

LP4Y SIDE EVENT

APRIL 2021



The key involvement of the corporate world towards Youth inclusion

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Report with inputs and solutions*

Introduction

Polls and studies show that what Youth aspire to foremost, is access to decent and purposeful jobs. Policies and programs prioritizing Youth employment have increased in different parts of the world especially during the pandemic: stimulus packages to deal with the COVID 19 pandemic often include action for Youth. However it is not enough.

Young adults who are affected by exclusion are likely to accumulate additional barriers when seeking for a decent job. This is where partnerships with corporations and the involvement of employers has become key to empower these targeted Young women and men.

Convinced that non-profit and corporate ecosystems have to collaborate for change, Life Project 4 Youth acted, from the beginning jointly with companies for a more effective response to exclusion and precarity issues. As Youth inclusion is a global matter, charity is not enough, it's time for collaboration and transformation.

Listening to the voices of Youth is essential, especially the Youth from excluded and underserved areas. They are the future change makers. Since 2009, LP4Y has accompanied out of school Youth, street Youth, Young mothers, differently-abled Youth, inmates, etc.

These are the voices we need to hear, and we need to hear how decent employment changed their life. If policies and non-profits play a crucial role in Youth inclusion, companies do as well.

Therefore, LP4Y organized a side event to give the floor to Youth to share their professional integration experience and explain what they expect and need from the corporate sector.

Our side event highlighted diversity and inclusion matters when it comes to recruitment and professional integration. Underserved Youth and companies team members discussed the importance of corporate action and engagement.

This event aimed at sharing concrete actions that are implemented by corporate companies to include at-risk Youth in their workforce, and what can be improved. We shared a panel of various initiatives from various countries.

Opening remarks

Economist from Georgetown University, Susana Puerto leads the Global initiative on Decent Jobs for Youth, an inclusive multi stakeholder partnership chaired by the International Labour Organization (ILO) to scale up action and impact on Youth employment within the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

Her latest work through Decent Jobs for Youth has focused on understanding the impact of the COVID 19 pandemic on Young people and advising on policy solutions. With over ten years of experience on the promotion of Youth employment, Susanna has managed and contributed to multiple efforts boosting employability and job creation.

Prior to joining the ILO, Susana worked at the World Bank and the Inter American Development Bank. She serves on a number of executive boards of Youth employment partnerships.

Susana Puerto
Senior Youth Employment Specialist, ILO
Geneva, Switzerland



Susana explained to us that as soon as the pandemic hit, ILO had to figure out quickly how it was impacting the labour market outcomes of Youth and what could be done to minimize the damage. From April to May 2020 they conducted a survey talking to 12 000 Young people across the globe. They particularly observed the negative effects on Young women, especially those from low income countries. Despite efforts of schools and training institutions to provide continuity of education, one in eight Young students was left without any access to courses.

Youth from low income countries were particularly affected, which also underline the digital divide. They also noticed that 55% of Young people reported having learned much less since the pandemic began. As a result, 51% of them believed that their education may be delayed and 9% thought that their education may fail.

The report showed that one in six Youth had stopped working since the beginning of the crisis. Younger workers (18 to 24 years old) were the most affected by job loss. Less visible, 70% of Young people are probably affected by anxiety and depression overall Young women and Youth between 18 and 24 years old. Unless urgent action is taken Young people are likely to suffer from severe loneliness during a pandemic and she believes there is a genuine risk of a lockdown generation.

“Youth will be the ones carrying scars from this economic crisis.”

This is why the ILO called for an urgent, large scale and targeted policy response to support Youth, boosting the quality of online courses, through employment and training programs, guarantee programs, social protection and insurance benefits, mental health services, social support and sport activities. Susana is convinced that now, more than ever, integrating mental health questions and psychological development to social support and employment policies is crucial so that inclusion stakeholders can provide comprehensive support Young people need today.

She finally reminded us that the ILO is protecting Youth rights : human rights and labour rights. She explained that change will not be achieved only because of the will of Governments, the United Nations, or some corporations, but by a collective action, and surveys show that interventions bringing together different stakeholders are more effective than otherwise, including on labour market outcomes of Youth. Youth employment interventions, particularly training programmes, have to understand the needs of employers and the productive sector in general, to integrate it in their training curricula. At the same time, it is also important to bring employers into the action, through apprenticeship programmes or any program that gives to Young people the opportunity to experience work-based learning.

Susana highlighted the fact that we should listen to corporations who are committed to generate positive change, and hear from Youth as well who are clearly part of the solution.

“The only thing we can do is to match their dedication by our commitment to sharpening their voices and promoting their active role as partners in sustainable development.”

Let's make sustainable jobs no longer a dream but a reality for Youth, with them, for them and by them.

➡ <https://www.decentjobsforyouth.org/>

Youth general testimony

Dian is a 19 year old woman from Jakarta, Indonesia. Living in the slum of Kampung Sawah, she joined the LP4Y program in 2020. Today, she is working as a Content Creator at Asia-Raya. She shared her experience and success story: from her high-school experience to her time at LP4Y, to how she managed to find a job during the pandemic; the challenges she faced and how she handled them.

Dian Safitri
LP4Y graduate
Content creator, Asia-Raya
Jakarta, Indonesia



Raised in a modest 5-members family, her parents have an informal micro-business : selling mattresses and pillows. Dian is the last child of the family, and is a fresh graduate from 49 Vocational high school and majoring in Multimedia.

She explained to us about her background : back in 2020, when the first time the pandemic came, she was feeling under pressure because she felt insecure when she wanted to go outside.

“It was difficult for me to find a job right after graduating from high school.”

But in July 2020 she joined a Professional Training for Entrepreneurs (PTE), Life Project 4 Youth program, then found an opportunity to improve her skills. As Dian explained : LP4Y provides professional training for excluded Young adults in Kampung Sawah, Jakarta. This PTE lasts between 6 and 9 months, and after, there are an additional 3 months outside of the center for the integration of the Youth.

The coaches accompany them daily into planning their Life Project Plan and help them learn key skills like English, communication, time management, team management and business skills. To help them follow the PTE, the Youth are being given an allowance, called Life Project Money, that helps provide for their basic food, hygiene and transportation to the center. During the training, the coaches also help them into making their own resume, motivation letter and they can practice mock interviews to gain confidence and to look for a job on their own afterward.

The first time she came to the center, Dian was quite nervous. However, day by day she felt like she found a platform where she could develop herself and gain a lot of knowledge.

After 8 months, Dian started to do her job search, in January 2021. She was so eager to reach her target job as a graphic designer or a content creator, because she is passionate about design, she wanted to work in the creative industry, and she got her professional certification of multimedia. Overall, she had experience as a graphic design freelancer since she was in senior high school. Then, she was confident to apply for a graphic designer or content creator position!

After over a month, finally, she got a job! She applied for a content creator position and was asked about her basic skills : “what kind of software do you use?”, “can you do the copywriting?” etc. Dian felt prepared and confident. She started a few days later. She is working from 9 am to 5pm, has free weekends, and the job description matches her salary.

The little story about it is that they were actually offering a low salary, around 3 millions IDR (which corresponds to 200 dollars a month) when the minimum wage in Indonesia is 4 millions. Dian met with the CEO of the company and said she would accept the offer only for 4 millions, as this salary matches her skills and the usual job market’s salary of a graphic designer. And they said yes ! After 3-months training, she earns 4.3 million IDR per month.

“I can finally say that I have reached my target job, my parents are so happy!”

This is the beginning of her journey. From here, she hopes to gain more experience, gain more knowledge, to develop her network, all of which would contribute to her self-development.

We wish her all the best!

Corporate partner general testimony

Deepak Kumar has been working for GE Healthcare for the last 6 years. Based in Bangalore, India, he is a design engineer. Volunteering part-time with LP4Y, he provides professional training on soft skills to the Youth. He told us how this experience changed his approach to poverty and exclusion, how he became aware of a situation happening in his own country and got involved by getting to know the local communities and the Youth.

Deepak Kumar
Design Engineer, GE Healthcare
Bangalore, India



Before visiting the LP4Y center in Bangalore, Deepak's vision about poverty and Youth inclusion was quite different. There were certain grey areas so he was curious to know more about LP4Y's actions to reduce poverty and improve Youth inclusion.

Things definitely changed when he came to the center : as he said, the mind-blowing thing was the co-location of the center in the community which makes it well accepted by local people and the Youth's families. Though he was aware of India's poverty and the Youth inclusion issues related through the media and news.

“My in-person visit to the center and the urban slum environment gave me better insights and a stronger purpose to contribute to diminishing poverty and reducing exclusion as an individual.”

Deepak got to learn about the 6-months transformation program that guides the Youth. What he loved is the chain reaction that this program creates, starting with coaches training the Youth, and then Youth training their community. He loved the lunches they had on Saturdays and the graduation days, seeing all the Youth, relatives, partners and catalysts together as one big community.

He then shared his vision on the need for corporate involvement in this odyssey. For him, in urban cities, corporate companies come right after governments when it comes to Youth inclusion action. Corporates involvement in reducing poverty and Youth exclusion can bring in rapid changes because of their huge presence. It also influences a lot of people within a company by creating a channel through which they can help marginalized communities and it also lays the foundations for corporations to look for talents.

“These Youth are motivated, talented and loaded with some key skill sets that can definitely benefit to the corporate world.”

Before even talking about recruitment, Deepak mentioned the importance of the involvement of the corporate world in professional exposure and pedagogy. He shared some information about GE's contribution as a corporate company and a partner. He reminded us of the purpose of LP4Y's new digital platform called Digital Inc as part of strengthening its pedagogy. Deepak, with other global GE volunteers signed up to prepare digital training on professional, personal and life development skills. The Digital Inc platform offers interactive activity-based learning and also provides the time flexibility to the learner.

“This pedagogy could be a huge game changer for many learners globally.”

As Deepak explained, a group of GE volunteers had done visits in India and Vietnam to conduct talent weeks : weeks during which the Youth will only work on the creation of new products for their micro economic initiative, in collaboration with corporate partners who give them their inputs and make the Youth benefiting from their business experience and skills. The GE team also did some home visits and had a tour of the Youth environment and community.

LP4Y is grateful to have such engaged corporate partners.

The importance of inclusive recruitment from the corporate world

We then heard from Raju Sharma, a former LP4Y Youth, working at Decathlon in New Delhi since 2017 as an Inbound Operations Team Member, and Kunal Gujar, the Outbound Logistics Manager in the Mumbai warehouse of Decathlon. They told us about the importance of inclusive recruitment from the corporate world. Kunal is the one who recruited Raju 4 years ago in the Decathlon team in Delhi.

Raju Sharma
Inbound Operations Team Member
Decathlon - New Delhi, India



Kunal Gujar
Outbound Logistics Manager
Decathlon - Mumbai, India



To give a bit of context, Raju, 22 years old, from Nepal, started to share his life story with us : when he was 5 years old, his family left him alone, in India. He was living in the street with his friends, in New Delhi, and then found a shelter in Salaam Baalak, an Indian non-profit and NGO. He spent 8 years there. He could go to school and practice karate and boxing. He was then transferred to Nepal, where he met his grand-parents, after many years. He lived with his grandfather but was not feeling comfortable there, so he decided to come back to Delhi, biking 2000 km (1250 miles) to reach there. He joined Salaam Balaak again for one year, until one of his friends told him about the LP4Y professional training for entrepreneurs program.

Kunal is coming from Jaipur, Rajasthan (India). He has been working for 5 years in Decathlon. He worked in Decathlon warehouse offices all over India. Now based in Mumbai, he met Raju in Delhi a few years back.

Indeed, during his LP4Y training, Raju did some company visits, including Decathlon. He liked the company and their corporate culture and spirit. He wanted to join and gave his resume to get an interview. First, he was not selected, but he did not lose faith: he prepared himself better with the support of his LP4Y coach doing mock interviews etc; and applied to an inbound logistics position. He was finally selected and succeeded to land a job.

“I was very happy and excited to start this new journey.”

Despite the 50km (31 miles) away from the city, he went everyday to the warehouse. It was not that easy at the beginning. Everything was new. His teammates helped a lot with his integration, on how to find a place nearby, and learned logistic skills. Today, he has been working for 4 years at Decathlon. Initially he learnt about basic logistic skills, he then learned how to report team management projects, and had the opportunity to work in different warehouses and train newcomers himself.

“Today I am managing 12 teammates in the outbound, as the monitor of the chain.”

What a success story!

Indeed, inclusion is at the heart of the Decathlon spirit, as Kunal reminded us. It is connected to their original mission : being useful to people and to the planet. Either in retail or logistics, they always feel they should enhance diversity in their teams with people from different backgrounds. For Kunal, what is interesting is that with people like Raju, there is always a different angle of thinking during team brainstormings - which is very rich.

“During recruitment, we are constantly trying to change our pattern.”

They post their job offers on their website and on some platforms, and connect with different NGOs, including LP4Y, where the Youth learn important soft skills. Once they set up the recruitment and get plenty of resumes, they adapt the process to the applicants (language, tests, etc.). It is always centered around sport. They have different rounds of tests, like group discussion to know more about applicants' personalities. Before even getting selected, they enable candidates to work in a warehouse or retail store for 2 days, so the Youth learn how it goes. Once they are confident, they onboard them. Decathlon supports the new team members with their transportation, accommodation, etc.

After a day of introduction to Decathlon values, explaining what they expect from selected newcomers, Young applicants are given a mentor during two weeks. He/She will be an expert in one domain of Decathlon's mission. They share their technical knowledge with the fresh ones. Finally, the validation phase comes once the applicant is feeling comfortable.

Decathlon team focuses on sport values, and looks for dedication and good communication skills. Within 3 to 4 months, newcomers become experts in one process, which was Raju's case. Within the 6 months following their introduction, newcomers will discover the panel of Decathlon departments and positions.

Once a month, within the team, members have a common debrief and express how they feel, what they liked and disliked. They have the opportunity to present their KPI (Key Performance Indicators). They can also share their new ideas, and can work on it if it matches the team's objectives. Personal issues are also taken into account. Kunal insisted on the importance of transparency in the managers' decisions. They make sure teammates grow, in the way that is suitable for them and according to their wishes.

“We are not yet an inclusion expert but we are at the initial state, trying different ways to enhance diversity, which make us more accessible to customers. Because one of our missions is to sustainably make sport accessible to everyone.”

Thank you Raju and Kunal for your purposeful insights on inclusiveness.

The importance of professional corporate mentoring to ensure the entire integration of the Youth

Both based in the Philippines. Lorraine, global HR team leader in CGI, has almost 14 years of experience, and has been the mentor of Nila, who joined CGI in October 2017 and reports daily to Lorraine.

They offered us a dialogue about their professional collaboration and the importance of mentoring to accompany the newcomers towards their professional development and confidence.

Lorraine Laxamana
Global HR Team Leader, CGI
Manila, Philippines



Nila Mae Tan
HR Member Associate, CGI
Manila, Philippines



Coming from the slum of Tondo in Manila, Nila explained she is now a proud permanent member working in CGI as a member of a growing HR Shared Services Team.

“The skills I got in the LP4Y program have been well applied and blended with lots of determination and assistance from the people I work with at CGI.”

Working within the HR United Kingdom Team, her first journey has not been an easy one. But after several years, she is glad and 100% proud of herself and her accomplishments being one of the more experienced team members of Service Delivery Center!

For Nila, being a woman needs to balance a lot: her family needs, her personal needs, and now professional needs, since she got this job.

“My team is a big part of my development and success in conquering my fears and those challenges.”

Nila explained that her team has been very helpful and they taught her all the things that she needed to know. Her superiors have been very considerate and supportive as well, and very patient with her and her challenges.

“And I am very grateful for that, and will always be appreciative to my buddies, my teammates, and my bosses in CGI who trusted me despite all.”

Indeed, as Lorraine mentioned, mentors will always be by her side, ensuring she keeps the passion and motivation burning, because they believe she has the skills, and expertise now, and it's time for Nila to fuel it up further.

Member of CGI for 14 years already, and still counting for more years to come, Lorraine told us that everyday is like her first day in the company, with plenty of challenges.

Such motivation rooted from relevant guidance from the beginning. Best practices sharing, open communication, diversity and team playing attitude has always been crucial for her, and that is what she teaches her teammates.

“Whenever I have new members in my team, as mentor, I make an extra effort to ensure that we pass on that mentorship mindset for them to have their own character and wit.”

CGI created a Member Partnership management framework, used as a guide for gaining commitment and fostering an improved sense of responsibility to everyone. They also settled regular sessions with CGI members, the occurrence depending on the needs, at least once to twice a month. There, challenges are openly discussed and each point of view is heard. They ensure gathering each and everyone's commitment to move for another day.

Lorraine explained they address LP4Y graduates Youth as regular members, but extending the support and understanding. They ensure that, as team leaders, they consider the Youths' accomplishments, development and areas of improvement, for them to be sharpened and assisted through the challenges they are facing. This is the CGI way to fully integrate their newcomers in the corporate world.

“We celebrate each challenge conquered. A milestone achieved in our own little way has always been part of our team's Ethos.”

This is all about empowerment!

Closing remarks

Jérôme Lemouchoux is the CEO of FoodChéri, a French subsidiary of the global company Sodexo. General Manager in the Philippines for almost 4 years, then in Belgium and Luxembourg, he is today back in France. In 2014, he met the LP4Y team in Manila and decided to partner through Sodexo to lift out Young adults of extreme poverty. He co-founded with LP4Y a network of companies ready to fight against Youth exclusion : the YIN (Youth Inclusion Network).

Jérôme Lemouchoux
Chairman of the Youth Inclusion Network
CEO FoodChéri, part of Sodexo
Paris, France



Jérôme began his remarks by stating that this event confirmed his point of view regarding the key role the corporate world has to play to help the Youth achieve their life project plan. When we think about Youth inclusion, we often rely on NGOs, public authorities, education... Jérôme believes we underestimate the impact the companies can have on their life and the opportunity they have recruiting these Young adults.

In 2014, Jérôme was appointed as CEO of Sodexo company in the Philippines (French company in catering and gift certificates). It was a 12 years old company with 100 employees, leader in the gift certificate market.

At that time, he was already convinced that companies should go beyond profits and have a key role to play to have an impact on the environment and society.

“So, in the Philippines, I was seeking what kind of impact we could have through Sodexo. Of course, I was struck by the extreme poverty and I thought we could do something about it.”

Jérôme started meeting NGOs and he discovered LP4Y. He enjoyed its pedagogical approach and understood that LP4Y needed companies like theirs to welcome Youth coming from extreme poverty in their teams. So he decided to partner with the organization.

At the very beginning, his team did not really know what to do. Other companies and LP4Y suggested that the first thing would be to connect with the Youth to get to know them. So they organized a company visit and welcomed 15 ladies coming from a Manila slum area called Tondo in Sodexo's premises.

“I personally thought that the Young ladies who came to visit us were impressive: highly motivated, very focused and engaged in the workshops we prepared. Let’s be honest, it was far from the clichés I had of people coming from the slums.”

Jérôme realized that working with them will not only be good for them but it would be a great asset for his company. He said that Youth are resilient, full of energy with a genuine desire to learn and to grow.

On top of that, Jérôme was also amazed by the impact of this initiative on his team : many of the team members expressed how proud they were to be part of Sodexo.

Then came the Christmas season, and Sodexo needed additional people to deal with the increased activity. So, Sodexo decided to extend its recruitment to the Youth coming from underserved communities. They found some applicants through LP4Y and they finally hired 3 Youths who did very well.

“As a company, everything was not that easy. Even if the will to recruit was there, we got lost in the way to find some applicants. This is where the YIN (Youth Inclusion Network) helped us.”

One week after meeting LP4Y for the first time, Jérôme explained he received a call from Laure Delaporte, co-founder of LP4Y, who told him that LP4Y planned to launch a network of companies ready to fight against Youth exclusion, and she asked him to close the kick-off meeting and set up the network. This is how Sodexo joined and founded the YIN with other companies and the support of LP4Y.

In 2015, Sodexo launched the YIN with 5 companies. This network is a success as they helped each other to find solutions to their questions, their doubts. It guides them on how to involve their company into the very first step towards Youth. And this can be as simple as opening the door to company visits - what they did - offering training, or recruiting contractuales, on internships or full time positions.

The YIN became a network of companies facing the same challenges, where they can share their experience or best practices from the experience of others. It is easier to involve a company being a member of a group of corporations fighting against exclusion.

This network grew month after month to reach today more than 20 companies in the Philippines. In the last 4 years, it opened in Vietnam, Nepal and India. Jérôme encourages companies to join them! From Jérôme’s point of view, if you plan to recruit the Youth as a charity case, for a good CSR approach, it is nice but it is the wrong way to do it and it is not sustainable. If you plan to recruit them because you believe that you will gain something as a company to have a diversity of people, resilient employees with a high level of engagement, then you won't be disappointed.

“The HR director and the CEO should be at the forefront of the initiative.”

Finally Jérôme told us he spent one morning per month engaging in the management of the YIN, setting up actions, onboarding new members, and meeting the Young adults in the field. Today, he is still involved from France and said it means a lot in his job and in his life.

“So let's work all together; public authorities, NGOs, and companies. Let's fight together hand in hand against Youth exclusion, for the Youth, for our companies, for our Nation and for ourselves.”

➡ <https://www.yinglobal.org/>

Conclusion

As inclusion is a common and global matter: corporations have to join the public sector, policy-makers, nonprofits and social organizations to work together to overcome this challenge.

In this second side event organized by LP4Y, we highlighted the key role of corporations in the professional and social integration of the Youth. Our grassroots experience shows that companies can be involved at the local level and have a key role to play.

We look forward to working or partnering with additional corporate partners in the future to empower the Youth. They are our future, so let's give them the means to achieve their dreams.

Thank you to all the panelists and participants in this event!

Together we can