



**Program Manual**  
**Direction Employment**

## Preface

The Direction Employment Program Manual was developed by Workshop for Civic Initiatives Foundation (WCIF), Bulgaria within the project "Direction Employment" funded by the EEA and Norway Grants Fund for Youth Employment.

It aims to assist individuals and organizations interested in supporting young people from marginalized groups to integrate into the labor market. It presents the Direction Employment holistic youth development model which combines academic training (IT, math and language training) with life skills training,

career counseling, on-the-job training, and ongoing psychosocial support to the trainees to tap into their hidden potential.

This Program Manual is being followed by a Student Handbook that assists the trainees in their daily work. Additional training materials are compiled for future trainers in a Mobile Classroom Kit, which will be provided free of charge upon request. We encourage you to contact Workshop for Civic Initiatives Foundation (<https://frgi.bg>) for more information and assistance.



## Some information about the project

The Direction Employment project will unleash the potential of NEET youth, suffering from multiple discrimination (i.e. Roma, LGBTI, refugees, single mothers, and disabled) by applying an experimental model for youth education, based on progressive pedagogy, integral and gamified methodologies. It will contribute to promoting the values of diversity and inclusion in the labor market concerning race/ethnicity, gender and gender identity, sexual orientation, disability, and global and digital citizenship.

By uniting partners from Bulgaria (WCIF), Lithuania (LGL), Slovenia (LUV), Portugal (IPP) and Italy (Lai-Momo), who have a proven track-record of working for the social and labor market inclusion of young people from highly marginalized minorities, the project will:

→ Create an educational model with experimental and innovative curriculum that combines IT skills training with life skills development, career counseling and on-the-job training.

→ Test the educational model in different contexts and with different target groups. Take into account the intersectional aspects of marginalization, which make the access to the labor market very difficult for particular groups of young people.

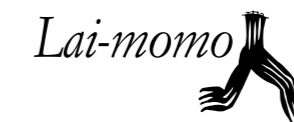
→ Establish the mobile classroom model to training of trainers at regional level.

→ Apply a social impact and integrated assessment tools that will produce comparative data, which will demonstrate the impact of the methodology on the trainees as well as on their close environment (extended family, peer group, etc.) and on the employers.

→ Achieve over 30% employability and over 50% placements (internships, continued education) for the young people involved as trainees.

The project envisions three annual cycles of recruitment, training, and post-training placement monitoring of the NEET youth, 1 diverse group of up to 30 trainees per country/ per year. It is being implemented in the period October 1, 2018 – March 31, 2022.

### Partners



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## Background and Introduction

The purpose of this chapter is to introduce the basic concepts of Direction Employment Program — Bulgaria and to provide a brief historical background to its methodology.

## What Is Direction Employment?

Direction Employment is the result of 4 years of implementation of the YouthBuild International comprehensive youth and community building program in the Bulgarian context. It facilitates the labor market inclusion of young people who are not in employment, education or training (NEET youth).

Direction Employment unleashes the potential of NEET youth, suffering from multiple

discrimination (i.e. Roma, LGBTI, refugees, single mothers, disabled, etc.) by applying an experimental model for youth education, based on progressive pedagogy, integral and gamified methodologies. It contributes to promoting the values of diversity and inclusion in the labor market concerning race/ethnicity, gender and gender identity, sexual orientation, disability, and global and digital citizenship.



By uniting partners from different sectors@ NGOs, educational experts, companies@ from Bulgaria, who have a proven track record of working for the social and labor market inclusion of young people from highly marginalized minorities, the project aims at:

- testing the educational model in different contexts and with different target groups, whose marginalization based on intersectionality make their access to the labor market very difficult;
- applying a social impact assessment tool that will produce comparative data, which will demonstrate the impact of the methodology on the trainees as well as on their close environment (extended family, peer group, etc.) and on the employers.

The project envisions 3 annual cycles of recruitment, training, and post-training placement monitoring of the NEET youth, 1 diverse group of up to 30 trainees per year. Dissemination of the educational approach will be ensured across the country by applying the gamified mobile classroom methodology in different regions. Evaluation and upgrading of the model will take place on annual basis, and the final evaluation will be based on the following key indicators:

- More than 50% of the trainees have received placements;
- 100% of the trainees have reported changes in behavior/self-assessment;
- 75% of the employers of the trainees have reported changes in their perception of the employability of NEET youth from highly marginalized minorities, which ensures sustainability of the results.

The Direction Employment Project makes use of the key features of the Youth Build International program that has been carefully designed by community activists with the input of young people in several USA neighborhoods over 15 years. Young people of many racial and ethnic groups have participated and benefited. It is appealing to groups in rural as well as urban neighborhoods.

#### The Direction Employment Program maintains the core elements of YBI model:

- It is a **community service program**, in which young people who receive free training courses are also asked to get involved in community service projects.
  - It is an **alternative school**, in which participants spend at least 50 percent of their program time pursuing academic goals, which include IT training, functional competences education, and English language skills (English for coding).
  - It is a **job training and pre-apprenticeship program**, in which young people receive on-site training in IT and high technology industries, during 50 percent of their time in the program from qualified instructors, who are often company managers, and then get placed in IT-related jobs or apprenticeships.
- It is a leadership development program, in which young people share in the governance of their own program and participate actively in community affairs, learning the values and the lifelong commitment needed by effective and ethical community leaders.
- It is a youth development program, in which young people participate in personal counseling, peer support groups, and life-planning processes that assist them in healing from past hurts, overcoming negative habits and attitudes, and pursuing achievable goals that will establish a productive life, sustaining themselves and their immediate families.
- It is a long-term mini-community, in which young people make new friends committed to a positive lifestyle, may pursue cultural and recreational activities together, and can continue to participate through follow-up services and a graduates program.
- It is a community development program, in which young people take responsibility for their extended families and neighborhoods (serving to the community and becoming role models for others).

## Program Components

#### The Direction Employment program contains three basic components:

1. educational and functional competences training in IT;
2. soft-skills training, counseling, and other support activities;
3. on-the-job training through implementing assignments which are provided by mentors from IT companies and other high technology industries.

#### To adequately support and implement these program components and ensure the best possible program outcomes, it is recommended that the following program elements also be in place:

- a participant outreach, recruitment, and selection plan;
- job placement services;
- post-graduation follow-up;
- accounting, reporting, and program evaluation systems.

#### The chapters in this manual go into detail on each of these program components and elements. They are briefly described here.

- **Educational and job training services** should be designed to meet the basic qualification requirements for a front-end developer in the IT sphere of industry.
- **Soft-skills training is designed** to develop employment and life-planning skills. Examples of such activities include working on an individual carrier-development plan, preparation for a job's interview, and general communication skills.
- **Counseling and other support services** should help trainees handle critical life needs that might otherwise interfere with personal achievement. Direct personal counseling from program staff should be available for all trainees. Individual and peer counseling can help trainees to develop

successful habits and values related to life goals, use of money, personal relationships, drug abuse, and the like. Linking young people to other community resources as appropriate to assist with problems related to health, substance abuse, housing, child care, family, or legal emergencies may be a part of the counseling process.

- **Outreach, recruitment, and selection** should be designed to attract youth between the ages of 18 and 29, inclusive, at the time of enrollment. At least 75 percent of trainees must be very-low-income (that is, below 50 percent of median income); at least 75 percent must not have completed high school. All trainees must have educational needs that justify their participation in the program.
- **Smart-classroom approach** tracking and filling knowledge gaps during the educational process. Thus, the education process is entirely person orientated, where covering the gaps is considered as important as the main curriculum.
  - **Gamification approach** stimulates behaviors and creates special experience by gamification techniques. Each curriculum can be gamified based on the group expectations, needs and profiles.
- **Job placement** in high technology industries is the key outcome of the Direction Employment program. Job shadowing, mentorship and implementing real assignments provided by IT companies are essential elements of the preparation for labor market inclusion of the trainees in the highly competitive technology industries.
- **Post-graduation follow-up counseling** and self-support groups are envisioned as additional support for the young people after completion of their full-time enrollment in the program.

## Program Principles

The Direction Employment program works to reverse the past negative experiences of trainees.

The following principles have proven to create a particularly successful program environment, if incorporated into all aspects of the Direction Employment program:

- profound respect for the intelligence and human rights of participants;
- protection, as much as possible, from destructive social influences, or at least the support necessary to survive them;
- meaningful and important work;
- real, patient caring for their development;
- actual teaching of skills and functional competences;
- a firm and loving challenge to stop self-destructive behavior and change negative attitudes;
- family-like support and appreciation from peers and adults;
- high standards and expectations;
- inspiring and caring role models;
- understanding of each participant's proud and unique cultural background;
- heightened awareness of the present day world and their important place in it;
- a path to future opportunity;
- opportunities for social activities;
- real concern and action from the agency about changing the conditions that have affected them and the people they love.

The rest of this manual is an elaboration of the key program components.

## Checklist of Essential Elements

Direction Employment found that there is a set of factors that together can help ensure program success.

- **Absolute agency commitment** to the success of the project. Involvement of highly committed local partners who are working with NEET youth is helpful in the recruitment phase. Smart operational structure with clear lines of responsibilities of the staff of the leading organization facilitates the achievement of measurable and visible results.
- **Clear lines of accountability** with at least three very competent full-time managers: Project Coordinator, Financial Manager and Operational Coordinator working directly with the group of trainees are needed for the successful implementation of the training program. IT and soft-skills trainers can be externally hired as long as the core staff maintains the program goals and objectives and quality assurance standards.
- **Systematic mechanisms for staff supervision, coordination, accountability, and building staff cohesion.** Clear job descriptions and expectations of staff. Weekly staff meetings, weekly supervisory meetings, and coordinating meetings between the site and the classroom components. Time set aside for discussion and training on program philosophy and goals. Procedures for firing staff who do not produce or who cannot relate to the young people. If an agency does not have a mechanism for removing a weak staff member, the program becomes correspondingly weak. Weekly meetings of front line staff specifically to review the progress of and coordinate services to each trainee.
- Recruitment of a large pool of eligible young people and **selection of the most serious** from among them.

Since considerable resources are being directed to helping the trainees, it is reasonable for you to select people who are most likely to show up every day.

- A system of monitoring **retention, attendance, and education progress**, accompanied by rapid intervention when weaknesses appear. The project coordinator and training delivery staff should have up-to-date objective information about enrollment, attendance, and education progress at their fingertips. This data will reflect the project's success or difficulties. Difficulties should trigger corrective action.
- A system of regular **youth involvement in decision making.** Responsiveness of the administration to problems raised and proposals offered by young people through a youth policy committee.
- **All program components tailored to the young people.** Adults who care deeply about them, reaching out above and beyond the call of duty; good classroom teaching and relationships; good site supervision; sensitive and effective counseling; high standards for work performance and attendance, and quick response to deviations from the standards; a responsive administration.
- **Unity and morale-building activities** such as field trips, retreats, cultural events, sports, awards ceremonies, support groups, leadership opportunities, travel, exchanges with other programs.
- **Sound fiscal management**, including methods of paying vendors that prevent being taken advantage of; reports submitted on time to avoid cash flow problems; adequate controls.

## Chapter 02

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### Getting Started

The purpose of this chapter is to assist organizations initiating a new Direction Employment project. It describes a broad range of considerations that should be taken into account during the planning and start-up phase.

→ Direction Employment benefits from:

- building broad IT-sector support for the program, involving partners who represent key players in the local IT sector, needed to secure program resources;
- identifying or creating the organizational structure (core staff and trainers) that will implement the Direction Employment program; and
- securing resources and hiring a project coordinator who will work through a planning period to put together program details and resources prior to start-up.

### Operational Structure

The Direction Employment model envisions the following operational structure with key staff who can be full-time employees of the host organization, and additionally hired external trainers, if the host organization does not have such internal staff.

#### Project Director/ Coordinator

##### Responsibilities

Plans, develops, and provides oversight of the Direction Employment program in a specific country. This includes raising program funds, developing strong corporate sector support and collaborative partnerships, maintaining effective linkages with other agencies, ensuring the quality and integration of all components, staff supervision, and oversight of the implementation of the training for NEET youth.

#### Financial Manager

##### Responsibilities

Ensures transparent and effective financial management of the program meeting the requirements of donors and the respective national fiscal standards.

#### Operational Coordinator/ Case Manager

##### Responsibilities

Manages daily program operations, including oversight of the trainee payroll and disciplinary systems with a focus on promoting trainees' total wellbeing, and oversight of the educational, counseling, leadership development, and graduate programs. Facilitates coordination and team work among staff, responsible for the training.

##### → Manages enforcement of the contract between Direction Employment and the trainees, including

- regular meetings with all trainees on the status of their contract,
- complete records related to disciplinary actions taken, and
- decisions on disciplinary action, counseling or other interventions.

Assesses personal needs of Direction Employment participants and help find resources to meet their needs. Provides individual and group counseling to Direction Employment participants. Liaise with social service, health, court, and criminal justice systems to resolve issues facing young people who are enrolled in the program.

Meet regularly with the other program staff to develop and maintain a consistent approach to supporting and expanding the personal growth and leadership skill of young people.

#### IT Trainer

##### Purpose

To teach youth the IT skills necessary to take a job in high technology industries as front-end developer, junior system administrator, web designer, and other similar jobs.

### Responsibilities

- Teach IT skills including programming, web design, and other related skills;
- Be responsible for overall safety enforcement during the training.
- Complete job reports — weekly — featuring attendance and student performance in the classroom.
- Monitors students' performance and completion of external assignments, provided by IT companies.
- Keep track of all tools and equipment used in the classroom on a daily basis.
- Assist in personal and vocational counseling and development of trainees leadership skills in conjunction with other Direction Employment staff.
- Help teach vocational IT training.
- Oversee the evaluation of student knowledge and skills in IT.
- Participate in on-the-job training assignments.
- Attend case management meetings as required by the Operational Coordinator.

### Responsibilities

- Assess personal needs of Direction Employment participants and help fill in knowledge gaps that will help them excel in the IT training.
- Provide individual and group training on functional competences development. Teach basic skills to students at varied academic levels.

### Eligibility requirements for Direction Employment trainees are:

- Participants must be 18 to 29 years of age, inclusive, at time of enrollment.
- At least 75 percent of participants must be very-low-income individuals or members of a very-low-income family. This is defined as household income that is 50 percent or below of median income for the standard metropolitan statistical area.
- Participants must not be currently enrolled in any formal educational program.
- Participants must not be currently working as part-time or full-time employed.
- At least 75 percent of the participants must self-identify as belonging to an underprivileged minority (group) on the basis of ethnicity, nationality, religion, sexual orientation, gender identity, physical or mental ability, or any other characteristic.

## Minimum educational skill level required for entry

The program does not have a minimum educational level requirement. However, it does have a skill level requirement. Applicants will be tested on logical thinking and ability to solve simple logical tasks. While each implementing organization may use a different testing method, all of the diverse methods should aim to check the ability for logical thinking and problem solving skills of the candidates.

## Sample Recruitment Test on Logical Thinking

### Sample Test on Problem Solving

1. Fill in the missing digit in each of the tables

5	3	0
5	3	0
5	3	

0	1	2
1	2	3
2	3	

1	8	7
2	9	6
3	4	

2	1	0
3	2	1
4	3	

1	2	3
6	5	4
7	8	

2	3	4
3	2	2
4	4	

2. Fill in the missing arrow in each of the tables

a) 

↖	↖
↖	↖

↓	
↓	

d) 

↓	↓
↙	↘

↑	
↖	

b) 

↑	↑
↗	↗

←	
↙	

e) 

→	↓
↑	←

↗	
↖	

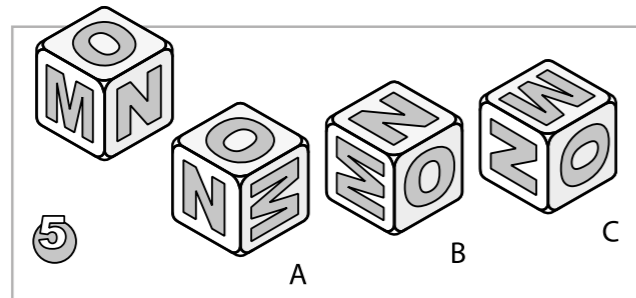
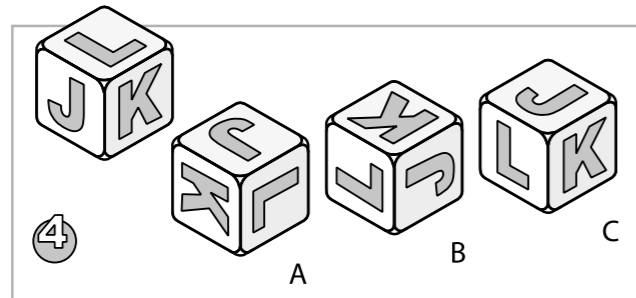
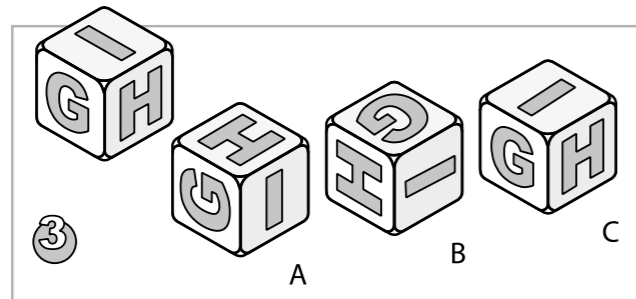
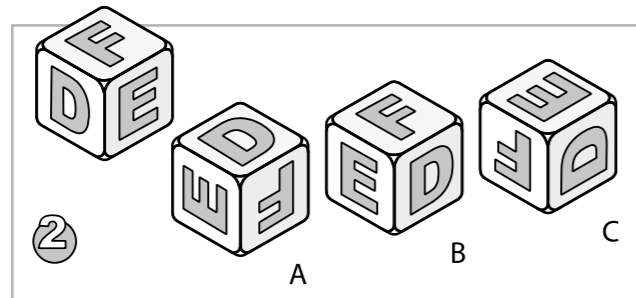
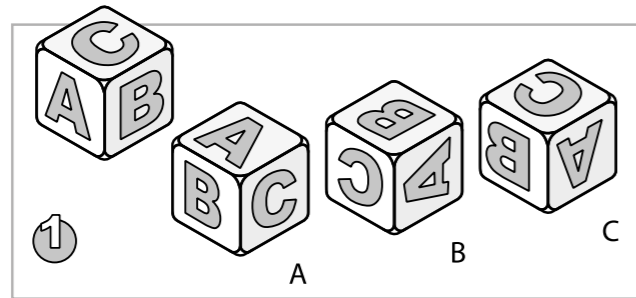
c) 

↘	↘
↓	↓

↑	
↖	



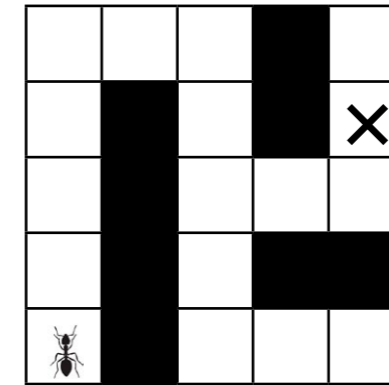
3. The letters on one of the cubes A, B and C are in the same order as in the cube on the left side. Find out which one is this cube.



4. Help the ant to reach the X cell, without stepping on the black cells. You can give 2 types of instructions to the ant:

“Forward”, which will make the ant move one cell ahead;

“Turn Right”, which will make the ant to turn right but remain in the same cell



Instructions:

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5. You have a bunch of flowers. All flowers in the bunch except 2 are roses; all flowers except 2 are daisies, and all flowers except 2 are tulips. How many flowers are in the bunch?

6. There are 100 people in one office. 70 of them are drinking tea, while 80 of them drink coffee. What is the maximum number of people, who drink both tea and coffee? And what is the minimum number of people who drink both tea and coffee?

7. Which is the next number?

- a) 1, 2, 3, 5, 8, ...
- b) 1, 4, 9, 16, 25, 36, ...
- c) 2, 3, 5, 7, 11, 13, ...
- d) 3, 10, 17, 24, 31, ...

8. Use Internet to find out what does UNIX timestamp mean.

What is it and what is it used for? What would be the difference between UNIX timestamp in Sofia and in London at one and the same moment? If we take UNIX timestamp at 08:00 in the morning on the 14 of February 2019, what would be its value?

## Answers

1.

0, 2, 4  
9, 5, 3

2.

a) ↓	c) ↑	e) ↘
↓	↖	↙
b) ←	d) ↑	
↙	↖	

3.

1 B	3 B	5 B
2 B	4 A	

### 4. Instructions

1. Forward	6. Forward	11. Turn Right
2. Forward	7. Forward	12. Turn Right
3. Forward	8. Turn Right	13. Turn Right
4. Forward	9. Forward	14. Forward
5. Turn Right	10. Forward	15. Forward

5.

3 – one rose, one daily and one tulip.

6.

Maximum 70 can drink tea and coffee.  
Minimum 50 will drink tea and coffee.

7.

a) 13	c) 17
b) 49	d) 38

8.

UNIX timestamp is used for presenting a moment in time. It presents the number of seconds which have passed since 00:00 on the 1st of January 1970 Greenwich Time.

There will be no difference between UNIX timestamp in Sofia and in London, taken at one and the same moment, because this presentation of time does not depend on the time zones.

If we take UNIX timestamp at 08:00 am on the 14 of February 2019 it will have the following value — 1550102880  
(use <https://www.unixtimestamp.com/index.php>, in order to calculate).

## In-Depth Interviews with All Candidates

In addition to testing the logical thinking and problem-solving abilities, the Recruitment Phase includes in-depth interviews with all candidates. These interviews aim to assess the candidates' motivation for personal and career development, which is an essential prerequisite for making best use of the training program.

### Sample Interview

## Key Program Components

The Direction Employment program is expected to achieve the most positive trainee outcomes when there is tight coordination between the classroom, self-preparation, on-the-job training and other activities. This means designing your program schedule and staffing structure with regular time set aside for coordination. This may be in the form of weekly staff meetings, daily “case reviews” of trainee performance, periodic staff training on specific topics, and/or staff retreats at key points in the program cycle (before trainee recruitment, midway through each cycle). A coordinated approach minimizes the likelihood of problems occurring.

## The Smart Classroom Approach

The open, inclusive and smart classroom is stepping on the concepts of the Integral Theory for Education, broadly utilized in the educational systems of Finland, Denmark, Island and some regions of Spain. It resonates between Experience in the educational process; Behavior during education, based on the behavioral strain of the motivation theory; Culture toward education and System for teaching and training. It should not be mistaken for democratic educational or progressive education theories, yet all of them have common roots, based on the ideas for methodological pluralism, which can be tracked back to the works of John Locke

and Jean-Jacques Rousseau (and the Social Contract Theory).

The smart classroom however is a novel approach which facilitates building the skills of the 21st century, based on integral, progressive or democratic methods can be developed with the help of the new digital means for education. It combines technologies, e.g. interactive white boards, classroom management applications, learnings management systems, environment, e.g. teaching videos, lights, and state-of-the art space for learning, e.g. adjusting desks etc.

## Classroom Site Selection

One of the earlier tasks in planning the education component is the selection of an appropriate space in which to conduct classes. It is recommended that the site used for educational programming

- be in the same building or close to the administrative offices, for ease of communication and coordination;
- be easily accessible with public transport;
- have both large classroom space and space that is appropriate for and conducive to individual and small group work; and
- be available after the training hours for self-preparation: many of the trainees may lack computers at home, so they must be allowed to use the classroom after the formal training hours for self-preparation and working on assignments.

Experience has shown that the use of existing school buildings can be problematic for participants. By expecting them to re-enter and succeed in a place that they failed in the first time around, you may be triggering emotional reactions that impede their openness to learning. If using an existing classroom is your only or best option, it can be useful to make some physical changes that indicate that your classroom will not be a replication of a traditional classroom. Also, during an orientation period you can ask recruits to assess the factors that made them fail in school earlier. This may minimize the resistance that a traditional setting may trigger.

## Leadership Development

The requirement that young people in Direction Employment program be involved in program decision making is one of the key factors that distinguishes the program from other job training and alternative education programs.

To be most effective, however, you may want to include youth in decision making from the beginning of your planning process. By doing so, you send an immediate message to the young people that this program treats them differently, respects their opinions, and believes in their potential to succeed as productive members of society.

Youth involvement during the planning phase may be accomplished in a number of ways. Young people can be invited to take part

in a planning committee, a separate youth advisory committee can be established, or young people can be asked to take part in specific activities during the planning period, such as a needs assessment or program design review. There are advantages and disadvantages to working with youth separate from an adult committee.

The Direction Employment Program includes a Needs Assessment Phase, conducted for each training group. In addition to checking the market needs by means of desk research and interviews of employers, the program staff assesses the needs of the youth candidates by means of structured interviews.

## Core Training

The Core Training is a combination of IT Skills Training and building functional competences: Math for Coding and English for Coding. The functional competences training is individualized and aims to meet the knowledge gaps of each trainee.

The Core Training takes 4 months. Weekly schedules include 50% classroom training and 50% self-preparation and group work on assignments out of the formal training hours.

## Training Program

The training program includes the following components

- **English language (for coding)**
- **Mathematics and Logic**
  - Basic mathematical terms – whole number/fraction, positive number/negative number;
  - Arithmetic multiplying, subtraction, division, multiplication, gradation
  - Solving elementary linear equations
  - Geometry: face and area of a triangle, rectangle, circle
  - Logic: Logical operators, negation, AND/OR;
  - Importation of the negation
  - Quantum for existence and aggregation
  - Rules for the logical conclusion, modus ponens
  - Basic logical fallacies <https://www.futurelearn.com/courses/logical-and-critical-thinking/>

## Computer Literacy

- Working with a file system: Basic structure of the file system; creation and modification of files/folders; Copying and moving of files/folders; Installing and de-installing of a program; Basic types of files and their extensions; Images: png, jpg, jpeg; Documents: pdf; Text files: txt, doc, docx; Electronic tables: xls, xlsx
- Working with Internet:
- **Google search; Creation of an e-mail address and working with it to send letters, attachments, etc;**
- **Registration in web sites**
  - Main risks in using Internets
    - Scam, fishing
    - Spam
    - Personal data security risks
- **Working with Office Pack**
  - The basics of Word
  - The basics of Excel
  - Table information formating
  - Basic functions: SUM, MAX
  - Programming
- **Games for formal thinking**
  - Situation puzzle games
  - Unplugged activities from code.org
- **Imperative Thinking Basics**
  - The games in Code.org
  - Scratch
- **Java – basic constructions: if, for, arrays, functions**
  - Problem solving with immediate feedback
- **Front end development**
  - Html
  - Formatting of text
  - Creation of tables
  - Inserting images
- **CSS**
  - colors
  - scripts
  - elongations
  - location of the elements
- **Javascript/jQuery**
- **hosting of website in a local network / local PC**

## Communication and Dissemination Activities

A visible series of activities or events will keep key people and groups informed of the training progress and build support. These might include:

- writing articles about Direction Employment for specialized newspapers/magazines;
- having program staff speak at appropriate educational events; job fairs; HR events; IT-industry events, such as the EU Code Week;
- publish news periodically at the program web site to keep people informed of progress during the implementation phase;
- holding press conferences at key points such as the securing of a construction site or a funding commitment;
- designing infographic and 2D animation and distributing it widely to key stakeholders;
- organizing special business meetings and maintain a relationship with potential employers.

## Sample Timeline for a 6-Month Training Program

The following sample timeline provides an overview of a program's possible activities and their duration.

Month 1	Month 2	Month 3	Month 4	Month 5	Month 6
Recruitment and Orientation Two-weeks trial period; Signing Contracts with the Trainees	Core Training	Core Training	Core Training	Core Training/ Implementing assignments from IT companies	Core training/ Implementing assignments/ Final Exams and Graduation



## Chapter 03

### Trainee Recruitment, Selection, and Orientation

## Selection Criteria

During the Direction Employment program planning process each implementing organization should establish criteria that define who would be a good candidate for admission. Consider the following factors.

- **Commitment to changing life.** This should be a key selection factor. You will have to assess this primarily through your interview, so care should be taken to develop questions that will address this factor. It may be reflected in the initiative which applicants have already taken to deal with housing, day care or other needs, or the steps taken to move away from a destructive lifestyle.
- **Interest in both IT and soft-skills development.** Try to select applicants who want both the IT training and the opportunity to improve their soft-skills, self-presentation and life-planning skills.
  - **Reading level** — Experience has shown that most students entering the program with reading levels below good text comprehension will not be able to advance in the IT training.
  - **Age** — Within the 18-to-29 requirement, each Direction Employment program must decide whether to give preference based on age.
  - **Income.** The maximum income level for 75 percent of the participants of no more than 50 percent of the area median income.
  - **Criminal record** — The program does not pose any restrictions for participation towards young people with criminal record.
  - **Gender** — Gender balance will be observed, and the program will encourage the participation of women and gender diverse people (trans, intersex, gender neutral, etc.)
  - **Cultural diversity** — The program encourages the participation of young people from cultural minorities and migrant background.
  - **Interest in leadership** — Most applicants will not have leadership experience. Interview questions can assess interest and potential for leadership — for example, interest in being involved in improving neighborhood conditions and helping other people.

## Recruitment

Recruitment messages should not be misleading and should contain specific information on the program. Emphasize that this is a training program where participants can “learn while they earn” and that graduates can enter the high-paying, demanding field of IT industry.

## Sample Application Form

### Application Form

Name .....

Address .....

Date ..... Phone .....

Where did you hear about Direction Employment?

- Newspaper
- Radio
- TV
- Flyer
- Somebody told me about it
- Other (write in)

.....

.....

.....

Why are you interested in being in this program?

.....

.....

.....

.....

If you are accepted into this program, you will be in class Monday through Friday, 8:30 to 11:30 a.m., studying IT, English and math skills to help you prepare for a front-end-developer job in the IT industry. What would you like to get out of the class?

.....

.....

.....

.....

## Sample Application Form

### HEALTH

Do you have any physical, medical, or health problems? Yes  No

If yes, please describe:

.....

.....

When was your last physical exam? (date) .....

### EDUCATION

Last school attended: .....

Highest grade completed ..... Last year in school .....

If you did not complete high school or get your diploma, why did you drop out?

.....

.....

.....

### TRAINING AND WORK HISTORY

Have you ever been in another training program? Yes  No

If yes, give name and location of program:

Dates you attended this program: .....

Did you complete the program? Yes  No

### LAST JOB

Have you ever held a job before? Yes  No

Name of Company .....

Dates you worked there: FROM:..... TO:.....

Job Title .....

What kind of work did you do? .....

.....

.....

Supervisor's Name and Title .....

Why did you leave? .....

## Sample Application Form

### CURRENT JOB

Are you currently working? Yes  No

If so, is your job Time  Part Time

If employed, current hourly wage rate: \$..... per hour

Number of hours, on average, you work each week: .....

What are you interested in doing for a career?  
.....  
.....

What types of jobs do you think are available in the field of IT?  
.....  
.....  
.....  
.....

### ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

.....  
.....  
.....  
.....

Have you ever been convicted of any crime? Yes  No

If yes, please describe and include dates and status of case:  
.....  
.....  
.....  
.....

If yes, are you on probation? Yes  No

Name and phone number of officer .....

Are you on parole? Yes  No

Name and phone number of officer .....

## The Interview

It is recommended that all program staff who will be dealing directly with the trainees should participate in the interview process. If possible, each interview should be conducted by two or three staff members who represent the job training, counseling, and academic components. For existing Youthbuild programs, it helps to get input from a current student. Staff participation in the interview process begins to build rapport and can provide a diversity of opinions about the suitability of the applicant.

During the interview, tell the applicant more about the program and the responsibilities of the participant. Be sure to explain that IT training requires math and English language skills as well as formal logic training.

Every applicant should express an interest in the IT field. Ask questions that might identify interest, but keep in mind that many women and trans people in particular may not have had opportunities for exposure or hands-on experience that men often get.

Determine if the applicant can participate and still meet financial obligations. Explain your wage or stipend structure. If a part-time job will be necessary, determine the motivation to make that commitment.

Following is a sample format for an interview.

## Instructions for Interview

Individual interviews are conducted in one-hour sessions. Applicants are rated on a scale of one to five, five being the best. The interviews are conducted by the program manager and one or two other staff.

## Purpose of Interviews

- The purpose of the interview is to learn if applicant is motivated to
- improve educationally,
  - learn IT skills,
  - stay with a job for a long period,
  - show up on time, all the time,
  - get along with peers,
  - deal with personal problems so he or she can succeed, and
  - take on leadership role in program or community.

## Interview Questions

**Education** Why did you leave school? What subjects did you like? Why should we believe you want to come back to a school setting? Do you know that IT training involves math?

**Work Attitude** What have you been doing since you left school? Do you help out at home? What time do you go to bed at night? When was the last time you got up at 6:30 or 7:00 a.m. to arrive some place by 8:00 a.m.?

**IT training** Why do you want to do IT training? Have you ever done anything in IT sphere or other skilled labor, which involves intensive use of computers and internet?

**Attitude toward Peers** Do you like working alone or with other people? Have you ever worked as part of a team or group? How would you feel about working with other people on a common assignment?

**Money** The program will provide free public transport card on monthly basis to help you cover the costs of local transport to and from the training center. Do you need any additional social support in order to participate in the training course? Are you currently receiving unemployment benefits? Will you still be receiving them if you start the training program?

**Family** Are you a parent? Do you provide child support? How much time do you spend with your child? How are you going to take care of problems at home, so you can keep your mind on Direction Employment?

**Leadership** Have you ever been seen as a leader? Have you ever been the one who made good things happen for other people? If so, describe it. What changes would you like to see in the community? How do you think that could be done?

## Final Selection

Interviewers should take notes and make evaluations immediately after the interview.

Then all the interviewers should come together to select those most suitable for the program. Try to identify any problems and ask, "Is this person right for this program? Is the program right for this person?"

## Acceptance or Rejection Procedure

Accepted applicants should be given at least one week notice to make final preparations. Avoid last-minute selections and notifications.

Applicants who have not been accepted should be notified with the same speed and respect as those who have. At no time should contact with a Direction Employment program be discouraging for young people who have taken an important step of reaching out and seeking help. Your staff should make it a priority to be familiar with other job training and educational opportunities so that they can refer applicants who are not accepted.

## Over-Enrollment

Over-enrolling generally works better than accepting only your budgeted class size. It will help you meet the target number of students if you have dropouts and terminations during the course. It is difficult for new students to miss orientation and some of the training, and for the program to accommodate new participants midway through a program cycle. That is why we recommend over-enrollment with 10-20 percent, or at least maintaining a list of reserves.



## Orientation

A well-organized orientation of at least one to two weeks can be critical to setting the tone, expectations, and relationships in the program. A program orientation for the participants could incorporate the following elements:

- goal-setting and team-building presentations and exercises;
- introduction and overview of program goals and expectations;
- introduction of staff—their roles and expectations;
- trainee expectation of program, staff, themselves;
- awareness of factors contributing to trainees' past success and failures, and analysis of barriers to success;

- conflict resolution skills;
- examination of issues related to gender, substance abuse, and sexual harassment;
- building appreciation of different cultural and racial groups;
- listening and communication skill building;
- review of trainee contract, if your program has one (see sample below).

**An effective orientation process can utilize large and small group discussions, videos, guest speakers, role plays, youth panels, team building exercises, support groups, specific goal-setting practices, other trust-building activities, and a completion ceremony.**

## Sample Trainee Contract

We expect the best of Direction Employment trainees. The fact that you were accepted into the program means that we trust that you want to learn and to grow. We intend to help you in that process. In coming to Direction Employment, you have made a commitment to take your life in a new direction, to strive to do your best and contribute as a leader. As a Direction Employment trainee you are agreeing to:

- Participate fully in all aspects of the program. To attend every day, arrive and leave at the scheduled time. To achieve an attendance rate of at least 85 percent for the entire program.

- Come to the classroom or the worksite prepared to work—bringing the appropriate tools and equipment, and wearing clothing and shoes that will be appropriate for the activity that you will be engaged in.
- Express an attitude and a spirit of respect and cooperation toward all staff and students. Remember that your actions not only reflect on yourself, but on the group as a whole and the Direction Employment program.

**Best of luck and welcome to Direction Employment!**

## Transport Cards

Trainees will receive a monthly public transport card to cover their local transport expenses to and from the training center.

## Infractions

The Direction Employment program must have rules and guidelines to achieve order and accomplish its goals. In keeping with this basic principal, we have identified some behaviors/infractions that, when they occur in the program, have the potential to threaten the achievement of program goals.

Students are expected to follow all of the rules at all times. Violation of these infractions will be dealt with swiftly and appropriately. Infractions have been divided into two groups. Those identified as serious infractions have the potential to cause immediate harm to self, others, and the program and will not be tolerated.

### • Infractions—Group 1

- Absence Without Advance Approval by Program Staff
- Bad Attitude/Disruptive Behavior
- Lateness
- Smoking in the Building

### • Serious Infractions—Group 2

- Leaving Without Notice
- Dangerous or Careless Behavior
- Physical, Verbal, or Emotional Abuse or Threats of Violence
- Possession of Weapons, Drug Paraphernalia, Beepers, or Pornographic Materials
- Possession of Alcohol/Illegal Drugs, or Coming To Work or School Drunk or High
- Destroying Property
- Stealing
- Drug Dealing
- Lying
- Severely Bad Attitude/Disruptive Behavior

Repeated violation of the same infraction may result in dismissal from the program. Violation of a serious infraction may result in immediate

dismissal from the program. Your attitude and willingness to change is the key to successfully completing this program.

## Sample Trainee Contract

### Infractions

#### Group 1 Infractions

- Verbal Warning
- Written Warning
- Second Written Warning Possible Learning or Service Activity
- Visit to Program Manager
- Send home without pay for a designated period or Intervention meeting
- Termination

#### Group 1 Infractions

- Written Warning (Possible Service Activity)
- Sent to Program Manager
- Dismissal (in Some Instances and Immediate Dismissal May Be a Consequence) — Drug Dealing

I .....  
have read and understand the conditions that are described above in the Direction Employment Trainee Contract and agree to abide by these conditions. I also acknowledge that I have received a copy of this contract which I am expected to learn.

Trainee ..... Date .....

Counselor..... Date .....

## Monitoring of Trainee Development

### Measuring Growth in Leadership Development Skills

Direction Employment contributes to building the following personal competences, which are measured during the course of the program by means of observation, discussion, and other ways of interaction with the trainees:

#### Personal Development

- Can keep and use a weekly schedule and calendar for the entire program year.
- Can set and achieve personal development goals.
- Can manage anger constructively.
- Can demonstrate dependability, responsibility for self, and other basic skills required to secure and hold a job.

#### Group Leadership Skills

- Can listen well to others in class, in a meeting, and on the work site.
- Can take useful notes in class, in a meeting, and on the work site.
- Can lead an effective group discussion.
- Can explain and participate in methods used to make group decisions.
- Can define the functions, skills, and attitudes of good leaders.
- Can participate in various forms of self-evaluation and group feedback as a way to evaluate his or her progress.

#### Community Leadership Skills and Knowledge

- Can effectively use a telephone system.
- Can find information through researching.
- Can give basic information of how local, state, and federal government works.

## Counseling

Counseling is a key component of Direction Employment program. The Operational Coordinators take the role of Counselors who help participants deal with their feelings, behavior, and thoughts. Because participants generally come to a Direction Employment

program with a variety of past negative experiences, the counseling process is critical to healing and turning their lives around.

The Operational Coordinators should share the following underlying assumptions about young people:

- Young people have inherent worth.
- They deserve respect.
- They need to be included in decision making.
- They are partners and not clients.
- Various obstacles interfere with their full development and this requires working on behavior, feelings, and thoughts.

## Counseling Components

Possible components for a counseling program include

- one-to-one counseling sessions, scheduled as needed;
- rap groups;
- various types of support groups;
- behavior management training;
- conflict resolution/mediation training;
- group interventions (by either staff or peers) when behavior becomes disruptive;
- life skills development and planning;
- a case management system;
- referral to outside agencies.

A counselor is not a psychologist, physician, or policeman. There may be circumstances that the counselor is not qualified to handle. Look for signs of severe mental illness, risk of

suicide or homicide, or other problems that may be beyond the expertise of the staff. If warranted, contact the appropriate professional.

## Counseling Approaches

Counseling can be done in any or all of the following ways:

- Case-management, in which the counselor coordinates the use of social services available in the community and links the young person, on a one-to-one basis, with appropriate services.
- Individual and group counseling sessions, led by a trained counselor, where specific issues and problems can be discussed and analyzed, and resolutions proposed and encouraged.
- Life-skills training, aimed at providing information and training toward achieving personal goals, and life-management skills including hygiene, housekeeping, handling one's finances, dealing with anger, birth control or pregnancy care, prevention, self-presentation skills, conflict resolution, time management, and so on.

## Confidentiality

Confidentiality of personal information secured as part of the counseling process is fundamental. Counseling files should be locked at all times, and only authorized individuals should have access to these files.

Maintaining confidentiality of the counseling process is important not only to protect the privacy of participants, but also to gain and keep their trust in you.

## Initial Assessments

At the time that a participant enters the program, it is useful to prepare an initial assessment form to establish a baseline of information about each participant. The information recorded in this form should be coordinated

with the general program application form so that duplication is minimized. The form should be filled out as part of an initial assessment interview conducted by the counselor with the participant.

## Personal Development Plans

A few weeks after the participants start work, it is recommended that each prepare a personal development plan with the assistance of the Operational Coordinator/Case Manager. A personal development plan is a tool to help the participants think about and measure their short-term (three to six months), intermediate-term (one year), and long-term

(three to five year) plans for themselves. The personal development plan should be reviewed and updated every three months by the participant, with the assistance of the Operational Coordinator. In this way, trainees can measure and evaluate their progress towards meeting their personal goals during the course of the program.

## Sample Personal Development Plan

### Sample Personal Development Plan

Name ..... Date ..... Program.....  
Age.....

This survey will help us learn about you, your needs and expectations from Direction Employment. We will ask you to answer the same questions when you finish the Direction Employment program to help us see how you have changed and how effective the program has been.

#### PART 1: THE PROGRAM

For each part of the Direction Employment program listed below, please indicate HOW IMPORTANT it is to you:

	Most Important	Very Important	Important	Not Important	Doesn't Apply To Me
a. IT training and classroom instruction	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
b. Help getting into college or technical school	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
c. Better math & English skills	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
d. New friends and positive people	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
e. Helping my community	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
f. Learning how to become a better leader	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

## Sample Personal Development Plan

#### PART 1: THE PROGRAM

1. Five years from now, how likely do you think it is that you will:

	Very Likely	Somewhat Likely	Likely	Not Likely	I have not thought about it
a. Have a good job?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
b. Have an IT diploma from a university/college?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
c. Have another college degree?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
d. Vote regularly?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
e. Be proud of yourself?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
f. Be married?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
g. Be politically active?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
h. Be in trouble with the law?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
i. Be living?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
j. Participate in organizations?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
k. Speak at some public meeting?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
l. Want to be a leader in your community?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
m. Play a positive role in your community?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
n. Have a positive attitude towards life?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
o. Have children? (or more children)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
p. Have moved out of the neighborhood?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>



## Sample Personal Development Plan

2. What goals have you recently accomplished?

.....  
.....  
.....  
.....  
.....  
.....

3. What do you want to be when you are 35 years old?

.....  
.....  
.....  
.....  
.....  
.....

4. What is the most important way you hope to change during your participation in Direction Employment?

.....  
.....  
.....  
.....  
.....  
.....

Please use the rest of this page to tell us anything else about your Direction Employment experience that you would like people to know.

.....  
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.....  
.....  
.....

# Chapter 05

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## The Education Component

The Direction Employment project, among other things, aims to build a new educational culture which stimulates imagination and intellectual development. It enhances the cognitive flexibility and the unseen dispositions that are shaping the 21st century culture. It uses new and classical mentoring and coaching approaches, including smart classroom with individual support, self-awareness building, peer-to-peer learning etc.;

The training program's focus is on employability and soft skills development of highly marginalized groups of young people.

The core training is developed on the basis of market needs assessment and outlining job prospects in the highly competitive IT industry. In 2018-2019, the Core Training Program (IT Training) made use of the following Curriculum outlined below:

# Curriculum

<b>Week 1</b>	Orientation
<b>Week 2-3</b>	Visual programming with Code.org
<b>Week 4</b>	Programming Fundamentals with Javascript. Introduction to Javascript: Intro to programming for drawing and animation. Variables. Strings.
<b>Week 5</b>	JavaScript: Functions. Conditional statements. Debugging.
<b>Week 6</b>	JavaScript: Loops. Arrays. Clean code. Object and object-oriented design.
<b>Week 7</b>	Project on Drawing and Animation with JavaScript.
<b>Week 8</b>	Algorithms with JavaScript. Warm-up problems and problems for arrays and strings.
<b>Week 9</b>	Algorithms with JavaScript: Time complexity. Bubble sort. Insertion sort. Counting sort. Solving problems.
<b>Week 10</b>	Algorithms with JavaScript: Binary search. Solving problems.
<b>Week 11</b>	Front-End Web Development: HTML and CSS
<b>Week 12</b>	Front-End Web Development: Javascript for Web. Project on Front-End Development.
<b>Week 13</b>	Back-End Web Development: Introduction to the Internet. Client-server architecture. Working with command prompt. Introduction to NodeJs.
<b>Week 14</b>	Back-End Web Development: Introduction to NodeJs and ExpressJS. Handling requests. Serving static files.
<b>Week 15</b>	Back-End Web Development: Project on Back-End development; creating a client-server web application.
<b>Week 16</b>	Back-End Web Development: Introduction to Databases. MongoDB. Installing MongoDB and working with the database from NodeJs.
<b>Week 17</b>	Back-End Web Development: Full Stack Project (client, server, database).
<b>Week 18</b>	Object-Oriented Programming: Introduction. Concepts. OOP in JavaScript.
<b>Week 19</b>	Object-Oriented Programming: UML diagrams. Solving problems for object-oriented design.
<b>Week 20</b>	Wordpress: Introduction. Functionalities. Examples.
<b>Week 21</b>	Wordpress: Project on Wordpress.
<b>Week 22</b>	Interview preparation: Solving Logical Questions. IT Common knowledge. Coding Challenges
<b>Week 23</b>	Interview preparation: Problems for Object-Oriented Design. Mock Interviews.

## Key Elements of the Education Component

### Academic Skills

Academic skills training is required by Direction Employment, and provides for functional skills learning in reading (English), writing, and math. It sets a foundation for future learning. It fosters critical thinking, problem solving, and conceptual understanding in a practical-skills context.

Academic skills may be effectively integrated with IT training, job readiness, and leadership development. Reading and writing skills can be linked to IT; mathematics and logic training are essential for programming. Academics can also be linked to the development of important life skills—for example, through reading and writing assignments that require students to reflect on their behavior, their community, and their future direction.

Students often learn more successfully when their academic work seems relevant and meaningful. Students can be given the opportunity to explore and analyze their community, racial, and cultural issues that are important to them and related to their experience.

Classroom instruction may be individualized, within a group context. When each student's skills are carefully assessed at intake, the academic program can be tailored to individual needs. If the path for achievement and advancement is established specifically for every student, no student will work too slowly or too rapidly in any area.

### IT Skills

IT skills training is the core training of Direction Employment program. This area of training introduces students to the basic tools, materials, and skills necessary to work in the IT sector at an entry level.

Expectations for student vocational skills learning can and should be clearly established up front. Every effort should then be made to help students meet those expectations.

When possible, students will be introduced to new skills in a workshop setting, allowing time for review and practice. The skills taught in class can then be correlated with the skills needed for developing assignments. During assignments and self-preparation, students can be given structured, daily opportunities to discuss and review skills learned.

### Job and Higher Education Readiness Skills

Job and college readiness skills training introduces students to the essential skills necessary to find and keep a job, and to apply for and attend higher education schools. Each student might build an individual job readiness portfolio, possibly including a résumé, job application, cover letter, job interview practice sheets, and other samples of the student's work that demonstrate job readiness.

Leadership development training introduces students to the essential skills needed to develop awareness of their circumstances in the context of the larger world, to participate in democratic decision making, and to have a positive impact on their own lives and the lives of others.

### Leadership Development Skills

Leadership training is most effective when it occurs in all aspects of the program. Opportunities for the development of leadership skills can be made available

through participation in program governance, community service projects, and through a variety of activities in the classroom and on the site.

## Educational Model

### Establishing Specific Educational Objectives

Prior to intake, it is helpful to establish specific educational objectives—specific statements about what students will be able to do upon completion of the program.

You may want to use the following questions as a guide in planning educational objectives.

#### Long-Term Skill Objectives

- What are our general skill objectives for the students (as workers and learners) by the end of the program?
- What qualities make a “ready IT worker”?
- What qualities make a “ready IT learner”?
- What will students be able to do?

Once you have established overall skill objectives, your teachers can develop appropriate short-term skill objectives and teaching strategies geared toward meeting these objectives.

#### Short-Term Skill Objectives

- What specific skills will students have at the end of a one- to two-month learning unit?
- What will students be able to do?
- How will these skills be assessed?

#### Teaching Strategies

- What strategies and methods will we use that will both teach and reinforce these educational objectives?

#### Evaluation and Documentation

- How will we determine whether educational objectives have been achieved?
- How will we document this ongoing evaluation?

You will be able to decide what is feasible based on the amount of time you have with your students, the number of students you have, the skill levels of the students, and so on. You might choose to establish as expectations only those goals that are realistic, based on the progress that can be made in one program cycle. Present your specific educational expectations to the students in the very beginning of the program, in order to set a tone of seriousness, high standards, and confidence.

#### Suggested Educational Expectations

- Demonstrated academic improvement in reading and writing in English, and in math.
- Minimum attendance requirement of 90 percent.
- Mastery of monthly or bimonthly academic competency requirements.
- Mastery of monthly or bimonthly vocational/IT competency requirements.
- Successful completion of job/college readiness competencies.
- Successful completion of leadership development competencies.
- Successful completion of individual educational objectives (objectives will vary depending on student skills and program goals): earn a certain number of credits, achieve IT certificate, pass apprenticeship examination.
- Demonstration of good work habits, attitude, and leadership skills in classroom and at worksite.
- Completion of exit examinations.

## Competency-Based Curriculum

It is recommended that the academic program be competency-based, keeping in mind that students will be working on various levels and have a wide range of needs. Short-term, easily attained benchmarks will help to keep the participants interested in learning by showing them that they are making progress on either a daily or weekly basis. These benchmarks can be outlined in a competency checklist. (Similar checklists can also be used for job development skills, career and life skills, and leadership skills.) Through these checklists, both students and teachers can track the student’s progress on a regular basis.

A competency-based curriculum enables Direction Employment programs to foster teacher creativity in instruction, boost student motivation, and improve program accountability. A competency-based curriculum is structured around a core of measurable or specific student learning objectives. These objectives define the intended outcomes or end result of instruction,

but not the means, the instructional method, or the materials. A competency-based curriculum thus offers teachers unlimited opportunities for innovative approaches to instruction, while holding them to a concrete set of expectations defined in terms of student outcomes.

A competency-based curriculum motivates students by giving them clear and frequent measures of their progress. By tackling and mastering a sequence for competencies, a student experiences regular and noticeable progress through the program. Students always know which objective they are working to achieve.

In a competency-based curriculum, each student progresses at her own rate, so the curriculum will take less time for some students than for others. Because a student can have all the time she needs to master each objective, she need never fail to reach an objective.

## Individual Learning Plans

An individual learning plan, also known as an individual education plan, is used by the teacher to provide the following for each student:

- a record of present academic level in reading and mathematics,
- short-term classroom objectives needed by the student to achieve proficiency in reading and mathematics,
- academic assessment to determine if the student has mastered these objectives, and
- documentation of assessment results.

## Developing Individual Learning Plans

After teachers have done a combination of standardized and individual testing in reading, writing, and math, they will have a fairly detailed picture of each student's skills and areas of need. Using competency checklists as a guide, teachers can identify the specific skills that individuals need to work on. An

individual learning plan enables teachers to outline the specific activities they would like each student to do during the course of the unit. Time should be incorporated into the daily schedule for students to work alone, or with assistance from teachers and tutors, on the assignments outlined.

## Plan Individual Learning in a Group Context

Individual learning activities can correspond to the overall goals of the group, but at the level appropriate for the student. For example, suppose the whole group has been practicing recognizing details in their reading, by working in groups to list the details about a character in a story they have just read. During independent learning time, students can supplement

this learning at their own pace: beginning readers are assigned to a chapter in an adult literacy reader of their choice that focuses on searching for detail, while GED students might work on this skill in specially selected sections of the "Interpreting Literature and the Arts" chapter of the GED workbook.

## Student Involvement in the Development of Learning Plans

Students can be involved in planning their individual learning plans. Students may be told the results of various initial assessments and may speak with the teacher about the skills they need to develop. It is helpful for students to be aware of both the skills on the competency checklists and the requirements

for successful program completion.

# Assessment

## Purpose of Assessment

Assessment is the process of gathering information about student learning, in order to make decisions about further actions. Assessment tools can be used for a variety of purposes—for instance, to help us

**Assessment is an integral part of a dynamic, "living" curriculum.**

- measure what students are learning as well as how well they are learning;
- understand how students learn;
- understand student interests and personal histories;
- help students to understand their own learning;
- evaluate the effectiveness of learning activities, curriculum materials, and overall program objectives; and
- summarize and document student learning.

## Initial Assessment

It is helpful to conduct an initial in-depth assessment of the students' needs, learning strengths, and weaknesses. The curriculum should be built around the information gathered in this assessment, using students' current academic levels as a starting point.

The first assessment should take place during initial intake. At this point, standardized tests

may be used, because they are efficient and give rough grade equivalent scores.

After a grade equivalence level has been established, teachers should plan to schedule a time, preferably during orientation, to meet with students individually to listen to them read and interview them about their academic histories and experiences with learning.

## Ongoing, Individualized Assessment

A participant's academic level can be determined in a variety of ways throughout the program cycle. Some standardized testing is useful initially, but all of a student's knowledge will not be discernible from these tests. Participants should be given opportunities to demonstrate their skills in a variety of ways:

to write about things they are interested in, to speak about their interests informally with a teacher and in groups, and to demonstrate their knowledge in activities. Participants may also assess themselves, which will help them understand and think critically about who they are and what they know.

## Program Assessment

Assessing the education component itself can help ensure that the program meets the needs of trainees. Staff can develop their own assessment process following the steps below.

### Determine the Purpose of the Evaluation

Decide for whom you are doing the evaluation. Are you doing it for yourselves, as a staff, so that you can honestly determine your strengths and weaknesses and better achieve your ends? Are you doing it for present and future funders, who will need quantitative results to

determine your eligibility for funding? Are you doing it for the board of directors, so that they can help you improve? Are you evaluating the program in such a way that you can satisfy the demands of all three?

### Determine the Format of Your Evaluation

Consider doing an evaluation that has both qualitative and quantitative elements.

Keep accurate records so that you can give solid statistical information, but be prepared to support the facts with explanations.

(For example, state that you graduated x number of students, but be prepared to explain why, what worked, what did not, and how you plan to improve next year.)

### Determine the Format of Your Evaluation

→ Programs may collect data to answer questions such as the following.

- How effective was the teaching and training? What additional skills do our instructors need?
- How closely did we stick to the model? How appropriate was it for our students? What were the problems and how can they be fixed?
- Did we recruit the right students? Were we able to meet their needs? How can we improve recruitment?
- Did we establish reasonable, achievable objectives? Did students learn what we wanted them to learn? If not, why not?
- Did we develop a comprehensive curriculum that encompassed skill objectives in a relevant and meaningful way? What was good about the curriculum? What needs to be changed?
- Was the classroom design conducive to discipline and learning? Was the worksite design conducive to discipline and learning? Did we have a manageable, simple, consistent schedule? How can it be improved?
- How effective were our academic assessment tools? Do we have an accurate sense of student achievement?

### Evaluate Throughout the Program Period

Gather information for your end-of-year evaluation throughout the program year. On a regular basis, assign staff to collecting data on, e.g., attendance, retention, termination, grade level improvement, and acquisition of GEDs or diplomas. Establish regular meetings with all staff to review data so that shortcomings can be acknowledged and addressed before they become crises.

In parallel, analysis of the group and individual experiences will be conducted, and feedback to the education methodologies and trainers will be provided on monthly basis. Reports of learning metrics, e.g. activity, learning flow, laziness etc. will be provided, and indexes for personal development will be introduced.

### Involve All Staff

It is recommended that all staff be involved in bimonthly evaluation sessions. Staff can be asked to review the program from the perspective of their own component as

well as others, and can address program-wide concerns. In addition, staff should be involved in evaluating the program at the end of the year.

### Involve Students

It is recommended that students, too, be asked to do both written and verbal evaluations of the program on a regular basis. Have alternating representatives of the student body sit in on bimonthly evaluation

sessions; have all students complete end-of-the-year questionnaires. Use student self-evaluations as part of your determination of progress.

## Graduation

While graduation requirements vary a great deal between local Direction Employment programs, it is important to establish your program's graduation requirements and make them clear to trainees up front.

It is recommended that a graduation ceremony be included at the end of each program cycle. During such an event, certificates of completion and achievement can be awarded, and outstanding performance in a variety of aspects of the program can be recognized. A Direction Employment graduation ceremony often serves as the first time in a young person's life when she is recognized in front of peers, friends, and family for completing something positive. The value of such recognition cannot be overestimated.



## Chapter 07

### Job Development

The leading indicator of Direction Employment program success is job placement, but the real measure of success is long-term employment and career growth for graduates. The trainees need a range of educational, job related, interpersonal, and self-supporting skills in order to achieve self-sufficiency. Most programs do all they can to ensure their graduates the greatest possibility for obtaining success.

It is important to establish a baseline understanding regarding the skills of trainees when they begin the program. The baseline is needed not to set limits on trainees, but to allow you to help them set challenging but realistic goals for their next step after DE and beyond.

The level of training possible in your program partly depends on the starting point of your trainees, but it also depends on the effectiveness of the program's training components. To place your trainees in viable jobs upon completion of the program and afford them the greatest opportunity for success, provide solid job training and good job opportunities upon completion. Pre-employment training, job and educational prospecting, interpersonal development, matching jobs leads with qualified candidates, identifying support systems and job placement follow-up are all critical to your strategy for placing young people and having them maintain and grow in their jobs, careers, and personal development.

### Pre-Employment Training

Pre-employment training is the beginning of the job placement process. It provides trainees with job counseling, practical skills, and methods for obtaining and retaining employment. It exposes them to employers'

expectations and proper work ethics. It may be a formal part of the classroom training curriculum, but it could also be a large part of the construction training component.

**The Pre-employment training is delivered by the Operational Coordinator/Case Manager.**

→ The significant elements of a pre-employment training curriculum are

- introduction to the world of work,
- job counseling,
- interviewing,
- application and résumé writing,
- job search techniques, and
- job retention techniques.

Many young people have never held a demanding job. If they are to be prepared for the rigors of long-term employment, they need to be taught what it takes to make it in today's marketplace.

The young people also have to be prepared for the potential hierarchical attitudes and

disrespect that they may face. This is at least a two-level process: controlling oneself in the face of perceived disrespect and knowing what systems are available to avoid or deal with harassment. Role playing, group discussion, written information, and speakers are all an important part of the trainees readiness.

### Job Prospecting

Prospecting for jobs and calling on employers is a critical element of job development.

When you consider the strengths and weaknesses of the young people to be placed and the fact that marketable skills, a solid work history and reliable transportation are prerequisites for employment, the task of job prospecting becomes one of great magnitude. To the greatest extent possible, employment should offer sensitive management as well as further training and advancement possibilities, job security, and additional benefits.

It is recommended that job leads be developed primarily by the Project Manager, but also by any other Program Staff who has good connections with employers in high technology industry. The Direction Employment units search for commitments from business managers and owners to reserve appropriate front-end-developers jobs for graduates can doubly benefit the program. Even if jobs are not immediately reserved, these relationships can lead to opportunities for collaboration that can eventually lead to graduate employment.



## The Executive Role

The director, or Project Coordinator, is directly involved in job prospecting and development. They can use the contacts they have developed in the community to market the program, gain the interest of employers, and get commitments for job opportunities. With the director leading and coordinating the effort, the construction manager can utilize his contacts for jobs in the construction industry. Advisory and board members, through networking in their professional and social affiliations, and through contact with potential employers, can obtain commitments for jobs from company executives and business owners.

The ability to develop jobs from the top down is vitally important. Doing so helps insure that the young person is given a real opportunity to succeed. If the business owner or vice president in charge of personnel commits jobs and instructs employees to help make it work, the business has to some extent “bought into the program,” creating an atmosphere conducive to success. In post-placement follow-up, the Youthbuild follow-up person works directly with someone within the business who is interested in the welfare of the young person. Through a team effort, the potential for success is maximized.

## The Role of the Project Coordinator as a Job Developer

The job developer often serves as the primary person who does formal pre-employment training. It is her responsibility to coordinate the effort to provide trainees with requisite job acquisition and maintenance skills. In working with the academic, construction, and leadership trainers, the job developer tracks the trainee’s academic skills and leadership progress as they relate to potential job placement.

The job developer also generates job leads and funnels leads from the director and other executives to graduates. Her knowledge of the skills and abilities of each trainee and the job opportunities that are available makes her uniquely positioned to place graduates based on all available information. For a list of the tasks involved in this function, see Counselor/ Job Developer job description on page 18.

If the job developer is designated as the

person to do post-graduation follow up, she has the task of maintaining frequent, regular contact with the graduate and the company or business contact. The purpose of this contact is to get information on the employment status of the graduate and to get the employer’s and the young person’s perspectives on how things are going. The job developer may well have to intervene if there are misunderstandings or conflicts. The sooner intervention takes place, the more likely the chance of averting the young person quitting or being dismissed. Placement follow-up is vital to job retention. The young person needs someone to provide encouragement, support, and help in overcoming obstacles that will arise as she attempts to launch her career. Follow-up also provides the basis for tracking the growth and status of graduates and developing enduring relationships with employers.

## Job Opportunities

It is important that employers understand the skills and experience level of Youthbuild graduates. Employers can expect entry-level skills, good work habits, a good attitude, a desire to learn, and young people who will not be a liability to their concern. Developing rapport with potential employers and getting them interested in your program will help smooth the way for your graduates to enter a job situation that is sensitive to their growth and personal needs.

Good job opportunities are like gold. They become the lifeblood of a program and provide great inspiration and motivation to current and future trainees. Good performance by one graduate can lead to a number of job opportunities for others.

The main aim of the Job Prospecting Method is to secure further realization of the Direction Employment trainees, by building partnerships and potential for early enrollment in real work process. The work will be organized around 4 main set of activities:

- Preparing log for potential employers as well as set of criteria for selection as a potential employer, e.g. active participation in the IT market, internal good governance and inclusion policy, existing internship / scholarship programs, opportunity to participate in the daily work of the company etc. Participation of business breakfasts, and other match-making events
- Presentation and business pitches – presenting the 4.0 DE training program.  
Involving 4.0 DE ambassadors (see WP2)
- Maintaining communication flow with potential employers.

**Additionally, the freelance opportunities will be explored and presented to the Direction Employment trainees.**

## Internships

One short-term educational opportunity that a program may develop for its trainees is the internship. Internships provide on-the-job training for young people who, after six to nine months in the program, are placed with private contractors, city agencies or businesses as subsidized trainees. The program pays the intern’s salary so there is no risk to the employer. The intern is still considered a full-time Youthbuild trainee, continuing his academic requirement. This is a great opportunity for the young person to test his job skills in the private sector and be exposed to the type of work he may be interested in doing in the future. Close assessment by the job developer will help in shoring up the weaknesses and highlighting the strengths of the trainee.

Internships can work well with developers and contractors who are trying to place neighborhood residents with subcontractors. It gives them an opportunity to provide the subcontractor a trainee at no cost. If the young person does well during the internship period, he has a good chance of being hired by the subcontractor.

## Colleges and Universities

For those of your graduates who have excelled in the program, entrance into a college or university may be a viable option to further their education. Visits to campuses, arranged through school councils and fraternal organizations, give the prospective student a chance to see and hear what it will take for her to complete a college education. Identify support services of various kinds. If possible, identify a person who agrees to act as a mentor for Youthbuild graduates. The same way a manager's or owner's commitment to the program improves the graduates' chances of job retention, a dean's or counselor's commitment can improve the graduates' chances of degree completion. Bonner scholarships are available at 22 residential colleges throughout the U.S., targeted at students who have performed community service and will continue to commit ten hours a week in college to community service.

## Volunteerism

One of the more important tasks your program may choose is encouraging and getting young people involved in volunteer work. Volunteer work benefits trainees by offering them leadership development, community service, personal development, a means to new specific skills, a pre-employment opportunity, job references, and networking. It is important that the community service begun during the program is recognized as both assisting the community and a possible job benefit. Encourage your staff to have presentations and group discussion around these kind of opportunities.

## Conclusion

The suggestions, guidelines, and topics mentioned are by no means intended to be an exhaustive list of issues that may be encountered in operating a Direction Employment program. Operating a Direction Employment program is a multidimensional and challenging endeavor. It requires input from staff, participants, and outside resources to achieve acceptable results.

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