favourable factors. One is the strong level of autonomy of the CoPs in their thematic orientation. This autonomy of the CoPs strengthens ownership by the members to shape the work of the CoP.

The use of a semi-decentralised management allowed the most possible freedom and decision-making for the CoPs. The decentralized management approach consolidated confidence of CoP members, as this way of managing responsibilities increased possibilities for participation. The principle of management through participation included the integration of CoP representative(s) in the Steering Committee as interface between managerial and learning sphere.

The structural integration of international stakeholders in the field of ES has given YouMatch an outstanding reputation and visibility. The positive reputation of the network strengthened attention of participants in activities and provided an important incentive for experts and practitioners to join the YM network. The network provided highly appreciated opportunities for learning and professional exchange in an international environment. As stated during some interviews, however, there seemed to be an insufficient representation of private employment centres in the CoPs. Moreover, there seemed to be a need for more focus on private employment service initiatives and more professional input for the private sector stakeholders in the CoPs.

Balanced participation of men and women is often being supported in the CoPs, but not often achieved, as there was no structurally planned participation of women in the CoPs member structure. That fact was not intended. It evolved as the nomination of CoP members happened by their nominating institutions based on CoP member's terms of references (TOR). In the annex 1 (page 72) of this KP document, the TOR as of October 2018 is included. This document states the desired profile of the member, benefits for him/her, as well as necessary commitments on the member's side.

The YM structure needed to take into account the variety of countries participating, of which key challenges are the socio-economic differences of many of the sub-Saharan African and MENA countries as well as cultural diversity as part of the countries' realities. Thus, the YM structure needed to enable to export knowledge on ES with a well-defined and adapted local approach, with potential difficulties to transfer information to the local context. Sharing of information is time-consuming and needs to be assessed for its benefit.

This assessment is rarely being done at a structured level in the institutions of the CoP members because resources and capacities for such task are simply not available. Thus, transfer of input from the CoP into the member's institution often takes place in a non-formal and not specifically planned setting, where a specific strategy on how to systematically integrate the input cannot be assured.

Transparency and the creation of confidence was an important aspect of the CoP structure. CoP members affirmed to trust each other. Members can open doors for other members, an effect which was understood as being a key element of the CoP networking effects. This dynamic had also a direct effect on the staff of involved institutions, thus, to learn from this level of trust and cooperation. As such, the multiplier effect of the CoP approach can be assessed as positive and sustainable.

## 0.4 Processes of the YouMatch network

The process design of the CoP network substantiated the autonomous management approach. The project team acts as facilitator and partner who can (and does) offer institutional learning experiences based on demand by the members. This type of partnership increased trust and performance of the CoPs.

Transparent communication processes enabled an ownership and active participation of the CoPs and its members in decision making. Transparency can be identified as a crucial success factor for the YM network.

The budget commitment at national level (and likewise in the budget planning) was considered as generally too low. ES need a lot of contribution of time, staff, budget, and planning resources. There is often not enough support from national governments to implement respective activities or create necessary (infra-)structures. Additional support for hardware and country-related small funding has been demanded by CoP participants.

The strength of the various CoP processes lies clearly in connecting practitioners and sharing professional expertise. This has improved services offered by the participating institutions and created new projects and initiatives. All stakeholders see the need to consolidate the successes achieved and to continue the positive momentum from YouMatch also outside a project context.

The integration of external facilitators, experts and trainers broadened the knowledge horizon of the CoPs and significantly supported learning processes with practical examples and expertise. This strengthened professionalism of the work of the CoPs as well as of the YM network in general.

Key learnings from knowledge exchange include soft skills (i.e. communication, inter-personal, negotiation, management etc.) that are key to improve employability of graduates and success / effectiveness of employees. Local employment committees bring together relevant stakeholders (private, public, civil society) at the local level to improve accessibility of ES and information on the labour market for young people.

Government institutions did have little experience or knowledge on how to establish Public-Private-Partnerships (PPPs) for ES and on which topic to focus on. This is where the members from private sector institutions came in with their support and expertise. YM could provide professional contribution to the questions of how to start, plan and implement PPPs on ES. The necessary details of establishing such PPPs have been transferred through learning processes, that were incubated through the CoP meetings and other knowledge exchange processes. YM is hereby focussing on the practical side of support, which includes coordinating mechanisms, change management, stakeholder engagement, and advocacy for this legislative process. Still, the different legal frameworks can make it difficult to compare the examples from other countries, especially when comparing private and public sector experiences.

## 0.5 Activities of the YouMatch network

The various activities of the YM network strengthened the learning experience of the CoP members. A success factor was the direct exchange through physical presence among the CoP members until the Covid-19-pandemic stopped all face-to-face meetings. Face-to-face exchange is a key element of knowledge exchange in the CoP approach. Participation in the CoPs contributed to developing leadership skills as well as technical expertise. The CoP experience helped members to become more strategic and structural in their own work and even strengthened confidence of some to act as change agent in the sector.

Study tours have been assessed as having lasting effects for knowledge exchange amongst CoP members. The tours represent well perceived opportunities for direct exchange and learning experiences (from other countries). Study tours provide a highly participative dynamic, where an open forum enables the participants to introduce their own experiences. The face-to-face meetings in August 2019 during the Turin meeting at the International Labour Organization (ILO) International Training Centre were an important event at the beginning of the second YM project phase. Participants contributed with their own knowledge and the meeting brought together a variety of backgrounds and expertise; diverse perspectives have been communicated and exchanged.

The physical presence of participants in these first meetings can be identified as a key success factor for professional exchange amongst the CoP members.<sup>5</sup> In-person meetings are important also for establishing professional networking outside the CoP structure, e.g. for assessing the functioning of private sector ES in other countries or to share some of the experiences with public ES. YM strengthened these networking effects, which do not necessarily transform into direct appraisable changes at institutional setting, but which have a longer-term effect on professional networking for knowledge sharing on specific technical aspects of ES for the youth.

Jointly developed guidelines and handbooks presented practical support to work challenges in the professional environment of ES. The strong focus on practical solutions

increased the positive impact and benefits on / for the CoP members. Although these documents represent an important theoretical fundament, they need to be applied practically in the respective (and differing) country contexts.

The active participation of the CoP members is an indicator for the relevance and problem-oriented approach by which the YM network is functioning. The added value of participation in the CoPs can be characterized as cross-fertilization of ideas and progressive thoughts, thus symbolizing the benefit that the CoP members gained from YM.

Innovative ideas for the digitalization of ES have increased the level of advocacy of CoP members for digital applications and their usage in the national context. The application of digital tools goes along with the restructuring of management processes at institutional level and responsibilities along the “digital trail”. The steps into increased digitalisation also strengthened positive user effects on individual level and reduced the limitations on networking due to the Covid-19 pandemic.

Participation in YM activities had even longer-term positive effects by strengthening networking effects on international level beyond YM.

The strength of the CoPs is clearly in connecting practitioners and sharing professional expertise. This has improved services offered by the participating institutions and created new projects and initiatives. The YM initiative served well as incubator for knowledge and expertise concerning relevant aspects of ES.

All stakeholders, who were approached for this KP process documentation, identified the need to consolidate the successes achieved and to continue the positive momentum from YM also outside the project context.

The definition of a sustainable exit strategy is a key task for YM and all its stakeholders. This can ensure the continuous adaptation of good practices from the YM network to national contexts in and beyond the sector.

<sup>5</sup> Note: These positive dynamics could only be replaced to a limited extent by the online meetings, starting after spring 2020, that became necessary due to the Covid-19 pandemic.

## 0.6 Transfer of knowledge from CoP to practice

ES for youth is becoming an increased priority for many governments of YM partner countries. The topic is being integrated into policies and public strategies, as the governments are aiming to create new jobs for the youth on large scale. But job awareness amongst the students has been characterized as not sufficiently developed. Students rarely have a clear idea about the necessities for a professional career. With the support of the CoPs and through the learning transfer from other countries, the importance of Career Guidance Services in respect to advising the youth concerning their preparation of career planning, information about the access to jobs, demanded skills, and trainings was better understood.

Knowledge transfer to the national level as a key objective of YM has been proven successful in several cases. The products (i.e. documents and written outcomes) of the CoPs are essential for the transfer of knowledge into the national context. The application of the manuals and guidelines has been successful in several countries. There was a widely positive appreciation of learning from other country examples: Learning in the context of YM was not a simple copy-paste process, but the experiences of other countries needed to be adapted to the specific national context. This transformation goes beyond the mandate of YM and lies in the responsibility of the national institutions themselves.

In the diverse context of sub-Saharan African and MENA countries, the better understanding of ES and the importance to increase the professionalism of institutions to provide better services was an added value at institutional level provided by YM. The network is thus contributing to a more joint approach across these countries and regions by learning from each other and understanding other approaches.

A challenge for the creation of new structures for ES was lobbying and convincing the respective authorities about the importance of ES for young people. The trainings on strategic advocacy, change management and presentation skills supported the transfer of knowledge to the government authorities. It also enabled some CoP members for instance to convince other stakeholders in the sector at national level to join the development of a Labour Market Information System (LMIS).

Another challenge is the timeframe required for the implementation of policy recommendations. These require a long-term horizon (5-10 years) and are partly outside the scope of YM's activities.

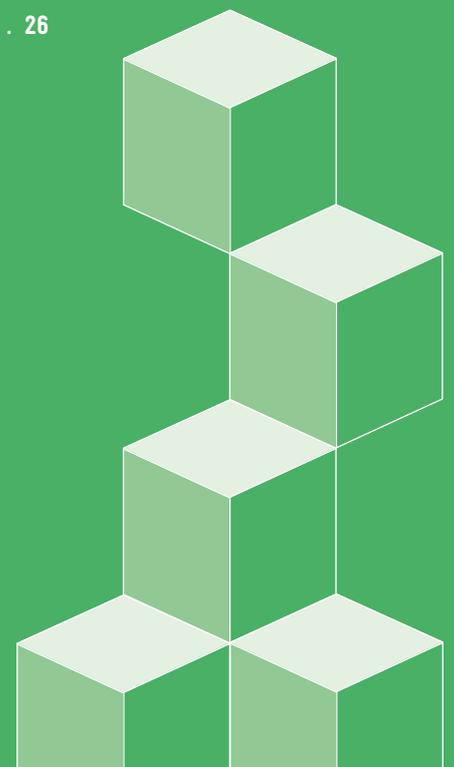
In summary, YM was able to contribute to the drafting of employment policies, for the implementation and coordination of dialogue processes, stakeholder engagement, and advocacy for legislative processes. Up to a certain degree, the inclusion of high-level decision makers can increase the knowledge transfer, in particular where CoP members fulfil their role as advocates for change. A limiting effect although is the necessary timeframe to achieve policy changes, where periods of 5-10 years need to be considered as realistic. There was also an identified reluctance of political representatives to introduce new digital technologies, although expertise from the CoP participation had been transmitted to the political leadership level. Implementation thus depends on the job level or the decision-making power of the respective CoP participant. It seems easier to transfer knowledge and ideas when the exchange happens amongst stakeholders or individuals of the same decision-making level.





# KP 1 COMMUNITY MANAGEMENT

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# 1.1 Introduction

Based on the project implementation phase 2018 – 2021, the YouMatch (YM) network collected experiences on its core processes in form of knowledge products (KP). The KP follow a strategic purpose: they shall be used by potential future hosts of the YM network or parts of it (respectively the Communities of Practice (CoP) as core elements) to apply the experiences and concepts for managing the network structure autonomously. Furthermore, the KP shall also be applicable as guidance for managing comparable networks in other sector areas and therefore serve a wider target group outside the present scope of the YM Initiative.

The KPs are comprised of the first part “Process Documentation and Knowledge Products” and looks at YM key processes and learning experiences. The second part consists of three knowledge “packages” on 1) Community Management, 2) Elaboration of Guidelines and Policy Recommendations and 3) Transfer of CoP Learnings to National Levels. The first part shall give an overview of the setup of the network and summarize what YM has been doing and how. The second parts shall serve as guides on the above mentioned three knowledge formats, with clear recommendations and check lists for application of the YM networks’ experience.

The **KP 1) Community Management** deals with the **management aspects** of the YM network, looking at it from the perspective of a (potential) network manager. When referring to the term “community” in this concept, it is always considered a structure that relates to the CoP approach.

The user shall feel enabled to turn the content into practice, although a certain level of adaptation to the respective (national or institutional) context may always be necessary. The second part guidelines are content-oriented and contain checklists. It encompasses the key question of **What To Do?**

## 1.2 Principles of community management

A knowledge community – i.e. in this specific context the CoP – can be understood as the structured basis for knowledge exchange. It is important to distinguish between work groups and task forces oriented towards specific tasks and objectives (e.g. for projects, temporary group work or collegial peer groups) and CoP based on an extensively defined structure and oriented towards specific topics. Essential here is the structured, hierarchical and guided exchange of knowledge which, according to the definition by North, Romhardt and Probst (2000), in the context of a CoP takes place among “... groups of people existing over a longer period of time who have an interest in a common topic and want to build up and exchange knowledge together. Participation is voluntary and personal. Communities of practice are grouped around specific content.”<sup>6</sup>

Informal, voluntary, not externally determined membership is understood as the central principle of a knowledge community. Through the interaction of the members with each other, the members contribute to the value creation of the community, thus changing from simple consumers to producers of knowledge and contributors to the exchange of experience.<sup>7</sup> This simultaneous momentum of the members of a CoP constitutes the foundation of interaction within such a community.

Active participation, which is based on the contribution of one's own knowledge and experience to the knowledge context, is the fundamental principle for the functioning of the CoP. Thus the commitment of the individual members is an essential factor for the successful (or unsuccessful) dynamics of a knowledge community.

**“... groups of people existing over a longer period of time who have an interest in a common topic and want to build up and exchange knowledge together. Participation is voluntary and personal. Communities of practice are grouped around specific content.”<sup>6</sup>**

For knowledge communities, several essential functions emerge for the creation, accumulation, and distribution of knowledge across organisational and/or national boundaries:

- They promote the strengthening of members' individual knowledge, wisdom and skills;
- They are connectors for the exchange and interpretation of information;
- Knowledge communities keep experiences and knowledge up to date through their conversational character;
- They promote the creation and development of new competencies that have an impact on the organisation (the transfer of knowledge that we consider essential to bring about structural changes as well).

<sup>6</sup> North, K. / Romhardt, K. / Probst, G. J. B. 2000. Knowledge Communities – the Nuclei of Living Knowledge Management (orig.: Wissensgemeinschaften – Keimzellen lebendigen Wissensmanagements). In: io-Management, 7/8, 2000. p. 52-62 (own translation).

<sup>7</sup> See Bullinger, H.-J. / Baumann, T. / Fröschele, N. / Mack, O. / Trunzer, T. / Wälfert, J. 2002: Business Communities – Professional relationship management of customers, employees and B2B partners on the internet (orig.: Business Communities – Professionelles Beziehungsmanagement von Kunden, Mitarbeitern und B2B-Partnern im Internet. Bonn: Galileo Business (own translation).

In order to implement knowledge management successfully, the implementation and strengthening of the following principles are seen as conducive to the success of CoP management:<sup>8</sup>

- Knowledge is created and resides in the minds of the members;
- Trust is the prerequisite for sharing knowledge;
- Technologies enable a new way of dealing with knowledge;
- Knowledge sharing must be encouraged and rewarded;
- Management support and resources are essential;
- Qualitative and quantitative measures are needed to assess the initiative;
- Knowledge is creative and should be allowed to evolve in unexpected directions.

Community management needs to consider these principles as well as the potential obstacles that can derive from the specific context, in which the CoP is being set up or managed. Thus, a management plan for the establishment or continuation of a CoP or similar knowledge management networks can be a crucial factor for the successful and long-term application of the above-mentioned principles.

## 1.3 Relevance of governance principles: transparency, integrity, accountability, and participation

Governance principles define a control and regulation system of a political-social unit and can accordingly be applied also to the governance of a CoP. Management and interaction in the network are characterised by the basic principles of transparency, integrity, accountability, and participation and as such represent a regulatory framework that guides all stakeholders in the network.

**Transparency:** Transparency internalises an open presentation and comprehensibility of processes, decisions, and budgeting to establish trust and credibility. It is crucial that the management level practises and promotes this transpar-

ency, which also includes the ability to feedback (also on one's own actions) and the possibility of an open exchange of opinions.

**Integrity:** Integrity is based on values and principles that guide the network's actions and that the network sets for itself and implements – even under difficult conditions if necessary. Integrity is thus the congruence of the given ideals and values with the practice to be experienced in the network and thus sets a high ethical standard for the conduct of all those responsible in the network.

<sup>8</sup> See: Concepts of Knowledge Management (orig. Wissensmanagement-Konzepte) (2010). <http://www.techsphere.de/pageID=wmo04.html> . (accessed 04.11.2021, 22:24).

**Accountability:** While financial accountability refers to the procedures we further discuss in chapter 3.2, personal accountability refers to the willingness “...to be held accountable by others – meaning they [the managers] take ownership over the impact of their actions (or inaction) and are open to teammates checking in about the status of commitments they have made.”<sup>9</sup> Thus the term is closely linked to the way communication and decision making takes place in the network, to the openness of all stakeholders and to the management for openly discussing decisions and their impact – even if there are critical aspects to consider.

“...to be held accountable by others – meaning they [the managers] take ownership over the impact of their actions (or inaction) and are open to teammates checking in about the status of commitments they have made.”<sup>9</sup>

**Participation:** As seen above, participation is one of the central elements in the functioning of a CoP. Ensuring and promoting participation is a management task that requires constant monitoring, as it is a highly dynamic social process. The active (and voluntary) participation of all those involved in the network in the various activities ensures that all people profit equally from the benefits of the network and can contribute freely to it.

## 1.4 Planning processes

### 1.4.1 Strategic planning

Both the establishment of a new network and the continuation of an existing structure require initial or recurrent planning processes, which will be briefly described here.

It can be assumed that a manager of a knowledge network is her/himself an expert in the sector in which the network is to be established.

**Content definition of network topics:** This process involves the definition of a rationale for the network, which groups gather around a specific topic area. The thematic orientation must therefore be focused on aspects that a) have not yet been sufficiently considered and worked on and b) where relevant networking has not yet taken place satisfactorily. Accordingly, the CoP must serve an existing need for knowledge building, networking, and practical application. The main objective of a CoP is usually to develop practical options for application for the participants and to demonstrate alternative courses of action that bring about a

practice-oriented application with transition effects in the institutions of the network members.

**Definition of the network structure:** The structure of a CoP is mainly determined by the available financial resources and the targeted size of the network. Supporting the management level through a Steering Committee (SteerCo) is an option that makes sense for larger networks to strengthen both the content aspects and the professional reputation. The advantage of a high-profile SteerCo is the elevated external reputation of the network and thus an increased attractiveness for experts to join the CoP. The greatest challenge for the establishment of a new network is therefore likely to be the recruitment of members for such a SteerCo, a process which also depends on the size and reputation of the own institution in which a network manager is involved (the founding institution). In general, the structure of a CoP should be defined according to the principles of simplicity, transparency, and manageability.

<sup>9</sup> See: The real meaning of accountability in the workplace. 4 steps to reframing and mastering accountability on your team (2021, August 26th) <https://www.range.co/blog/accountability-in-the-workplace> . (accessed 04.11.2021, 22:30).

**Outreach to potential members:** The content and structure of a CoP are prerequisites for its existence, but its functioning requires the participation of experts from relevant specialized backgrounds. Getting them interested in the network and motivating them to participate is therefore the most important task of the manager after establishing the network. This is generally done by activating existing contacts and communicating with target persons and institutions, which are drawn from the network of the founding institution as well as from the SteerCo (if a SteerCo exists).

**Planning of activities:** Once the network has sufficient structure and “saturation”, the next step is to plan activities to activate the community of practice. At best, such a planning process should be carried out in a participatory manner together with the SteerCo and the members within the framework of a planning meeting. In this process, aspects of content can be redefined, the scope of subunits of the network can be discussed, and – based on the available resources – the concrete activities for a specific period (which usually corresponds to the funding cycle) can be defined.

### 1.4.2 Financial planning and management

Financial planning is a central process in a project, with the help of which incoming and outgoing payments are monitored, controlled, and transparently forecasted. The basic task of financial planning is the transparency of cash flow, i.e. to make money requirements and budget surpluses visible and to secure the financing of the project (or in our case a knowledge community) within the given time frame and the planned tasks and activities.

A distinction must be made between long-term financial planning and short-term financial planning. The first is the basis for determining funding needs in the preliminary or planning phase of a knowledge community. Short term planning is essential for the implementation phase of a network, i.e. in the context of the operational implementation and control of a CoP. A planning period of 3 to 12 months is decisive for short-term financial planning, in which incoming and outgoing payments are considered. The establishment of a new network will in most cases be carried out with financial support from third parties. A compulsory component of funding applications for such a project is always a financing plan that shows the amount of financial resources required and their earmarked use. The presentation of the financial framework is therefore in most cases subject to the specifications of the funder or donor, a generally applicable template for a financing plan is therefore not relevant here.

For a future manager of a network, in particular capital requirement planning is likely to be very important. Capital budgeting looks to the future and plans the financial requirements that will be called upon later in the development and implementation of a network.

In contrast, the manager of an existing network with ongoing funding must focus on controlling the liquidity of the budget, i.e. controlling costs and planning, and implementing activities within the limits of the funding schemes / budget lines.

The following elements represent which essential elements of finance planning need to be considered in a knowledge network or similar project:

- Long-term financial planning as part of the strategic design of a network for start-up or continuation (after the end of an existing funding phase).
- Short-term financial planning during the implementation phase of the network.
- Monitoring and controlling of financial flows out of the network (expenses) and into the network (grants).
- Regular documentation of financial activities within the framework of accountability reports, of which the frequency depends on the legal requirements or the guidelines of the donor.
- Knowledge of and compliance with the legal requirements for taxes, duties, and necessary registrations of a network in order to fulfil the obligations for accountability and avoidance of corruption.

To avoid problems with finances, it is generally recommended that external expertise is consulted to be able to properly adhere to the respective requirements.

### 1.4.3 Procurement

To be able to set up or run a knowledge network, a basic infrastructure and hardware is necessary and needs to be procured. This is one of the essential steps of the initial management activities. The procurement of goods and services must be fully transparent and constitutes a complex administrative process for the manager of a network – often depending also on additional prerequisites of a donor or financing partner. Therefore, all procurement procedures must be undertaken in accordance to the acknowledged standard steps of a procurement process:<sup>10</sup>

**1 Step 1: Needs Recognition** – The identification of needs for the services and goods in accordance to the requirements of the project/activity, which are then documented in a procurement plan.

**2 Step 2: Purchase Requisition** – This step comprises key information in written or electronic form that is required to procure the right goods, services, or works.

**3 Step 3: Solicitation process** – This step includes a fixed number of requests for quotation (known as RFQ, usually three) to vendors or service providers with the intention to receive and compare bids to shortlist the matching vendor or provider, based on specifications outlined in the RFQs.

**4 Step 4: Evaluation and contract** – Review and evaluation of supplier quotations to determine which supplier will be the best fit to fulfil the defined requirements. Once a vendor or service provider is selected, the contract negotiation and signing are completed.

**5 Step 5: Order management** – After finalization of the contracted goods or services, the quality is checked and the final approval is given or changes are requested.

**6 Step 6: Invoice approvals** – Once the requested items or services have been accepted; the invoice is approved and forwarded to payment processing.

**7 Step 7: Record Keeping** – All respective documents from purchase requests to approved invoices are stored and are kept to be included in the financial reporting.

In addition to the above steps of the procurement process, the specific limits for different tenders must be considered. Up to what amount of procurement may a restricted tender be issued, and from what point do the legal regulations for a public, unrestricted tender take effect? The network manager must clarify this in advance to carry out the procurement in compliance with the law.

<sup>10</sup> See: Procurement Management Process – The 2021 Guide (2021, September 18th). <https://kissflow.com/procurement/procurement-process/>. (accessed 04.11.2021, 22:38).

## 1.5 Community management processes

While we outlined key steps for establishing and building a community of practice in Chapter 3, the downstream processes of operational management are central to the smooth running of activities, reporting, and the actual functioning of the CoP as a network for professional exchange.

**Resource management:** Time and finances are the key resources that need to be managed in the network, and both are limited. As for the time management, the planning of activities with increased feedback possibilities for the members strengthens their ownership and participation in the network. But the scheduling of activities is often hampered by time constraints of members to participate and thus pose a challenge for their integration into the network. Thorough planning and a regular financial and activity monitoring are required to use resources efficiently within their limits.

**Personnel management:** It would be unusual to find a manager running a network of the size and scope of YM on his or her own. Thus, a team of staff members and external experts will need to be managed, organized, and financed. For YM, the role of trained facilitators, who organized the CoPs, has been a key element in managing the relation to members and follow up of the CoP's action plans. The facilitators were selected professionals from partner countries, who received moderation training during the YM project phase. In annex 2 (page 76) of this document the terms of reference and requested profiles of the YM facilitators can be found.

**Steering of the network structure:** The network dynamics, which – as we have seen above – can be quite complex due to its manifold elements, must be continuously managed and tracked. This also includes the timely response to crisis, such as those caused by the Covid-19 pandemic. Only through appropriate crisis management will the CoP be kept resilient to unpredictable events. In most cases, this is more likely to concern the failure of the IT communication structure. At least, that is the experience from the YM network.

**Quality management:** Although quality control should be understood as a management task, it should be responsibly assigned to the substructures in the network. These are usually involved in the creation of products and have control over these processes as well as the quality of the products. A joint acceptance process involving the members of the SteerCo, on the other hand, should be provided for. For YM, the SteerCo members had the role of articulating requests towards the network from a policy level. They requested the CoPs to elaborate products and feed policy discussions with expertise generated from the implementation in the member's countries, e.g. on effectively establishing labour market information systems.

**Documentation and reporting:** Independent of the written products of the network, the management is obliged to provide accountability in the form of regular reports and statements of expenditure. These documentation obligations must be included in the time commitment, not least because they are usually the prerequisite for further funding.

**Data protection:** Compliance with data protection standards should be mentioned here as a specific aspect, since there are increasingly legal framework conditions for its compliance that must be observed by the management of a network. Since the respective national regulations differ greatly, we refer here to the international standard ISO/IEC 27701, which can be used as a basis for network managers. ISO 27701 relates to the way an organisation collects personal data and prevents unauthorised use or disclosure.<sup>11</sup>

<sup>11</sup> More information and a starter bundle can for example be found here: Irwin. An introduction to ISO 27701: the international standard for data privacy. (2021, April 20th). <https://www.itgovernance.eu/blog/en/iso-27701-the-new-international-standard-for-data-privacy> . (accessed 04.11.2021, 22:45).

## 1.6 Communication

In addition to the operational management of the network, communication is another central – if not the essential – pillar of a knowledge network. Any exchange of knowledge and experience, the generation of new expertise and the subsequent transition of newly acquired know-how into local structures takes place via the means of multi-directed communication. Multi-directed means that the flow of information is not only top-down but can go in both directions (top and down from experts to receiver), as well as horizontal (peer to peer). With the internal (related to the stakeholders of the knowledge community) communication in the network, the classic goals of information, motivation and identification are addressed.

A decisive factor in the design of the communication strategy is that digital channels now represent the central channels in a network in the sense of building and sustaining a knowledge community. Digital forms of communication represent the technical backbone of network communication; without digital solutions it is no longer possible to guarantee its functioning today. Management must therefore establish and maintain a variety of communication channels that can or should contain the following elements:

- Email at individual and broadcast level;
- Social media channels (e.g. Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, etc.);
- Mobile messaging services (e.g. WhatsApp, Signal, etc.);
- Mobile apps for enquiries or feedback options for network members (e.g. Doodle etc.);
- Online conference platforms that allow for remote meetings;
- Specific network platforms (e.g. in the context of YM, the [ASPYYE platform](#)) to connect members of the network in an intranet-like environment.

The use of some of these platforms and communication channels and the hosting of websites require subscription fees, which must be calculated for in the financial planning. Communication in the network has also a significant influence on the formation of a common identity among all participants (see Chapter 1.7). Accordingly, well-managed, transparent communication can contribute to strengthening the exchange of knowledge and experience in the network. The following guiding questions can form the basis of a corporate communication:

- 1 What communication strategy are you currently pursuing?
- 2 Which channels do you use for this?
- 3 What wording do you currently use?
- 4 What languages are spoken in the network?

Since the knowledge network is directed at actors outside a delimited context, i.e. unites members from various external institutions and work spheres, the distinction between internal communication (such as inside companies) and external communication in the sense of PR is only very rudimentarily given. Communication in and by the knowledge network should therefore be designed and undertaken with corresponding sensitivity. A crucial balance must be found between open communication within a save-space like a CoP, in which knowledge exchange is at the core, and a documentation of the network's outputs, which are designed for external use.

Ensuring the high quality of the information and communication system, and thus the effectiveness of cooperation within the network, is at the heart of management tasks.

## 1.7 Creation of a corporate identity

The creation of a unified sense of belonging (= corporate identity) to the knowledge network is an important factor in strengthening the commitment of the members and ensuring a balance between the learning output and the experience input of the participants. In addition, a strong corporate identity is also a certain unique selling point of a knowledge network, which makes it distinguishable from other, similar structures and projects and – in the best case – makes it stand out positively.

The corporate identity combines all activities that contribute to the network's internal and external image. It includes the elements of design, behaviour, communication, and culture and gives the network a personal face. A corporate identity does not develop itself but must be strategically planned. In its implementation, corporate identity concerns all symbols, images, fonts (design), the behaviour and conduct of all members and participants of a network (behaviour), the language and communication in the network (communication) and all values, convictions and attitudes that underlie the network (culture).

The following questions are intended to provide support in designing an initial framework for a corporate identity in the knowledge network:

### General aspects:

- What values does the network represent, what are the contents and attitudes that connect all participants?
- How should the network be perceived by the target groups and external third parties and which institutions or persons are these?
- What distinguishes YOUR specific knowledge network with the CoPs from other, similarly operating networks?

### Corporate Design:

- What visual impression do you want to leave with your target groups?
- Which components of the corporate design have you already defined and which are really necessary (less is more, limiting to the necessary should be the focus)?
- Does the design fit the network's goals and values, and are the symbols understandable and usable across different cultural spheres?
- What external expertise can be used to create a professional design for the network?

### Corporate Behaviour:

- What behaviour of the network's members is desired to ensure that the intended image is received by the public and your target groups?
- Have rules and norms already been defined or made known, i.e. do all those involved know the values associated with the network?

### Corporate Culture:

- How do the employees in the network deal with each other, with the members and external experts?
- To what extent can each person integrate and develop?

For aspects of corporate communication, it is referred to the previous chapter 1.6 Communication on the previous page 22 of this KP. Ultimately, the corporate identity should always be designed in a team to jointly check the intercultural acceptance and applicability of the corporate design and its elements.

## 1.8 Incentives for participation and knowledge exchange

The Cambridge Dictionary describes incentive as “something that encourages people to do something”.<sup>12</sup> In the context of a CoP, this relates to the participants and members of the network and the way the management can foster their willingness for input and creative investment into the network structure. Now, although we may consider the fact that being part of an exclusive network of experts may already be sufficient an incentive, practice shows that with time the perception of exclusiveness begins to vanish. Positive incentives need to be created by management to maintain the level of participation and input. From the practice of YM, some successful examples may highlight how these incentives can be created:

- **Face-to-face meetings** (e.g. during conferences) provide room for individual networking and the possibility of members to strengthen their own professional profile (to be better known in the community of experts). These kinds of activity have been identified as important incentives for members.
  - **Study tours** were presented by all participants as one of the most positive experiences from their participation in the YouMatch network. This activity – unfortunately very costly – is obviously an important incentive with a long-term impact.
- **The provision of third-party expertise** concerns specific aspects of knowledge that cannot be provided comprehensively by the network itself and collaboration can thus constitute an incentive for members of the network.



<sup>12</sup> See: Meaning of incentive in English. <https://dictionary.cambridge.org/dictionary/english/incentive> . (accessed 04.11.2021, 22:50).

## 1.9 Recommendations

Some key recommendations should help to facilitate the establishment and management of a network:

- Define clear roles and mandates for all processes and key stakeholders in the network.
- For YM, core elements / stakeholders of network were the project team / management, facilitators of each CoP, external experts, CoP members, SteerCo members, representatives, and contacts of partner institutions
- When establishing new CoPs, identify the participants based on their decision-making capacities in order to allow for an impact-generating exchange and collaboration.
- Equally engage members of the private sector, the civil society and government to guarantee a balanced representation of the three sectors (private/public/non-governmental), i. e. a multi-stakeholder approach, if that serves the purpose of the network and the composition of these stakeholders represent an added value.
- Undertake financial planning with a focus on sufficient and continuous budgeting to keep the network sustainable.
- Consider sufficient individual capacity development measures on the member's level (i.e. individual trainings) and on institutional level (e.g. trainings / consultancy for institutional needs on advocacy and strategic change)
- Prepare budget lines for logistical support for network members (tablet, smartphones, internet connection, communication equipment) to make meetings more efficient.
- Provide travel allowances to increase participation of face-to-face meetings, conferences, and study tours.
- Enable sufficient space and time for professional exchange of members.
- Think of sufficient formats and tools for exchange and meetings: communication tools, meeting formats (digital, physical, study tours, regular meetings, conferences, trainings). For YM, a mix of physical and digital meetings would have been the best option but was restricted due to the Covid-19 pandemic (compare chapter 0.5 Activities of the YouMatch network, page 11).
- Establish a regular and open communication with all levels of the network, as partnership increases trust and performance. The core elements / stakeholders could have regular exchange formats.
- Think of necessary connection and linkages between the core elements / stakeholders, i.e. in which formats could they exchange, act on their roles and responsibilities, and mandates?
- Prepare for crisis and unexpected developments and use the creative potentials of the network members when facing challenges and limitations. For YM, due to the Covid-19 pandemic, physical meetings had to be cancelled and digital tools became the (unplanned) key element of communication.
- Share experiences from the CoP approach beyond the own “member cloud”, as this can help to distribute good practices to other professional communities in- or even outside the sector.
- On the output level CoP success factors included: Ownership of the CoP's activities due to development of CoP action plans by CoP members, trained facilitators acting as connecting element between members and management team, focal points and external experts providing technical input for CoPs.

# KP 1 – Checklist for managers: Community Management

## Strategic outline for new CoPs – Aspects to be covered

Content definition of the network:

a) Thematic area of the Community of Practice

b) Vision and objective of the CoP

Definition of the network structure (outreach and steering)

Target groups to be addressed

Knowledge creation and progressive (new) contributions to the sector

Building trust and confidence for performance

Use of technologies: What tools and how?

## Operational planning for a new CoP

Work plan designed and timeframes documented

Risks and management of unexpected challenges

Support for management and resource monitoring (staff concept and controlling)

Resource allocation and budget lines defined

Financial and management plan documented:

a) Long- and short-term financial outlines

b) Monitoring and controlling of financial flows

Compliance with legal requirements:

a) Tax authority registration

b) Other registrations with the public administration

c) Bank account established

d) Audit considered / established

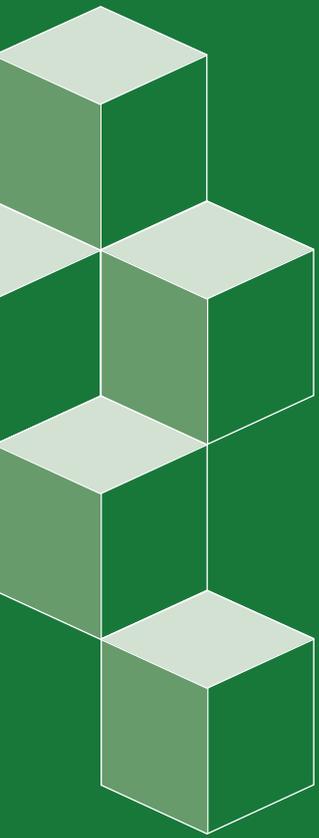
Staff concept

## Conceptual documents for the establishment of the CoP

Outline of the governance principles of the network, including:	
a) Transparency concept	<input type="checkbox"/>
b) Integrity rules, values, and ethics of the network	<input type="checkbox"/>
c) Accountability principles	<input type="checkbox"/>
d) Participation and equality concept	<input type="checkbox"/>
Finances:	
a) Procurement plan established (including IT and other infrastructure)	<input type="checkbox"/>
b) Templates for financial reporting	<input type="checkbox"/>
Staff contracting (long and short-term support)	<input type="checkbox"/>
Communication strategy defined	<input type="checkbox"/>
Staff management plan (distribution of responsibilities)	<input type="checkbox"/>
Data protection concept defined	<input type="checkbox"/>
Establishment of communication channels (Email, online tools, platform etc.)	<input type="checkbox"/>
Stakeholders and members of the network incorporated	<input type="checkbox"/>

## Community Management

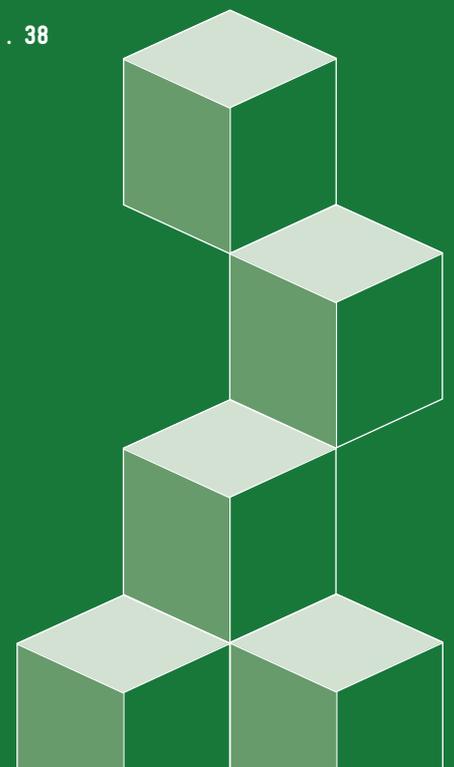
Initial meeting of the steering structure	<input type="checkbox"/>
Activities identified	<input type="checkbox"/>
Activity plan and budgeting documented	<input type="checkbox"/>
Quality management procedures defined	<input type="checkbox"/>
Recurring management and operational tasks defined and established	<input type="checkbox"/>
Documentation and reporting standards and requirements defined	<input type="checkbox"/>
Reporting periods and procedures established	<input type="checkbox"/>
Corporate identity strategy defined and distributed	<input type="checkbox"/>
Periodic activities and meetings established and scheduled	<input type="checkbox"/>



## KP 2

# ELABORATION OF GUIDELINES AND POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS

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2.3 Editing, design, and professional proofreading . . . .	32
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## 2.1 Introduction

Based on the project implementation phase 2018–2021, the YouMatch (YM) network collected experiences on its core processes in form of knowledge products (KP). The KP follow a strategic purpose: they shall be used by potential future hosts of the YM network or parts of it (respectively the Communities of Practice (CoP) as core elements) to apply the experiences and concepts for managing the network structure autonomously. Furthermore, the KP shall also be applicable as guidance for managing comparable networks in other sector areas and therefore serve a wider target group outside the present scope of the YM Initiative.

The KPs are comprised of the first part “Process Documentation and Knowledge Products” and looks at YM key processes and learning experiences. The second part consists of three knowledge “packages” on 1) Community Management, 2) Elaboration of Guidelines and Policy Recommendations and 3) Transfer of CoP Learnings to National Levels. The first part shall give an overview of the setup of the network and summarize what YM has been doing and how. The second parts shall serve as guides on the above mentioned three knowledge formats, with clear recommendations and check lists for application of the YM networks’ experience.

The **KP 2) Elaboration of Guidelines and Policy Recommendations focusses on the requirements** that are **necessary to develop employment service guidelines** and **define policy recommendations** for employment services (ES). The CoPs in this regard are understood as a key structure for the elaboration of ES-related guidelines.

The user shall feel enabled to turn the content into practice, although a certain level of adaptation to the respective (national or institutional) context may always be necessary. The second part guidelines are content-oriented and with the respective checklists. It encompasses the key question of **What To Do?**

## 2.2 Didactical basics for the development of guidelines

The team-based production of guidelines within a CoP can to a certain degree be understood as moving in a collaborative learning system. One of the fundamental analyses on the topic of learning in CoP and the respective transformative dynamics was presented by Wenger-Trayner et al. in their 2015 publication *Learning in Landscapes of Practice: Boundaries, Identity, and Knowledgeability in Practice-Based Learning*.<sup>13</sup> In their study, the authors present "... a somewhat elaborated perspective on learning in communities of practice, one that still starts with the assumption that learning is an inherent dimension of everyday life and that it is fundamentally a social process, but is now conceptualized as a trajectory or journey through a landscape of different and complex practices. From this perspective, a living "body of knowledge" can be viewed as a collection of communities of practice. Learning is not merely the acquisition of a curriculum, but a self-transformative journey across this landscape of practices."<sup>14</sup>

Based on the assumption of learning as a part of generating a so-called "productive identity"<sup>15</sup>, there is an essential difference between the mere acquisition of new knowledge, insights and competences and the ability to integrate these into a practice-relevant context, thereby bringing about processes of change as a result of the learning experience.

Crucial for the successful management of a learning process with the aim of creating a product is therefore an understanding of the didactic requirements of this socially highly dynamic process. The (team) manager is faced with the challenge of bundling the knowledge of the members, gaining their maximum performance and maintaining a positive learning and working environment throughout the entire process. Translated into practice, this means that the manager must create a framework of productivity that on the one hand demands and on the other hand encourages.

**"... a somewhat elaborated perspective on learning in communities of practice, one that still starts with the assumption that learning is an inherent dimension of everyday life and that it is fundamentally a social process, but is now conceptualized as a trajectory or journey through a landscape of different and complex practices. From this perspective, a living 'body of knowledge' can be viewed as a collection of communities of practice. Learning is not merely the acquisition of a curriculum, but a self-transformative journey across this landscape of practices."<sup>14</sup>**

13 Wenger-Trayner et al. (2015). *Learning in Landscapes of Practice. Boundaries, identity, and knowledgeability in practice-based learning*. [https://www.researchgate.net/publication/279276319\\_Etienne\\_Wenger-Trayner\\_Mark\\_Fenton-O%27Creevy\\_Steven\\_Hutchinson\\_eds\\_LEARNING\\_IN\\_LANDSCAPES\\_OF\\_PRACTICE\\_BOUNDARIES\\_IDENTITY\\_AND\\_KNOWLEDGEABILITY\\_IN\\_PRACTICE-BASED\\_LEARNING\\_Routledge\\_2015](https://www.researchgate.net/publication/279276319_Etienne_Wenger-Trayner_Mark_Fenton-O%27Creevy_Steven_Hutchinson_eds_LEARNING_IN_LANDSCAPES_OF_PRACTICE_BOUNDARIES_IDENTITY_AND_KNOWLEDGEABILITY_IN_PRACTICE-BASED_LEARNING_Routledge_2015) . (accessed 04.11.2021, 21:16).

14 Ibid.

15 Ibid.

According to Tuckman, in this process, **working groups classically go through different phases of a group dynamic**.<sup>16</sup> These can be categorised as follows:

- 1 Phase 1: Forming (arrival – thawing – orientation),
- 2 Phase 2: Storming (struggle for position and finding roles),
- 3 Phase 3: Norming (familiarity and intimacy),
- 4 Phase 4: Performing (productivity and differentiation) and finally
- 5 Phase 5: Mourning (separation and disengagement).

In some cases, these phases merge directly into one another, but it can also happen that the group takes a step backwards to a previous phase, for example if the composition of the group suddenly changes. The manager thus must first be able to

- a) identify the phase in which the team finds itself presently and
- b) has to respond adequately to the group dynamic in each of the phases.

However, in didactics, there is no uniform, globally applicable concept for successful learning in a team; rather, there is a multitude of approaches and didactic theories. In the following, a few aspects will be mentioned which are also taken from the practice of the YM Network and which may serve as a basis for a team-oriented learning and design process, with the specific aim of the production of guidelines and written outputs of a CoP in a particular subject area:

- A process owner or manager should be clearly nominated. He / she has the role of facilitating the process of elaborating a guideline, e.g. moderates feedback mechanisms.
- In case of YM, roles were assigned to CoP facilitators, who acted as an intermediate between the project team, the members, and external experts.

- Developing new visions and goals, leaving behind old, familiar paths and creatively enabling changes of perspective in the team;
- Respect diversity and differences and break down clichés and stereotypes;
- Establish a connection to the professional environment of the team members;
- Create a positive and constructive atmosphere, enable participation and encourage contribution;
- Lead competently by bringing in own knowledge and experience;
- Use different methods (virtual or face-to-face) imaginatively;
- Identify and reduce prejudices and obstacles in good time;
- Shape the networking of teamwork together and communicate regularly;
- Jointly review and further develop the quality of the products.

In addition, it can be very helpful at the beginning of team building to ask the members about their own experiences and to obtain their ideas of participatory didactics for the creation of a defined product. This can be a document in form of an activity / action plan, which describes topics, the CoP member want to focus on, possibly a timeline of activities, as well as a distribution of responsibilities and roles of key actors within the process.

16 See: Forming, Storming, Norming, and Performing – Tuckman’s Model for Nurturing a Team to High Performance. [https://www.mindtools.com/pages/article/newLDR\\_86.htm](https://www.mindtools.com/pages/article/newLDR_86.htm) . (accessed 04.11.2021, 23:00).

## 2.3 Editing, design, and professional proofreading

An essential aspect in the development of guidelines is the medium through which the products are later to be published. Cost reasons and the ease of distribution through digital channels are very much in favour of formats that can be published and distributed online.

Digital documents are easy to publish, cost-neutral to disseminate and can be made available to a global community of practitioners in a timely manner. Similarly, revisions of the guidelines can be made without great effort and communicated to the target group. At the same time, a printed publication can have a positive effect, if presented to the public at an official event and copies are made available to participants. Thus, this type of publication can result in increased publicity. Due to this aspect – and as far as the budget allows for – a hybrid publishing solution is to be preferred: production of a certain number of printed copies, which are made available to the (professional) public in the context of a presentation, and simultaneous provision of a digital version on the channels available to the network.

While the elaboration of the content of a guideline is usually done by the CoP in teamwork (see more on this in the following chapter 2.4), editing – i.e. the competent compilation of text, layout of images and other content – is a professional task that should usually be carried out by trained staff. If the network has such resources of its own, they can of course be used, otherwise outsourcing to external service providers is preferable. In this case, the corresponding costs must be included in the calculation.

Design concerns both the form and the function of a product. The design for the publication of guidelines depends on the target sector, the users, and the expected benefits as well as on any existing requirements (e.g. from funders of the network). There is also the question of whether the guidelines will only be published online or will also be produced in a printed version. In addition, there are aspects of visibility of persons or institutions participating in the production through naming or logos, etc. Hardly any manager of a network will automatically be a good designer. If there are no institutional guidelines for the design, it is strongly recommended to externalise this task to ensure a professional layout of the publication to which a global community will have access.

Proofreading and the translations of publications – here essentially the guidelines – must be included in the resource calculation of the network in terms of time and cost coverage. For the revision of the product, professional proofreading can be consulted, but it is important to understand that documents to be proofread by external experts “... must not be altered or amended in a way that changes the academic content.”<sup>17</sup> In accordance with recognised standards, proof-readers cannot re-write or rearrange sentences or passages, change words or figures, check, rewrite or relabel calculations, formulae, equations or codes in any way or add any content.<sup>18</sup> Thus, the very final revision of a document or guideline remains a task to be undertaken by the CoP members or the management.

<sup>17</sup> Proofreading and editing rules. The Open University. [https://help.open.ac.uk/students/\\_data/documents/helpcentre/proofreading-and-editing-rules.pdf](https://help.open.ac.uk/students/_data/documents/helpcentre/proofreading-and-editing-rules.pdf). (accessed 04.11.2021, 23:07).

<sup>18</sup> Ibid.

## 2.4 Skills and tools to work collaboratively on a guideline

Guidelines and handbooks as products of a network of practitioners focus on the support for practical solutions to solve challenges in the professional environment (in the case of YM, employment services). A crucial factor in the development of guidelines is that they need to reflect the latest state of practice; otherwise their application may not be relevant. Therefore, an important skill for all individuals involved in the drafting process is to provide the most up-to-date knowledge and to have access to the appropriate reference sources.

The cooperation in the CoP for the elaboration of guidelines requires a high degree of teamwork, which makes corresponding skills necessary. These are aspects such as:

- the ability to work harmoniously with others, i.e. the ability to cooperate;
- a positive attitude towards achieving the goal;
- constructive communication in which critical aspects are communicated in a positive way;
- self-awareness, i.e. the realistic assessment of one's own strengths and limitations;
- closely related to this is the ability to reflect, i.e. the ability to reflect on oneself, the processes and relationships in the team;
- the ability to be tolerant and equal, which also refers to one's own intercultural competence;
- and, last but not least, the ability to structure, i.e. the ability to pursue goals, make plans and distinguish between the important and the unimportant.

According to the synonym of social or soft skills, the ability to work in a team thus describes the social competence to constructively integrate oneself in cooperation with others.

The distribution of roles in the team must be clarified. In a team, not everyone takes on the same role – there are different tasks to be accomplished. Teams should therefore be formed based on personal strengths and weaknesses. Who takes responsibility (the lead) for the team process? Each group member knows and assumes his or her position in the work process and takes responsibility for the final result.

The coordination of teamwork is also referred to as workflow management. This is a task that is led by the team coordinator, but all team members equally contribute to the workflow as part of their responsibility.

Important aspects in the organisation of the team are therefore:

- Identifying the competences of the team members in order to distribute roles and tasks adequately;
- Clarification of the positions in the team and feedback on the acceptance of all of the agreed team structure;
- Definition of sub-products and associated responsibilities and deadlines;
- Regular team meetings (jour fixe) to keep the team informed about the current status of the work;
- Quality assurance through internal feedback loops;
- Conflicts have priority: If tensions or disputes arise in the team, they must be addressed promptly by the team coordinator. This always has priority over the creation of products;
- A common task for all team members: creating a friendly and constructive working atmosphere in which all can perform at their best.

Teamwork as group work exercise in face-to-face events can be organised in the classic workshop mode with the familiar tools such as whiteboards, presentation cards, etc. Additionally, a variety of online applications are available for virtual teamwork – the more important form in the context of an international CoP. The better known are for example, Microsoft Teams, WebX or Google Workspace. These are platforms for joint collaboration on documents, communication, and team management. In many cases, these tools are fee-based, so that either a corresponding budget line must be considered in the cost calculation for the network. Or, as a

team, you can use free online versions, such as Google Docs in conjunction with messenger services (e.g. Signal). If the respective virtual environment is not provided by the CoP, the team should communicate internally about the available capacities and find a solution acceptable for all. In the meantime, online collaboration has become so common that it can be assumed that most people participating in a knowledge community have a certain experience in the use of such tools.<sup>19</sup>

## 2.5 Dissemination strategies

Classically, knowledge dissemination in expert community is based on the so-called 3 Ps of dissemination: posters, presentations, and papers. Posters in the CoPs are only occasionally relevant at face-to-face network events. This is complemented nowadays with the new digital forms of sharing and acquiring knowledge, which allow permanent access to and timely updates of the content of “knowledge containers”.

In knowledge dissemination, the expertise available in the knowledge network can be understood as an immaterial resource that acquires a material character and value through systematisation and publication in the network. This is because practical know-how, which goes far beyond pure expert knowledge, emerges through direct, often informal exchange between the participants in the network. Through the formalisation, the expertise is transformed, so to speak, from a free-floating process into a tangible resource in the literal sense.

A dissemination strategy must be defined to clarify and plan, what reach is targeted with the produced publications. Is it an internal dissemination only within the network or should target groups outside the CoP’s sphere of action also be included? Internal documents can be disseminated via the available communication channels of the network, such as email and the CoP website (if such a platform is available). In the actual sense, no sophisticated strategy is needed here; the actual labour-intensive processes are the upstream activities for the creation of the respective document. The launch of the document can also be accompanied by a face-to-face or online presentation – which may also depend on the form of the publication (printed or digital).

<sup>19</sup> A list of free open-source workflow tools can for example be found here: The Best 7 Free and Open Source Workflow Management Software. <https://www.goodfirms.co/blog/best-free-open-source-workflow-management-software> . (accessed 04.11.2021, 23:05).

The dissemination of a publication for a wider (professional) audience, on the other hand, requires more detailed preparation, taking the following steps and questions into consideration:

- Definition of the scope of the dissemination and respective list of recipients (individuals and institutions) for the publication (or product) with additional information text and abstract;
- In particular for policy recommendations, clearly define the target group to focus on the relevant individuals (identifying change agents);
- Shall a reviewer's copy be submitted to journalists / other experts?
- Depending on the scope: press / media information and involvement;
- Potential role of the network members or stakeholders for supporting the dissemination;
- Form of the presentation (online or in presence), cost calculation and timeline for the dissemination process;
- Who will present the publication? Producers or potential recognized and high-profile experts from in- or outside the network?
- Follow-up activities and potentially a monitoring of the use of the product or the respective impact of policy recommendations.

However, copyright aspects must also be considered, since even purely network-internal publications must be assumed to be further disseminated on digital channels. Although expertise is relatively easy to disseminate, it is correspondingly difficult to protect. Third party legal expertise may be necessary to clarify such aspects.

## 2.6 Levels of policy input

In addition to the production of practice-oriented guidelines, the identification of policy recommendations can represent another central area of the products of a knowledge network. This applies particularly to those networks that have defined the policy level as a sphere of influence and target group or domain due to their membership structure and the objectives of the network. The nature of professional contributions to policymaking should not be confused with lobbyism. Rather, policy recommendations are professional expert advice to constructively guide the normative design of a particular sector or subject.

To identify the potential of an expert network to help shape policies, it is first necessary to understand the so-called policy making cycle. According to Jordan and Adelle, this cycle consists of six sub-processes:<sup>20</sup>

- 1 problem emergence
- 2 agenda setting
- 3 consideration of policy options
- 4 decision-making
- 5 implementation, and
- 6 evaluation.

Advice is most likely to be considered influential during the phases 1–3, with different options and limitations.

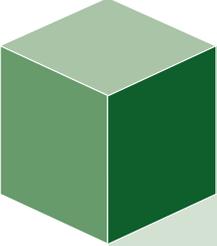
In the first phase of the policy cycle, recommendations developed from a CoP can contribute to the identification of a deficit that has not yet or not sufficiently been in the focus of policymaking. This can raise awareness for the need for change and contribute to the initiation of a process of problem emergence.

In step two of the policy cycle, the previously defined problem is put on the political agenda. The form of policy debate includes public discussion, position papers, press releases or statements. Here, policy recommendations can contribute to the formation of opinion on the issue and provide expertise from a community of experts and practitioners for policy formulation. From the understanding of the dynamics of the policy process, this phase can be understood as the most receptive to policy recommendations. Here, specific inputs can be made at institutional level (this can also concern partner organisations of the network, such as ministries or public administrations) or through direct contributions to agenda setting via members of the CoP.

Likewise, in the phase of consideration of policy options, i.e. the third phase of the policy cycle, a relevant contribution can be made from the expert network.

Understandably, the actual impact of a CoP on policy-making depends on several internal and external factors that a network manager should analyse to assess the meaningfulness of developing policy recommendations. One is the life cycle of the network, which may not outlast the long-term nature of a policy process (we are talking about periods of 5-10 years). Furthermore, the contacts and positions of the network stakeholders are constitutive for their possibilities to influence a discourse in the framework of political decision-making. Thus, consideration of the development of policy recommendations should be subject to a realistic cost-benefit analysis to guarantee the efficient use of resources in the network.





## 2.7 Recommendations

Some key recommendations and YM experience should help to facilitate the development of guidelines and policy recommendations:

- Include theoretical concepts and approaches only to a certain minimum into the network's products. Practical support is more demand-driven and a strategic follow-up of the experiences in the practical application of the guidelines and handbooks needs to be integrated into a CoPs thematic scope.
- Focus for the elaboration of hands-on products and tools for usability on a practice-oriented approach.
- Enable the members of your network to include their own good practices of their respective context into the guidelines and policy recommendations.
- Realistically define the influence sphere and potentials of the network. This needs an internal analysis of the members' influencing capacities, the stakeholder portfolio of the network and the definition of influence spheres (according to step 1-3 of the policy cycle).
- On output policy level, success factor of YM is that outputs from the CoPs and policy recommendations have been developed upon request of political stakeholders in the SteerCo, therefore a demand for these products was ensured

## KP 2 – Checklist for managers: Guidelines and Policy Recommendations

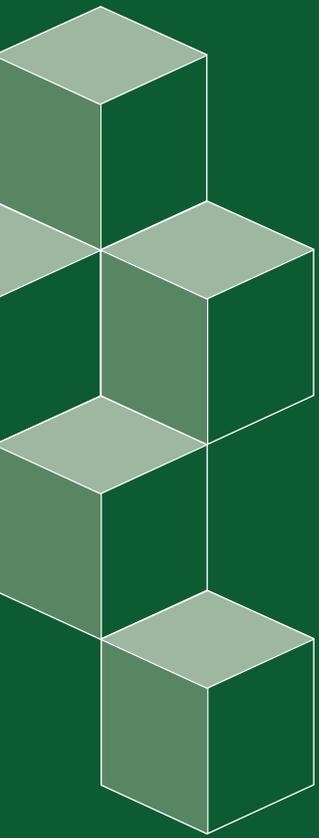
### Guideline development – Team process

Formulate the learning and design process:	
a) The product, its size and scope are defined	<input type="checkbox"/>
b) Target group(s) for the product identified	<input type="checkbox"/>
c) Vision and goal of the guideline development is formulated	<input type="checkbox"/>
Team management plan according to the 5 Tuckman phases prepared	<input type="checkbox"/>
Experience of the team members assessed	<input type="checkbox"/>
Team competencies assessed	<input type="checkbox"/>
Team tasks agreed on and assigned	<input type="checkbox"/>
Time management for the team established (including jour fixe)	<input type="checkbox"/>
Definition of different methods for team meetings and content development	<input type="checkbox"/>
Communication channel and respective tools for the team established	<input type="checkbox"/>
Quality-management steps for the product defined and scheduled	<input type="checkbox"/>

### Editing and design

Form of publication (printed, online, hybrid) defined	<input type="checkbox"/>
Budget lines for editing and design clarified	<input type="checkbox"/>
Editing tasks commissioned (or assigned internally)	<input type="checkbox"/>
Design development commissioned (or assigned internally)	<input type="checkbox"/>
Proofreading commissioned or assigned	<input type="checkbox"/>
Translation commissioned or assigned	<input type="checkbox"/>
Final document revision scheduled	<input type="checkbox"/>

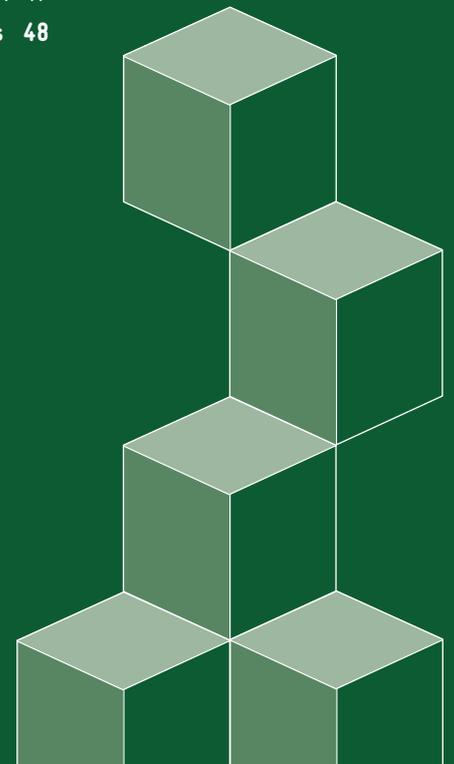
<b>Internal network processes</b>	
Identify the influence sphere and potentials of the network:	
a) Analysis of the members' influencing capacities	<input type="checkbox"/>
b) Analysis of the stakeholder portfolio of the network	<input type="checkbox"/>
c) Definition of influence spheres (according to step 1-3 of the policy cycle)	<input type="checkbox"/>
Cost-benefit analysis for the development of policy recommendations	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>Dissemination of guidelines and policy recommendations</b>	
Development of a dissemination strategy	<input type="checkbox"/>
Copyright aspects are clarified	<input type="checkbox"/>
Scope of the dissemination is defined	<input type="checkbox"/>
Abstract of the publication prepared	<input type="checkbox"/>
Reviewer copies submitted	<input type="checkbox"/>
Press/media informed	<input type="checkbox"/>
Presentation mode defined	<input type="checkbox"/>
Preparatory logistics for the presentation finalised	<input type="checkbox"/>
Invitations submitted	<input type="checkbox"/>
Follow-up activities prepared and scheduled	<input type="checkbox"/>



## KP 3

# TRANSFER OF COP LEARNINGS TO NATIONAL LEVELS

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## 3.1 Introduction

Based on the project implementation phase 2018–2021, the YouMatch (YM) network collected experiences on its core processes in form of knowledge products (KP). The KP follow a strategic purpose: they shall be used by potential future hosts of the YM network or parts of it (respectively the Communities of Practice (CoP) as core elements) to apply the experiences and concepts for managing the network structure autonomously. Furthermore, the KP shall also be applicable as guidance for managing comparable networks in other sector areas and therefore serve a wider target group outside the present scope of the YM Initiative.

The KPs are comprised of the first part “Process Documentation and Knowledge Products” and looks at YM key processes and learning experiences. The second part consists of three knowledge “packages” on 1) Community Management, 2) Elaboration of Guidelines and Policy Recommendations and 3) Transfer of CoP Learnings to National Levels. The first part shall give an overview of the setup of the network and summarize what YM has been doing and how. The second parts shall serve as guides on the above mentioned three knowledge formats, with clear recommendations and check lists for application of the YM networks’ experience.

The KP **3) Transfer of CoP Learnings to National Levels** focuses on the **learning transfer from the CoP level to national and/or institutional levels** and what lessons can be derived from it for potential future hosts of (parts of) a CoP network.

The user shall feel enabled to turn the content into practice, although a certain level of adaptation to the respective (national or institutional) context may always be necessary. The second part guidelines are content-oriented and with the respective checklists. It encompasses the key question of **What To Do?**

## 3.2 Theory of knowledge transfer

There is currently no coherent, self-contained “theory of knowledge transfer” that could be declared as a universally valid basis for a CoP. Traditional models share the field with modern theories as well as a multitude of empirical and studies to justify different strategies of knowledge transfer.<sup>21</sup> For the network structure as we see it in a CoP, the definition of knowledge transfer as found in the Encyclopaedia of Quality of Life and Well-Being Research seems most appropriate: “Knowledge transfer and exchange is the act of moving research knowledge into action. It is best understood as a dynamic and iterative process that includes knowledge synthesis, dissemination of research findings, knowledge exchange, and the ethically sound application of research findings in order to improve policy and practice.”<sup>22</sup>

This definition already reflects a central aspect of the CoP, as expressed in the objective of the YM Network: More than just the exchange of expertise and the creation of new skills and knowledge for the members of the network is the goal. Rather the concrete shaping of the sector with its specific administrative and political appearance is an essential *raison d’être* of the network.

Now, however, there is a fundamental contradiction between the demand for knowledge transfer into practice – which is time-consuming – and the ephemeral nature of both knowledge and knowledge-building processes in our highly dynamic environment. According to Straßheim, it is generally the case at the societal level that knowledge networks themselves are subject to a process of acceleration: “In the meantime, network work is also characterized by time limits and acceleration. Project cycles are shortening in proportion to the degree of specialization and specification of the targeted product. Instead of regular and successive network meetings, exchanges tend to take place in parallel working groups, workshops or teams that are created as needed and then dissolve again.”<sup>23</sup>

For the management of a network, this means finding a difficult balance between the need to generate constantly updated expertise in the network and, on the other hand, to introduce this expertise into a rather ponderous political-administrative process in such a way that change is initiated or supported.

**“Knowledge transfer and exchange is the act of moving research knowledge into action. It is best understood as a dynamic and iterative process that includes knowledge synthesis, dissemination of research findings, knowledge exchange, and the ethically sound application of research findings in order to improve policy and practice.”<sup>22</sup>**

21 An interesting overview of the complexity of the topic is provided by: Graham, Paul J. (2008). Knowledge Transfer in Theory and Practice – A Guide to the Literature. Saskatchewan. [https://www.academia.edu/1962622/Knowledge\\_Transfer\\_in\\_Theory\\_and\\_Practice\\_A\\_Guide\\_to\\_the\\_Literature](https://www.academia.edu/1962622/Knowledge_Transfer_in_Theory_and_Practice_A_Guide_to_the_Literature) . (accessed 04.11.2021, 23:18).

22 Quoted from: Smith. Knowledge Transfer and Exchange. [https://link.springer.com/referenceworkentry/10.1007%2F978-94-007-0753-5\\_1580](https://link.springer.com/referenceworkentry/10.1007%2F978-94-007-0753-5_1580) . (accessed 04.11.2021, 23:18).

23 Straßheim, Holger (2002). Knowledge generation and knowledge transfer in local employment policy networks (Orig.: Wissensgenerierung und Wissenstransfer in Netzwerken der lokalen Beschäftigungspolitik). Wissenschaftszentrum Berlin für Sozialforschung gGmbH. Berlin. <https://www.econstor.eu/obitstream/10419/50744/1/357671295.pdf> . (accessed 04.11.2021, 23:22). (own translation).

**“In the meantime, network work is also characterized by time limits and acceleration. Project cycles are shortening in proportion to the degree of specialization and specification of the targeted product. Instead of regular and successive network meetings, exchanges tend to take place in parallel working groups, workshops or teams that are created as needed and then dissolve again.”<sup>23</sup>**

### 3.3 Role models of stakeholders: Influencer vs. decision maker

When considering the member portfolio of a community of practice, the elementary criterion of participation is certainly the technical expertise of the participants and their involvement in practical processes in the topic area of the network. When founding a new CoP, a manager is faced with the challenge of specifically integrating those persons who correspond to the requirement profile (which the manager should create in advance).

Without wanting to simplify things, we can nevertheless identify two typifications of personalities, both of which play an important – albeit different – role in the transfer of knowledge out of the network. Decision-makers are those individuals who work in central positions in the sector of the network (this can be in the public or private sector or in civil society) and who, due to their power and/or competence, can significantly initiate or steer transition processes. For the group of decision-makers, the network provides a resource for new ideas and strategies and creates incentives for putting them into practice.

In addition, we have individuals who, due to their knowledge and expertise, are involved in the run-up to decisions or work processes in the sector and who can have a relevant influence on decision-makers to raise awareness of necessary changes. For this group, whose role we can characterize as influencers, the community of practice is an important backing for the introduction of new knowledge and innovative approaches into their institutional environment and can strengthen their role as an influencing force on decision makers.

An important finding from the YM experience was that the application of new knowledge and ideas seems to be more effective if the exchange happens amongst stakeholders or experts of the same decision-making level. The balanced composition of a CoP is therefore an essential aspect for its success for knowledge transfer.

## 3.4 Identifying capacity needs and training planning

In addition to knowledge exchange, i.e., the dissemination of expert knowledge and the generation of progressive dynamics, the further training of members represents another pillar of the expert network in order to make current expertise applicable in practice.

For a network manager, the task here is to provide relevant content for capacity development in the network to enable relevant knowledge transfer even within the structure of a CoP. This shows that more than just a needs assessment is required; it is also necessary to analyse and take note of the expertise available in the network.

First, an analysis of the competencies in the network is required; this can be done, for example, by means of a standardized questionnaire to the members. In this context, the categories

- 1 technical-theoretical knowledge,**
- 2 members' own assessment of technical competence, and**
- 3 members' experiential knowledge and practical relevance should be assessed in relation to the network's thematic focus.<sup>24</sup>**

This is an important prerequisite for obtaining an overview of the internal spectrum of knowledge and expertise in the network for subsequent further training measures. The assessment provides the network manager with a basis for deciding which aspects of further training can be covered by the network's own internal competencies and which topics for capacity development may need to be reinforced with external expertise.

Following the analysis of the actual state of knowledge in the network and the available competencies, a needs assessment is then required for the design of relevant training

measures for the members of the network. Following the analysis of the existing state of knowledge in the network and the available competencies, a needs assessment is then essential for the design of relevant training measures for the members of the network. In such an analysis, however, one should be aware that in the context of a CoP, and in contrast to classical needs analyses, it will be much more the interests of the participants that will be expressed rather than their de-facto training needs. However, we want to create a motivated and creative environment in our network, to the extent that interest orientation over need orientation can be a motivation (and thus a strong incentive) for members to become more actively involved in a CoP.

Based on the YM experiences, it makes sense to jointly define in a planning workshop the trainings to be carried out, although this also can be done in the form of a standardized questionnaire. Not every individual interest can be considered, so this form of training planning is a good way to reach compromises that can be accepted by all participants. At this workshop it can also be decided when to use external expertise and the network's own competencies for the training activities.

Finally, it is the manager's task to create a training plan and allocate the appropriate resources. Depending on this, decisions are made as to how the training is to be conducted, as a face-to-face or an online event. Likewise, the type of documentation for the training courses must be clarified in advance, the creation of didactic material, the concrete time scope and an implementation plan for each training course must be organised, as well as the invitation and logistics management. Thus, sufficient time and personnel capacities should be included in the operational planning of the network for these comprehensive tasks.

<sup>24</sup> For a more detailed introduction into expertise assessment, see for example: tyleralterman. (2016, February 14th). Why and how to assess expertise. <https://forum.effectivealtruism.org/posts/9fTGkBMamRN93JM8y/why-and-how-to-assess-expertise> . (accessed 04.11.2021, 23:25).

## 3.5 Dealing with pushbacks and resistance to change

From the experience of the YM network, we can conclude that there are indeed a variety of possibilities for influencing administrative or political processes and decision-making through the provision of professional expertise. Decisive for success are the right timing of the presentation of knowledge or expertise, the target level as the recipient of the information and the comprehensibility of the presented content. At the same time, however, it was discovered that a major obstacle to achieving change is the reluctance or even disinterest in change on the part of decision-makers in the target institutions to which the expertise is being addressed.

This phenomenon, on the other hand, is not so much of a personal nature but rather a well-known dynamic that is referred to in change management as “resistance to change”. This is because resistance can protect teams and organisations from excessive demands and senseless or harmful changes. Not every change must necessarily be an improvement. Accordingly, the goal of sustainably influencing administrative or political processes from within a CoP must be strategically planned, i.e. the purpose must be clear. The mere production of guidelines and policy recommendations as well as other relevant publications is demonstrably not sufficient to set changes in motion.

Downstream, decision-makers are always present who have the final say on the transfer of knowledge into a national or institutional context or who can start relevant processes in the first place.

This raises the need to include advocacy for change as part of the strategic direction of an expert network of practitioners. An advocacy strategy within the network serves to improve the addressing of CoP products (i.e. identifying advocates for change in the partner spectrum). At the same time, advocacy should be a central part of the network’s knowledge portfolio as part of the learning experience. Exchange of experiences, documentation of relevant knowledge from different national contexts as well as further training of network participants in strategies and practices of advocacy work are important elements in this context. This can strengthen the transfer of knowledge into practice-relevant contexts outside the network with a potential for change.

## 3.6 Advocacy to policy stakeholders

The previous chapter made it clear that the transfer of knowledge to national or institutional contexts must be planned purposefully and strategically – and for the internal dynamics in the network also operationally. Advocacy must be oriented toward impact, so to speak, in order to make desired impacts possible. In KP 2 on guidelines and policy recommendations, we presented the policy cycle (refer to 2.6, page 35), which also plays a central role for advocacy, since the potential for influence is most significant in the phases of agenda setting and consideration of policy options.

If we start from the premise that both decision-makers and influential personalities can initiate processes of change, these individuals must be targeted from within the network. To do this successfully, there are a few important aspects that a manager of a network should consider in order to outline an appropriate strategy:

- Who are relevant addressees for the network's products, who is influential and receptive to the expertise as change advocates?
- Which members in the network already fulfil this function and represent a potential resource for change processes?

- Which change processes are considered relevant and possible, and how can this assessment in the network be supported by specialist expertise?  
This aspect ultimately determines the identification of the addressees (i.e., the policy stakeholders) of advocacy.
- Where are already existing advocacy initiatives for the selected topic area and how can the network participate in them?

Finally, thought should be given to documenting the potential effects. A follow-up of the usage of products for the analysis of the knowledge transfer should therefore be considered in the operational planning of the network.

## 3.7 Measuring knowledge transfer and impact

From a methodological perspective, essentially qualitative methods for measuring impacts are available for the analysis of changes at the national level, which are based on a knowledge transfer out of the CoP. Due to the subject matter of the analysis, more extensive quantitative approaches are only conceivable at a downstream level (such as in the national framework of the member organisation), but less so as an original investigation of the network itself.

Aspects such as the number of indirect beneficiaries, broad impact of the change, disaggregation of data, etc. will be difficult to be assessed from the meta-level perspective of the network. By means of qualitative methods, analyses of complex social, political, or societal dynamics are brought to a comprehensible level. The qualitative method tries to highlight the core of an issue and to get to the bottom of the underlying causes of change. Still, proper measurement through before-after comparisons represents the minimum standard for analysis.

Typical qualitative methods for investigating impact of knowledge transfer can include:

- **Narrative interview:** The aim of a narrative interview is to obtain information about cause-effect relationships that cannot be obtained by means of standardised surveys.
- **Group discussion:** In a group discussion, several people discuss a given object of analysis under the guidance of a group leader. The group discussion is a non-standardised, verbal method of analysis. It can be used as a survey or observation.
- **Standardised questionnaire** with a qualitative question grid, which can also be conducted online. For a deeper analysis of impact, however, open answers should be possible (individual statements by the respondents), which in turn makes a manual evaluation of the questionnaires necessary.
- **Lessons Learned exercise** where members of the CoP explain in a guided group discussion how their contribution from network knowledge into the national context resulted in changes at institutional, legislative or policy level. This can typically be conducted during a conference or similar events of the CoP.

A comprehensive compendium of methods and principles of qualitative analysis can be found at <https://www.betterevaluation.org/en>. A checklist of important points for qualitative data collection is available at <https://wmich.edu/sites/default/files/attachments/u350/2018/qual-eval-patton.pdf> and provides a helpful supplement for managers who want to analyse the effects of knowledge transfer out of their network.

In all of these approaches, the question of resources being provided for the measurement of impact of knowledge transfer should not be lost sight of, balancing between resources to invest in measuring impact and the need for information / data to make the changes visible. A further aspect that requires thorough reflection is measuring the effects of knowledge transfer on cross-cutting issues such as gender, human rights or impact on specific target groups.

## 3.8 Recommendations

Some key recommendations should help to manage knowledge transfer from CoP:

- Maintain the network on the long run to increase national-level impact, as the lengthy timeframes for transformation processes require an equally long-term commitment.
- Create a balanced mix of member profiles from all decision levels and support members to fulfil their role as advocates for change.
- Define well in advance a realistic knowledge transfer strategy and integrate the right decision makers who can trigger transformation in the sector of the network.
- On output level country, success factors are: Punctual support by YM with external consultants and trainings upon request, support in applying the guidelines and toolkits from the CoPs.
- For YM, “entry points” in form of bilateral and regional programmes of German development cooperation / GIZ and partner organisations, e.g. ETF, ILO, UfM, WAPES etc., have proven to use synergies on national levels when implementing learnings and products of the CoPs.

## KP 3 – Checklist for managers: Transfer of CoP Learnings

### Capacity needs and training plan

Competency assessment of the network members undertaken	<input type="checkbox"/>
Needs / interest assessment undertaken	<input type="checkbox"/>
Relevant training content identified and agreed on	<input type="checkbox"/>
Training and capacity development budget secured	<input type="checkbox"/>
Training plan established / scheduled	<input type="checkbox"/>
Resources (incl. trainers, external expertise etc.) allocated	<input type="checkbox"/>
Form of training documentation defined	<input type="checkbox"/>
Development of didactical material commissioned or assigned	<input type="checkbox"/>
Training logistics identified and planned	<input type="checkbox"/>

### Advocacy management

Development of an advocacy strategy:	
Identify relevant addressees for the network's products	<input type="checkbox"/>
Identify members in the network who may act as agents for change	<input type="checkbox"/>
Define relevant and possible change processes to be strengthened	<input type="checkbox"/>
Links to existing advocacy campaigns established	<input type="checkbox"/>
Follow-up of the usage of products considered in the operational plan	<input type="checkbox"/>



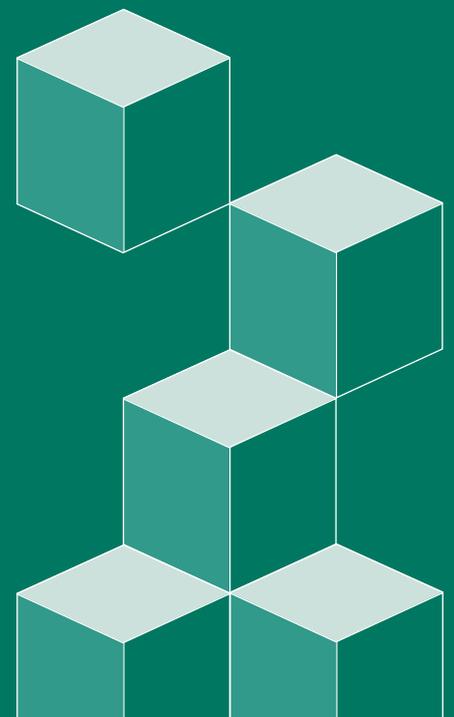
### Measuring knowledge transfer

Prepare a qualitative analysis of the impact of knowledge transfer:	
a) Clarify and secure the budget	<input type="checkbox"/>
b) Define the methods (interview, group discussions, etc.)	<input type="checkbox"/>
c) Timeline for the analysis established	<input type="checkbox"/>
d) Persons to be involved recruited or assigned	<input type="checkbox"/>
Contacts to resource persons established	<input type="checkbox"/>
Means of documentation defined and prepared (e.g. templates)	<input type="checkbox"/>
Results documented	<input type="checkbox"/>
Form of presentation of results defined	<input type="checkbox"/>
Presentation / dissemination of the assessment(s) scheduled	<input type="checkbox"/>



# VOICES FROM THE YOUMATCH NETWORK

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## YouMatch is ...

... a Global Initiative on Innovative Employment Services for Youth implemented by the (GIZ) Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit GmbH on behalf of the German Federal Ministry of Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ) between 2016–2021. Its network brought together around 100 employment service practitioners from 25 African and MENA countries within five thematic, interregional Communities of Practice (CoPs).

The CoPs worked theme-specific and addressed such topics as career guidance and life skills, setting up effective job centres, labour market information systems, public private partnerships and multi-stakeholder approaches in the field of employment services as well as employment services for rural youth. Each CoP was comprised of between eight to twenty-five members and is facilitated either in French or in English.

Facilitators, trained by YouMatch, provided overall guidance and advisory inputs on the plans, strategies and initiatives of the CoP and moderated the group discussions. CoPs elaborated their own action plan, detailing the objectives, expected outcomes and respective timeframe of their meetings and activities. YouMatch aimed to improve the employment services of the participating countries through a multi-stakeholder interregional dialogue.

### The formed CoPs were the following:

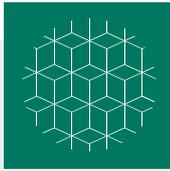
**CoP 1** acted in English and French and worked on “Using labour market information as essential basis for effective ES for youths”. The CoP produced upon request from the AUC a guideline on [Establishing Information systems to Support Employment Governance in Africa](#)

**CoPs 2 & 5** joined forces and worked together in English on “Career guidance & life skills at schools, universities & Multi-stakeholder employment dialogue at regional & local level for the development & implementation of ES for youths”. The CoPs produced a case compilation on [Multi-Stakeholder Dialogue and Cooperation Approaches](#)

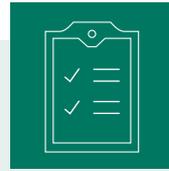
**CoPs 2 & 4**, too, joined forces and worked together in French on “Career guidance and soft skills in schools, universities & Approaches to aligning vocational preparation and soft skills training with labour market needs”. The CoPs held an e-conference on [Soft skills: a strategic challenge for developing the employability of young people](#)

**CoPs 3 & 6** also joined forces and worked together in English on “Setting-up effective job centres for youth & Building effective public-private partnerships for ES”. The CoPs produced together with ILO a [Job Center Toolkit](#)

**CoP 7** worked in French on “Adapting ES to the specific problems and potential of green jobs for rural youth”. The CoP produced a guideline on [Setting up local Employment Committees in Rural Areas](#)



The YouMatch initiative was implemented in partnership with the African Union Commission (AUC), the African Union Development Agency (AUDA-NEPAD), the Union for the Mediterranean Secretariat (UfMS) and the World Association of Public Employment Services (WAPES). YouMatch further collaborated with organisations such as the European Training Foundation (ETF) and the International Labour Organization (ILO). YouMatch intensively cooperated with WAPES' network partners as well as with relevant regional and bilateral German development cooperation programmes in member countries.



The results of the work of the YouMatch CoPs are very practical tools (links can be found in the table on page 51.) For example, toolkits and guidelines for job centres or labour market information systems have been developed and are already being used in different participating countries.

In the following success stories, members from different CoPs and countries (Benin, Cameroun, Ethiopia, Jordan, Kenya, Mauritania, Namibia, Rwanda, and Senegal) report on their first-hand experiences with YouMatch. They show in an impressive way the innovation potential that has been mobilized through the intensive exchange of experience and knowledge and the achieved results derived from this in the individual participating countries.



The kick-off meeting in August 2019 in Turin, Italy, was very special for the YouMatch participants. They came together to form the various CoP. The decisive factor was the challenges of the labour market and its specifics that the participants faced in their respective countries. Together they defined the next steps to address the challenges and achieve positive results. The joint definition of the next steps within the respective CoPs and the personal relationships that developed during the kick-off meeting in Turin were a valuable experience for the participants.



We would like to thank all those who were available for interviews. With their willingness to share their knowledge and experiences, they have made it possible for us to publish these success stories and best practices. The reader can form a direct impression of their personal experience and their view on YouMatch illustrates tangible as well as intangible results. The expansion of one's own network or the personal impressions gained during study tours to other countries are outcomes, which are very valuable for the participants on an individual level.



## Benin

### Employment committees, improved data and increased digitalisation for more success

Getting young people into employment and strengthening employment services is the central concern of all labour market practitioners from Benin who participated in the YouMatch Initiative. They are working closely together to achieve this goal. New services and better labour market information are the first steps on this path.

### Encouraging young people and respecting their needs

“We are now focusing on soft skills and digitalisation,” says employment counsellor Nadège Djigla from the National Employment Agency (L’Agence Nationale Pour l’Emploi, ANPE). It is very important to strengthen the soft skills of young people and thus improve their chances on the labour market. During a study trip to Tunisia end of 2019 as part of the YouMatch Initiative, she had experienced the role soft skills play in successful job placement. And not only for the jobseekers, but also for her colleagues at the National Employment Agency. “Soft skills are also the basis for successful work on our part, they have great importance for the way we work.” In the meantime, the counsellors have been trained, thus strengthening their skills in this area. The model here is the multi-level system used in Cameroon to train employment counsellors in soft skills.

Maurice Gbemenou works closely with the National Employment Agency. He, too, was inspired by a study trip. Above all, meeting young people in rural areas of Morocco in early 2020 was a very important motivation for him, as he says. “We met with young people in rural areas to better understand what they need. In Benin, we also need to focus on young people in rural areas and give them hope.” He says it is important to listen to young people and respect their needs and perspectives, especially in improving employment services.

### “Set up local employment committees”

Strengthening the personal skills of young jobseekers in combination with improving employment services is already bearing fruits, confirms Nadège Djigla. “Job-seeking young people find employment faster because they are able to adapt to the demands of the labour market.”

Local vocational and employment committees in each department bring together all relevant actors in the departments as local multi-stakeholder platforms. It is a new form

of cooperation between the relevant stakeholders at the local level with the aim of promoting employment opportunities for young people, especially in rural areas. Maurice Gbemenou is enthusiastic about this instrument. “I can only recommend: Set up local employment committees and share your experiences.” Because only through the joint effort of all actors and, he is convinced, with the involvement of young people, the right solutions can be found.

### Digital offers and a better database

The National Employment Agency ANPE is now increasingly using digital formats in job placement for young people. In cooperation with the Ministry of Small and Medium Enterprises and Employment Promotion (Ministère des Petites et Moyennes Entreprises et de la Promotion de l’Emploi), a platform was set up specifically for young people looking for work. Here they can upload their profile or search for vacancies, and companies can look for suitable employees. Wilfrid Gbèwènondo Djodjo from the Employment and Training Observatory highlights another advantage. “Especially young people in rural areas have access to labour market information that is important for them through the virtual platform.”

Wilfrid Gbèwènondo Djodjo also works closely with the National Employment Agency and contributes his expertise gained through participation in a CoP of the YouMatch Initiative. His world is statistics. “It was important for me to meet professionals from other countries who know statistics. I learned through my participation in the CoP how to create labour market information and how to collect data that is relevant.” Intensive monitoring of the labour market, conducting labour market studies and publishing information on the Beninese labour market are the very concrete results that have come out of this. Labour market statistics have also been improved in the meantime.

The mutual exchange of experience and learning from each other as well as the enlargement of personal networks are what the participants from Benin particularly appreciate about the YouMatch Initiative and the CoP. And another thing: “The CoP has resulted in strong cooperation in the West African region,” Wilfrid Gbèwènondo Djodjo sums it up.



**Comlan Maurice Gbemenou** is the Chair of the Network of Organisations to Fight Unemployment (Réseau des Organisations de Lutte Contre le Chômage, ROLCC). He is currently the executive director of the Employment and Training Exchange and the NGO Dynamique ODD: Gender & Employment.

“I can only recommend: Set up local employment committees and share your experiences.”



**Wilfrid Gbèwènondo Djodjo** is Head of Research, Focal Point Monitoring and Evaluation at the Employment and Training Observatory (Observatoire de l’Emploi et de la Formation, OEF).

“Especially young people in rural areas have access to labour market information that is important for them through the virtual platform.”



**Nadège Djigla** is Head of the monitoring and evaluation department at the General Directorate of the National Employment Agency (L’Agence Nationale Pour l’Emploi, ANPE) Benin.

“Job-seeking young people find employment faster because they are able to adapt to the demands of the labour market.”



## Facts about Benin

Benin’s economy is dominated by agriculture. Around three quarters of exports come from the agricultural sector, which is also the country’s largest foreign exchange earner. The main export is cotton. However, agriculture only contributes about 25 per cent to the GDP, about 50 per cent comes from the service sector. The majority of the labour force works in the agricultural sector.

Two-thirds of the Beninese population are younger than 25, and almost half of the Beninese live in extreme poverty. On the current Human Development Index, Benin ranks 163 out of 189 countries.

## Cameroon

### Improving labour market opportunities with soft skills

The task of the Fonds National de l'Emploi (FNE) is to promote employment in Cameroon. An essential part of this task is the integration or reintegration of people looking for work. One of the main problems is the matching between the skills of jobseekers and the requirements that employers expect from their future employees.

### Companies see soft skills positively

"Soft skills are one of the solutions," says FNE consultant Françoise Belinga Bibi. She is convinced that this will not only improve the skills of job seekers, but also those who are already employed. "We also need to promote this to companies in the country." As a woman of action, Françoise Belinga Bibi has also done a lot of promotion and has already given talks to various companies on the topic of soft skills. Her experience: "Companies are very positive towards soft skills".

At the same time, she also initiated a training programme on soft skills within the FNE. She had convinced the management of the FNE of this innovative approach to soft skills for the organisation, which she had learned about at the YouMatch initiative. All participants of the trainings are FNE staff members, the monitoring for the implementation of the trainings is the responsibility of the FNE directors.

### FNE training in three stages

The training programme started in mid-October 2020 with the first stage. All those nominated by the FNE management attended this first session. There, the concept of soft skills was explained to them in detail. "From this group of people, we then selected 50 participants for the second stage, which is about deepening this soft skills concept," explains Françoise Belinga Bibi. "And from this group, the FNE will then select 20 trainers who will be responsible for passing on the knowledge of this soft skills concept to the employment counsellors and to the job developers who are responsible for relations with the companies. They will also be trained in pedagogy and how to conduct these seminars."

Due to the Covid-19 crisis, the [SOCIEUX+](http://sociieux.eu)<sup>25</sup> experts in charge of trainings are currently unable to hold on-site

trainings. Everyone is now hoping for September onwards and that trainings will be possible then. Françoise Belinga Bibi and the experts have the two cities of Yaoundé and Douala as training locations. The first training is planned for the second half of September 2021. It will first focus on the pedagogical reinforcement with the implementation of the pedagogical modalities and on the deepening of the soft skills project. This will be followed by the elaboration of a deployment plan of the FNE trainers with the employment counsellors and the job developers. A month later, the second training could take place, focusing on practice. The trainers will accompany the newly trained trainers on their first counselling assignments with the employment counsellors. "Everyone is enthusiastic," the consultant knows. "It is this health crisis that is creating the blockages to realising this project."

### Sharing experiences and developing soft skills

The YouMatch CoP was and is an important exchange forum for Françoise Belinga Bibi. "I try to use what I have learned and experienced at YouMatch. And I also try to support other CoP members when asked," says the consultant. "I gave a presentation on all the steps we took to get to the partnership with SOCIEUX+, which is responsible for training FNE staff in soft skills development."

Françoise Belinga Bibi makes no secret of the fact that she is passionate about soft skills, saying that the lack of training in this area is an acute problem in Cameroon. And she knows what she is talking about. "My specific experience is my own development of my soft skills. I now understand the role these skills play in my personal and professional life. This is a great added value for me in my life as a woman and a business owner, even though my company is still in its infancy. That is the good side of this discovery." However, she said, everyone needs to have an awareness of this concept to understand it and use it for their own development. "That's why I put all my energy and focus into making people aware of it, making them consciously realise that the success of their professional and personal lives depends entirely on them. We need to learn to appreciate this endogenous power that everyone possesses."

25 For more information: <http://sociieux.eu/about/> (accessed 04.11.2021, 23:48).



**Françoise Belinga Bibi** is an independent consultant, she accompanies employees in the development and awareness-raising of soft skills. Before that, she worked for the Fonds National de l'Emploi (FNE) for about 30 years until her retirement, ten of them as Regional Director. She represents the FNE as a consultant in YouMatch.

"My specific experience is my own development of my soft skills. I now understand the role these skills play in my personal and professional life..."



## Facts about Cameroon

Due to its geographical location and ecological diversity, Cameroon has considerable potential in agriculture and livestock, which contribute about 15 percent to the country's gross domestic product (GDP). The primary sector is developing more and more, thus also creating jobs. More than 60 percent of the people are employed in agriculture. The official unemployment rate is quite low at just over four per cent, but about two-thirds of the labour force is considered underemployed. The youth unemployment rate is slightly higher than the general rate. Especially in the poor north of Cameroon, many young people lack professional and social prospects.

More than a third of the Cameroonian population lives below the national poverty line. 62 percent or a good three-fifths of the population are under 25 years of age. On the current Human Development Index, Cameroon ranks 150 out of 189 countries.

## Ethiopia

### Employment services on the road to the digital future

Every year, several hundred thousand young people enter the Ethiopian labour market. It is not easy for them to find a job. And it is just as difficult for companies to find qualified workers. Functioning employment services are needed to bring the two together.

### Virtual recruitment platform successfully launched

“It is possible to find the right people with the right skills for companies, I have been able to experience this time and again through my participation in the YouMatch Community of Practice,” says Siham Ayele. And she especially has the job centres in mind, which she got to know during a YouMatch study tour in Berlin, Germany. “I was particularly impressed by all the IT solutions used in the job centre. Especially the virtual systems for internship programmes left a lasting impression on me.”

The programme director of [Dereja.com](http://Dereja.com) got a lot of inspiration from her participation in the YouMatch initiative, which she is now implementing in the company. The Covid-19 pandemic has made it even more urgent, says Siham Ayele, to focus more on digital solutions in employment services. “In August 2020, we launched our job board [Dereja.com](http://Dereja.com) along with a resource placement platform for young people. Since the launch of the website, it has registered more than 50,000 CVs of job seekers and a variety of jobs posted from time to time. In Ethiopia, [Ethiojobs.net](http://Ethiojobs.net) is the largest and first recruitment platform for candidates with experience. Dereja is a subsidiary of [Ethiojobs.net](http://Ethiojobs.net) and the platform that is popular among young people.”

The digital portal has also already put its own learning system online. To continue the Dereja Academy Accelerator and fresh graduate training programme, in 2020 Dereja also developed an online learning management programme that offers a 12-weeks intensive training to 500 young graduates, 380 of whom have already found employment, according to Siham Ayele. The academy is different from any other training programme in the country, states the programme director of [Dereja.com](http://Dereja.com). “It consists of nine modules ranging from self-awareness to effective time management, communication, analytical thinking, effective job search, gender in the workplace and financial management.”

### Several public employment centres already established

Thanks to the expertise she has gained in employment services through her participation in the YouMatch Community of Practice (CoP), she is now able to support the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs in setting up employment services. Siham Ayele knows that “the government rarely has experience or knowledge about how to set up employment service centres and what to focus on as they use traditional methods of jobseeker data management and placement mechanisms. And this is where private sector institutions come in with their support.”

[Derja.com](http://Derja.com) has now established four public employment service centres as part of a public-private partnership. These are the first public employment centres in Ethiopia. However, according to Siham Ayele, it is not easy to transfer the skills and know-how acquired through participation in the CoP to both public and private partners who are in the decision-making position.

### “Like a think-tank across the countries”

Siham Ayele also took a lot away personally from her CoP. “Participating in the YouMatch initiative was very motivating for me personally. Sharing experiences with the other participants in my CoP and their different perspectives have boosted my confidence and helped me to become more strategic and structural in my own work. In addition, participating in the CoP has broadened my knowledge horizon about the situation in other countries with different cultural contexts and political systems.” It was also enlightening for her to learn that most African countries face similar problems when it comes to youth unemployment and how they address these challenges. “The Community of Practice is like a think-tank across the countries.”

Key experiences for Siham Ayele, besides the study trip to Berlin, were the kick-off meeting in Turin and the “highly participatory approach” that underpins the CoP’s way of working. The fact that the members of the CoP could decide for themselves which topics they would work on was an unusual experience for her.



**Siham Ayele** is programme director of [Dereja.com](https://dereja.com), a social enterprise of Ethiojobs.net. As such, she is responsible for managing Dereja's business and overall operations. She is currently leading a 5-year project funded by the Mastercard Foundation under Young Africa Works.

"I was particularly impressed by all the IT solutions used in the job centre. Especially the virtual systems for internship programmes left a lasting impression on me."



## Facts about Ethiopia

Ethiopia is the second most populous country in Africa. Almost a quarter of the people live below the national poverty line. About two thirds of the population is employed in agriculture, which is the basis of the Ethiopian economy. The industrial and service sectors have grown strongly in recent years; about two-thirds of the gross national product (GDP) comes from these two sectors.

Youth unemployment is a major challenge for Ethiopia. This is especially true in light of the fact that three-fifths of the population is younger than 25. Those seeking employment often lack the necessary qualifications. On the current Human Development Index, Ethiopia ranks 173 out of 189 countries.

## Jordan

### **Fighting unemployment with a labour market information system**

High unemployment is a permanent problem in Jordan. In particular youth unemployment poses massive problems for the country. The many refugees from neighbouring Syria are another challenge. The Covid-19 pandemic has further increased unemployment in Jordan.

### **Reliable data is the most important thing**

Mai Aziz Elian, Director of policies, strategies and institutional development at the Jordan Ministry of Labour, has a leading role in setting up the new labour market information system (LMIS). The new LMIS is designed to provide policymakers and other decision-makers with reliable, real-time data on labour demand and supply. It is the basis for instruments to manage the labour market and improve job placement.

However, building a labour market information system is not that easy, as Mai Aziz Elian reports. “The problem in setting up a functioning labour market information system is the lack of data. The informal sector does not provide any data at all and the private sector is very reluctant to provide data. Therefore, the lack of correct and reliable data is the biggest challenge in creating the LMIS in our country.”

### **The expertise from the CoP flows directly into the development of the LMIS**

But such difficulties won't stop her. Equipped with the expertise she gained as a member of one of the six CoP of the YouMatch Initiative, she tackled the task. “The knowledge and experience I have access to as a member of the CoP feeds directly into my work without detours. We use the CoP's guideline to develop and build our labour market information system. It saves us a lot of time that we would otherwise need to find best practices and do research.” She adds, “The best practices for employment services come mainly from the YouMatch initiative, which is very important for me.”

The guideline on LMIS was developed jointly by CoP members through sharing their experiences. It is a tool from practitioners for practitioners. Mai Aziz Elian's colleagues also use the documents from the CoP in their daily work. To make even better use of the knowledge and expertise of YouMatch, Mai Aziz Elian would find it important to have even better access to the work of the other CoPs.



**Mai Aziz Elian** is Director of policies, strategies and institutional development at the Ministry of Labour (MoL). She is a Monitoring and Evaluation Specialist and has a wide range of experience in labour market and employment policy.

"The best practices for employment services come mainly from the YouMatch initiative, which is very important for me."



## Facts about Jordan

Three-fifths of Jordan's land area is desert, and agriculture plays a minor role in the country's economy. The largest share of the gross national product (GDP) is generated in the service sector, with the industrial sector in second place. Jordan's economy is among the smallest in the Middle East. Chronic high rates of unemployment and underemployment pose a major challenge to the economy.

The Jordanian population is very young. More than half of the people are younger than 25, about one third even younger than 15. The domestic labour market has so far been unable to offer them adequate job prospects, and youth unemployment is estimated to be well over 30 per cent. On the current Human Development Index, Jordan ranks 102 out of 189 countries.

## Kenya

### Strengthening youth employability with life skills

The issue of youth employment has gained importance in Kenya over the past 15 years, as more than half of the country's population is between 15 and 25 years old. The qualification of young skilled workers, which is geared to the needs of the Kenyan economy, is therefore of great importance. Improving the technical and vocational education and training system (TVET system) plays an important role in this.

### A tailor-made curriculum for life skills

It is not difficult for Ndungu Kahihu to list what the YouMatch initiative has brought to Kenya so far. It has contributed to very concrete solutions in the field of job matching, he reports. For example: through a YouMatch grant in 2018 Ndungu and two colleagues completed a research on the integration of a life skills curriculum in the state technical and vocational education and training system (TVET system). The findings of this research have helped to shape the direction of TVET reform in Kenya. Due to the exposure his organisation has gained from YouMatch, CAP Youth Empowerment Institute (CAP YEI) has been nominated to many international networks, including the African Union cluster on Life Skills and Career Guidance and Counselling.

The integration of life skills into the state TVET system is intended to specifically promote the employability of young people at national level. CAP YEI and its Executive Director Ndungu Kahihu, with their work and expertise gained through participation in YouMatch, have been instrumental in ensuring that a tailored curriculum for the subject of life skills is now integrated into the government strategy.

### The leap from programme to policy level

But before this happened, CAP YEI also did a lot. "We improved our curriculum for the life skills training programme by integrating direct entrepreneurship counselling and mentorship for the many vulnerable youth that we target and later, as capacity building input for the many TVET institutions that we work with to effect reforms," says Ndungu Kahihu and continues. "The strategic shift for CAP YEI was to take it from the programme level to the system level, because Basic Employment Skills Training is a programme model, which means it has to be translated from a small scale to a large scale. We have used the lessons learned

from engaging with YouMatch partners such as Egypt, Jordan, and Rwanda to lobby to the Kenyan government to integrate these issues into policy level decisions. And that goes well beyond working at the organisational level."

Knowing how to scale experiences and translate project solutions to the systemic level, in this case the policy level, is, says Kahihu, "the most important outcome of working with the YouMatch Initiative."

### Solving problems together makes sense

But participation in the YouMatch initiative and the CoP also brought him personal benefits: Contacts to networks, to individual and specialised organizations in the sector and on the continent and especially in the MENA region. Ndungu Kahihu found the visits to other countries very helpful for learning from each other. For example, during a visit to Jordan, he was able to present CAP YEI's approach to professionals there. "Learning from experts who have dealt with the same problems is an important factor in passing on our knowledge and expertise to other stakeholders," is his conviction. He also acts accordingly when sharing his expertise in his own country.

He takes a differentiated view of the YouMatch Initiative, especially the short, 3-year time horizon of each phase, expected to make a difference at the policy level. In his view, this is too short "lasting, policy level changes, from my experience, take from 5 to 10 years, sometimes even more."

However, he feels that it is very positive that the "best experts" were selected for the CoPs. The South-South exchange also went down very well with him, as did the fact that the participants were free to decide which countries they wanted to visit. His conclusion: "Many of the challenges we face are closely similar and working together to address them makes sense. I have also been amazed at the level of talent that exists in our region. We should make use of it more."



**Ndungu Kahihu** is the Executive Director of CAP Youth Empowerment Institute (CAP YEI) based in Nairobi, Kenya. Previously, he served on the CAP YEI Board as Board Secretary for four years. His work involves management, research, partnership development and programme development. CAP YEI is a Youth focused NGO that works to provide skills training and support to enable vulnerable youth to secure decent opportunities to earn a living.

“Many of the challenges we face are closely similar and working together to address them makes sense. I have also been amazed at the level of talent that exists in our region. We should make use of it more.”



## Facts about Kenya

Kenya is the largest economy in East Africa and one of Africa’s economic leaders. Agriculture is Kenya’s most important economic sector, but it is suffering from the consequences of climate change.

More than a third of the population lives in extreme poverty, youth unemployment is high, and at the same time the country suffers from a shortage of skilled workers. The qualification of young professionals, which is geared to the needs of the Kenyan economy, is one of the country’s major challenges. On the current Human Development Index, Kenya ranks 143 out of 189 countries.

# Mauritania

## Fighting youth unemployment with soft skills and local employment committees

Improving the soft skills of young people looking for a job, setting up decentralised employment services, so-called local employment committees, throughout the country and digitalising the public employment service. These are the goals to be achieved in Mauritania with the help of the YouMatch initiative.

### First local employment committee in Boges

After almost two years, a start has been made in all three areas, as Elbechir Abd Razagh Eghdeidir reports. The establishment of the local employment committees has already begun in 2020. In the Boges region, the first committee was set up in 2020, also drawing on experience from the study tour to Morocco in early 2020. With the local employment committees, Mauritania wants to react to the special regional challenges of the labour market, especially in the rural regions.

The local employment committees, or as it is called in French “Comités locaux de l’emploi” (CLES), are local multi-stakeholder platforms, an innovative approach for Mauritania and a new form of cooperation between the relevant stakeholders at the local level. Members of these local multi-stakeholder platforms are all local actors involved in employment promotion. It is a consultation framework that allows for better coordination and targeting. It is governed by a decree of the minister responsible for employment and a charter signed by all members.

The establishment of the local employment committees is still in the pilot phase, which was co-financed by YouMatch, but “we need further financial support for the nationwide establishment of such local employment committees”, emphasises Eghdeidir.

### Soft skill training soon to be a permanent service

The Public Employment Service has high hopes for soft skills training among young people. “These trainings will soon be part of the services offered by our agency,” promises the director of the Skills Development Department at the National Employment Agency (Agence Nationale pour l’emploi “TECHGHIL”). The positive impact of this measure is beyond question for him. An action plan has already been drawn up, incorporating experience from Tunisia. The lack of soft skills is often an obstacle for young

people looking for a job. These skills are particularly important for those who are looking for their first job. A qualification in this area improves their employability, “it helps them to approach companies”. A direct benefit from which the young people profit as well as the companies.

### Culture of communication and reciprocity

The experiences and results from the exchange with the partners in the CoP are just as important for Eghdeidir as the fact that it is a South-South exchange. One has the same context and can learn from each other, he says. It is precisely this direct regional exchange within the CoP that he found very innovative and very participatory. A method that takes into account the needs expressed by the members of the CoPs. Especially the personal exchange as well as the discussion and reflection of new approaches also helps to prioritise the topics and to organise oneself. The clarity about goals and tools gained in this process is important to convince superiors that this is important work, he says.

“We need to firmly establish this culture of communication and reciprocity. We need an online exchange platform so that we can share with each other the experiences we have in and with the implementation of CoP ideas,” is Eghdeidir’s firm conviction. He sees this as a challenge for the future.

Elbechir Abd Razagh Eghdeidir’s personal conclusion about the YouMatch programme is: “I thought it was a great idea because the world has always been about exchange and reciprocity. That’s why I joined one of the CoPs and was never disappointed.”



**Elbechir Abd Razagh Eghdeidir** is Director of the Skills Development Department at TECHGHIL, formerly Agence Nationale pour la Promotion de l'Emploi des Jeunes (ANAPEJ). This was the first local employment agency in Mauritania. The department, headed by Elbechir Abd Razagh Eghdeidir, makes job seekers fit for the labour market. With the measures, people are better qualified for the needs of the companies.

"I thought it was a great idea because the world has always been about exchange and reciprocity. That's why I joined one of the CoPs and was never disappointed."



## Facts about Mauritania

Mauritania is one of the least developed countries in the world. 80 percent of the country is desert; agriculture is only possible in the south in the Senegal valley. A large part of the population lives in poverty. On the current United Nations Human Development Index, Mauritania ranks 157th out of 189 countries.

Around two-fifths of the working-age population are under 35 years of age, and slightly more than half of the working-age population are women. At the sectoral level, services remain the main source of employment in Mauritania. In 2017, for example, this sector accounted for 50 per cent of employment, followed by agriculture (30%) and industry (14%).

## Namibia

### **A labour market information system is being built**

Increased dialogue between key stakeholders in the labour market and capacity building for a Labour Market Information System (LMIS) are two key outcomes that should be achieved through participation in the YouMatch Initiative.

### **Important for success: the right tools and stakeholder engagement**

“We are now building a labour market information system as well as the necessary structures for it, such as a steering committee,” Albius Mwiya reports. “We have also set up a technical working group in the ministry, whose members are mainly younger people.” For the Director of the Labour Market Services in the Ministry of Labour, Industrial Relations and Employment Creation (MLIREC), the model for setting up the new structures is the labour market information system of the German Federal Employment Agency. During a study tour in 2019 to Bonn, Germany, as part of the YouMatch initiative, he got to know the system and how it works. He was particularly impressed by the commitment of the stakeholders to labour market information and the way they cooperate with each other, as well as the governance, because “the institutional arrangement is very important”.

Albius Mwiya got the tools for setting up the LMIS at the YouMatch kick-off meeting in Turin in 2019. Here he learned about the tools that are used, for example, to collect and process data on the labour market and that are now being used in practice in Namibia. The standard for the systematization of occupational titles was also updated and adapted to international norms. The International Standard Classification of Occupations (ISCO) replaced the Namibia Standard Occupation Classification (NASCO). A new database for matching job seekers was set up.

### **“The strategic approach enabled the transfer of knowledge”.**

For the new ideas, Albius Mwiya had to lobby and convince the respective authorities. That was a challenge, he admits. He was helped by “very good” training in lobbying and change he received through YouMatch. “The strategic approach I learned there enabled me to transfer the new knowledge to the authorities. And it also enabled me to convince the other stakeholders in the sector that we need to set up a Labour Market Information System.” To bring them

along and share his expertise, he regularly reported on the activities of his CoP to all relevant stakeholders. This was instrumental in convincing them of the benefits of the new LMIS.

According to Albius Mwiya, YouMatch helps above all in the practical implementation of the new Namibian employment policy. What coordination mechanisms are needed, how does change management have to be, what is the commitment of the stakeholders, what about advocacy – these are all questions where the experiences from the YouMatch Initiative help.

### **The learning experience broadens horizons and promotes potentials**

“Learning from others is not a simple copy-paste process, the experiences of other countries have to be adapted to the specific national context,” says Albius Mwiya about the collaboration in his CoP. “But the learning experience is very important because it broadens horizons.”

The mutual exchange promotes the potential of the participants and is also a good space for new, shared ideas. For example, the CoP, in which Albius Mwiya is involved, jointly developed a guideline for setting up LMIS. The process was facilitated and coordinated by a CoP-internal technical group. “The development of this guide was the idea of our CoP”, a fact Mwiya attaches great importance to. The CoP received support from YouMatch and an external LMIS expert.

Albius Mwiya is also personally very satisfied with YouMatch. “I have learned a lot personally, for example, I have acquired skills in the area of advocacy for labour market information governance. With these skills that I acquired, I am now motivated to pursue a PhD in the area of Labour Market Information Analysis.”



**Albius Mwiya** is Director of the Labour Market Services in the Ministry of Labour, Industrial Relations and Employment Creation. He is responsible for the provision of Public Employment Services, provision of timely and reliable labour market information, formulation and implementation Employment Policies, promotion of productivity in all sectors of the economy and the facilitation of labour migration.

“I have learned a lot personally (...). With these skills that I acquired, I am now motivated to pursue a PhD in the area of Labour Market Information Analysis.”



## Facts about Namibia

Unemployment and underemployment are widespread in Namibia. The unemployment rate is around one-third, and among the under-35s it is well over 40 percent. This means that Namibia has one of the highest rates of youth unemployment among African countries. About half of the labour force is employed in the service sector, one third in agriculture, and 14 percent in industry.

Namibia belongs to the group of higher middle-income countries. On the current Human Development Index, the country ranks 130 out of 189 countries.

## Rwanda

### Together with the business community for more jobs

Creating new jobs for young people is high on the Rwandan government's list of priorities. Employment services are the interface between young people looking for work and the companies, that offer jobs for skilled workers.

### The Youth Development Alliance

"We created the Youth Development Alliance last year," Valence Twagizihirwe tells us. "It is part of our Livelihood Project, which promotes young people's access to employment." The Executive Director of the NGO Akazi Kanoze Access (AKA) brought the idea with him from the CoP of the YouMatch Initiative, in which he participates. "Sharing experiences and best practices with participants from other countries, as well as learnings from our livelihoods project, which we implemented in collaboration with the Education Development Center (EDC) and other partners, were the basis for the Youth Development Alliance concept."

The Youth Development Alliance brings together stakeholders or so-called development partners (DPs) who work on youth empowerment at the district level. AKA was able to sign up to the district-level DPs forum, commonly known as the Action Development Forum. "We are part of the respective Joint Action Development Forum of Gatsibo, Bugesera and Nyaruguru districts," explains Valence Twagizihirwe. "We use this channel to advocate for youth issues and contribute to district initiatives to support youth. Since our participation in YouMatch's CoP, we have been able to develop a project and mobilize resources to help around 7,000 youth access employment through social and technical skills and income-generating activities."

### Partnerships with the private sector

Partnerships with the private sector to create more jobs are a result of participation in the CoP on multi-stakeholder approaches. Even before participating in the CoP, this partnership was in place, "but it only emphasized partnership as a way to create more opportunities," says Valence Twagizihirwe. "Through my participation, I learnt how to create joint public-private employment centres because we only have public employment centres so far. We learnt how to establish effective employment service centres for youth by sharing with the other participants, combining the efforts of private and public employment service centres to create synergies," reports Valence Twagizihirwe.

An experience that employment specialist Daniel Katurebe confirms. For him, too, it was "very important" to learn how job centres are organized efficiently, but he points out, "the concept of employment services is not new for us." Katurebe also participates in a CoP of YouMatch. Particular learnings from his CoP experience were to carry out segmentation and profiling of job seekers, who are registered within employment service centers to clearly rank their skill sets, and to learn about different strategies to engage more employers in public employment services.

### Joint project proposal of the Rwandan CoP participants

Besides Valence Twagizihirwe and Daniel Katurebe, other representatives from Rwanda have participated in various CoPs of the YouMatch Initiative. Together they have developed a proposal for the design of the public employment service. The title: "Sustainable governance and management of public employment centres". They submitted the project proposal through the Chief Skills Officer at the Rwanda Development Board. "We agreed on it and soon we will hire a consultant to develop that framework", Daniel Katurebe reports on the status of the project. "The terms of reference have already been developed, and soon we will advertise to hire a consultant for that service."

Regarding the successful joint proposal, Valence Twagizihirwe says he has also learned "how to strategically advocate for change" through his participation in the CoP. For him, his participation in the CoP was a valuable exchange of experiences and a platform that could even enable joint action across countries and regions. And it has brought him personally and his organization "more visibility". That is also an important result for him.



**Valence Twagizahirwe** is the Executive Director of Akazi Kanoze Access, a non-governmental organization (NGO) in Kigali. The local organization is dedicated to provide employability skills and other support services to youth to enable them to access employment.

“Sharing experiences and best practices with participants from other countries, as well as learnings from our livelihoods project, which we implemented in collaboration with the Education Development Center (EDC) and other partners, were the basis for the Youth Development Alliance concept.”



**Daniel Katurebe** is an employment service specialist at the Rwanda Development Board with a background in economics, focusing on micro and macroeconomic data analysis on labour market trends, forecasting and experienced in policy analysis, formulation and setting up effective job centers for youth in Rwanda.

“The terms of reference have already been developed, and soon we will advertise to hire a consultant for that service.”



## Facts about Rwanda

Rwanda is one of the countries with the highest population density on the African continent and fast-growing economy. Around three-fifths of Rwandans are younger than 25. Three quarters of the labour force work in agriculture, about one fifth in the service sector. The unemployment rate is at 17%, subsistence agriculture at 55.3% and the labour force participation rate at 56.4%. At the same time Rwanda is on second place to do business, according to the ranking of the Doing Business report 2020 by the UN, World Bank and others.

The Rwandan economy experiences a challenge of skills mismatch on the labour market. There is a need for career guidance programs for young people to be introduced in schools and TVET institutions to tackle this issue.

## Senegal

### Fighting youth unemployment with local employment committees and soft skills

Unemployed young people often lack soft skills, i.e. personal, social, and methodological competences. These are precisely the competences that make up employability alongside professional knowledge and technical skills. The goal of Senegalese employment services is to promote these skills and thus contribute to reducing youth unemployment.

### Soft skills pilot project launched in Dakar

In addition to the concept of soft skills, Fatoumata Ndiaye has introduced another concept to Senegalese employment services, that of local employment committees. The programme manager from the Employment Directorate of the Ministry of Employment, Vocational Training, Apprenticeship and Integration (Ministère de l'Emploi, de la Formation professionnelle, de l'Apprentissage et de l'Insertion, MEF-PAI) learned about both through her participation in one of the CoP of the YouMatch Initiative. Another employability tool she brought back from the CoP is internships in companies.

Fatoumata Ndiaye has already launched a first pilot project in Dakar. She was encouraged to do so by a study trip to Tunisia end of 2019 as part of YouMatch. "In the pilot project, we want to train young people in soft skills so that they have better chances on the labour market," she explains. "We have involved actors from the private sector in the project. Important for us are the partner companies of the labour office in the framework of the implementation of the National Agreement between the State and Employers (Convention Nationale État-Employeurs, CNEE)."

In cooperation with the National Agency for the Promotion of Youth Employment (L'Agence Nationale pour la Promotion de l'Emploi des Jeunes, ANPEJ), the concept note of the project was elaborated. Then, with the help of YouMatch, a request for technical assistance was sent to SOCIEUX+,<sup>26</sup> which is an EU programme on short term expert consultancies to support countries in their efforts with the design and implementation of effective employment

strategies and labour market policies. An action plan was validated so that the employment office's job counsellors could benefit from the capacity building of SOCIEUX+ experts. "Because, together with the ANPEJ, they are the main actors of this project," Fatoumata Ndiaye emphasizes.

The project is focused on very concrete support measures for job-seeking university and vocational training graduates. For example, a new service on soft skills and practical tools for conducting workshops in which soft skills are taught, are to be developed. Another goal is the creation of a national network of certified soft skills coaches. The implementation of an e-learning platform is also planned.

### Digital employment services and local employment committees

Digital platforms have become commonplace for employment services. This has advantages and disadvantages, as Fatoumata Ndiaye explains. "The digitalization of our services forced by Corona allows us to reach a larger target group, of course. The disadvantage is that with virtual trainings, it is difficult to capture the attention of young people for a longer period of time." And another difficulty has become apparent in recent months. "We have the problem that we can only use platforms that are easily accessible to young people and other stakeholders such as companies." That limits the possibilities, she regrets.

In the municipality of Gueule Tapée-Fass-Colobane, the first local employment committee will soon start its work. It consists of representatives of local authorities, the private sector and civil society. This committee is responsible for the proper functioning of the local public employment service, which has also been newly established. The first step in setting up the local public employment service and establishing the local employment committee was the signing of a tripartite agreement between the municipality of Gueule Tapée-Fass-Colobane, the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) and the Ministry of Labour. This was followed by the establishment of the local mission and the employment department team and a first meeting

26 For more information: <http://socioux.eu/about/> (accessed 04.11.2021, 23:48).

with local stakeholders. In June 2021, a workshop introduced the concept of the local mission and organized the local employment committee.

YouMatch supported the pilot project in Gueule Tapée-Fass-Colobane by capacity building and providing an external advisor.

### Exchange with participants from the region useful and important

Participating in the YouMatch Initiative and especially the exchange within her CoP has brought her a lot, says

Fatoumata Ndiaye. “I found it very innovative to bring together the countries of a region in a CoP and to promote the exchange of participants from these countries, because we all have the same problems. It was very useful for me because there is always one country that can share experiences and best practices on certain problems with the others.”

She is also excited about the participatory approach. For her, it was “something special” that the CoP was able to formulate its action plan itself.



**Fatoumata Ndiaye** is a programme manager at the Employment Directorate of the Ministry of Employment, Vocational Training, Apprenticeship and Integration (Ministère de la Jeunesse, de l'Emploi et de la Construction citoyenne, MJECC). She manages the Local Centres for Employment Initiatives Programme (Programme des Centres d'Initiatives pour l'Emploi local, CIEL).

“In the pilot project, we want to train young people in soft skills so that they have better chances on the labour market...”

## Facts about Senegal

Senegal lies on the edge of the Sahel, and the majority of the population works in agriculture and fishing. However, not even one fifth of the gross domestic product (GDP) is generated in the agricultural sector, around three fifths of the GDP comes from the service sector. This is also the most important growth area of the Senegalese economy, which is dominated by the informal sector.

Unemployment is high, and the young generation in particular lacks sufficient and sustainable employment opportunities. This is a major challenge for the country, as about 60 percent of the population is younger than 25. Senegal belongs to the group of Least Developed Countries (LDC) with about two-fifths of the people living below the national poverty line. On the current Human Development Index, Senegal ranks 168 out of 189 countries.



ANNEX 1

# TOR OF YOUMATCH COP MEMBERS





# Document as of October 2018

## 1. The Project

YouMatch II (1st June 2018–31st May 2021) is a global initiative financed by the German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ) and implemented by GIZ in partnerships with the Union for the Mediterranean, the African Union Commission, the NEPAD Agency and the World Association of Public Employment Services. The initiative aims at improving job orientation, preparation and matching for youth while promoting evidence-based policy making in the field of employment services in Africa and the MENA region. It brings together circa 80 employment services practitioners from various social groups (public and private sectors as well as the civil society and academia) within the framework of interregional, theme-specific, Communities of Practice (CoPs).

## 2. The Communities of Practice

The Communities of Practice provide a forum to exchange knowledge and locally developed solutions, disseminate best practices and lessons learned amongst participating members. They foster a sustainable interregional exchange among employment services practitioners from public and private institutions as well as from civil society organizations. They provide a vehicle for reinforcing capacities of their members e.g. through:

- 1 exchange with international experts,
- 2 the organization of study tours,
- 3 theme-specific trainings,
- 4 webinars and online exchanges,
- 5 exchange of news and information amongst members,
- 6 face-to-face and virtual group meetings,
- 7 peer-to-peer counselling,
- 8 linkage with international institutions and experts.

The working language of the CoPs is either French or English. Trained facilitators ensure their moderation. The Communities of Practice determine their own goal and specific objectives. The Communities of Practice elaborate their own action plan, detailing the objectives, expected outcomes and respective timeframe for their meetings and activities. Ultimately, the CoPs will be in a position to provide technical expertise and put forward policy recommendations that will support reform processes at regional and national level.

## 3. The Members

### Member profile

- Membership to the YouMatch II Communities of Practice is open to circa 80 representatives from public, private and civil society organizations from African and MENA countries that deal with employment services for youth.
- Within a given country, members should stem from different social groups (i.e. belonging to public, private, civil society organizations and/or academic institutions).
- Based on their language ability (but independently from their country origin), they could either join an English or a French speaking CoP.

- Members have a practitioner/expert profile in the field of employment services.
- They receive a mandate from their organization and are able to regularly and actively participate and contribute to the meetings and activities of their CoP over a period of at least 2 years.
- Members demonstrate the relevance of the CoP-topic for their organization as well as for their own competences, expertise and/or role within their organization.
- A Member can participate to only one CoP.

### **Member benefits**

- Members take advantage of capacity development measures provided within the framework of the Community of Practice (see 2. above).
- They benefit from the support of a facilitator whose responsibilities is to provide overall guidance and advisory inputs on the plans, strategies and initiatives of the CoP as well as to facilitate and moderate group discussion.
- The project and its partners cover the costs related to travel (visa fee, flight ticket, travel insurance, transport from and to the airport of the hosting country, accommodation, and meals), expertise, meetings and activities included in the action plan of the CoP. The Communities of Practice members that are personnel from multilateral and international organizations bear their own travel and accommodation costs.

### **Member commitment**

- Members commit to regularly and actively participate and contribute to the meetings and activities defined in the action plan of their Community of Practice.
- The action plan elaborated and agreed by the members of the CoP determine the scope, regularity and timeframe of travels, meetings and activities of the CoP. The scope of the member commitment may thus vary from CoP to CoP.
- However, pending their CoP's action plan, members should be ready:
  - to actively contribute and participate in CoP activities for at least 2 years,
  - to travel abroad up to twice a year (for 3 to 5 day trips incl. face-to-face meetings, conferences, study tour, training, etc.),
  - to contribute and participate to an average of one online activity/meeting (e.g. webinar) per month or every two month,
  - to review documentation, undertake some preparation work and comment drafts recommendations and papers in relation with the activities of the CoP.
- Member ought to exchange experience, share knowledge and expertise, provide feedback, discuss and interact with fellow CoP members.
- They contribute to the elaboration of policy recommendations in fields relevant to their CoP.
- They regularly update their organization on CoP activities and share relevant CoP documentation with their hierarchy.
- They communicate and work with their fellow CoP members in a respectful, collaborative, cooperative and transparent manner.

ANNEX 2

# PROFILE OF YOUMATCH FACILITATORS





# Document as of November 2018

## 1. The Project

YouMatch II (1st June 2018–31st May 2021) is a global initiative financed by the German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ) and implemented by GIZ in partnerships with the Union for the Mediterranean, the African Union Commission, the NEPAD Agency and the World Association of Public Employment Services. The initiative aims at improving job orientation, preparation and matching for youth while promoting evidence-based policy making in the field of employment services in Africa and the MENA region. It brings together circa 80 employment services practitioners from various social groups (public and private sectors as well as the civil society and academia) within the framework of interregional, theme-specific, Communities of Practice (CoPs).

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- 1 exchange with international experts,
- 2 the organization of study tours,
- 3 theme-specific trainings,
- 4 webinars and online exchanges,
- 5 exchange of news and information amongst members,
- 6 face-to-face and virtual group meetings,
- 7 peer-to-peer counselling,
- 8 linkage with international institutions and experts.

The working language of the CoPs is either French or English. Trained facilitators ensure their moderation. The Communities of Practice determine their own goal and specific objectives. The Communities of Practice elaborate their own action plan, detailing the objectives, expected outcomes and respective timeframe for their meetings and activities. Ultimately, the CoPs will be in a position to provide technical expertise and put forward policy recommendations that will support reform processes at regional and national level.

### 3. The Facilitators

#### Facilitator profile

- You are member of an NGO or are a local independent consultant working in the field of employment promotion or employment services
- You seek professional development in the field of „consulting” and „facilitation”
- In order to become an English-speaking facilitator, you are able to speak and write fluently in English
- In order to become a French-speaking facilitator, you are able to speak and write fluently in French while harnessing sufficient knowledge in English in order to participate to training sessions in English and communicate with your fellow facilitators
- You are ready to travel abroad in Europe / Africa (from 2 to 4 times per year)
- You have robust communication, social and networking skills
- You are technology affine and can work online (e.g., with social networks)
- A previous experience in the field of facilitation/moderation would be an advantage
- A previous involvement in the YouMatch network or with bilateral German cooperation projects in the field of employment services/employment promotion would be an advantage

#### Facilitator benefits & commitments

- You will be under contract with YouMatch and be remunerated for your activities
- You commit to work as a facilitator until at least until May 2021 (you workload will be approx. of 7 working days per month)
- You will benefit from a high quality training and coaching on e.g. cooperation management, moderation, strategic thinking
- The core training of the facilitators will take place in two steps (one 5-day training and one 3-day training) in Germany / Europe. YouMatch will fully cover your training and travel costs. However, you will not be remunerated during the training sessions
- You will regularly report to YouMatch on your Community of Practice’s progress and activities

