



Schweizerische Eidgenossenschaft
 Confédération suisse
 Confederazione Svizzera
 Confederaziun svizra

Embassy of Switzerland in Mozambique

medicorfoundation
 Liechtenstein

COOPERATIVE GROUP APPROACH

A
STEP-BY-STEP
 MANUAL



Accessible, flexible, and inclusive training linked to employment



HELVETAS

Helvetas is a politically and denominationally neutral development organisation. In Switzerland, Helvetas is structured as an association of 100,000 members and donors and is supported by twelve regional volunteer groups.

Helvetas

Authors:

Helvetas project teams of HOJE, CG-MOZ and CAP-CD:
Adrien Rebord, Inês Domingos, Safinia Aiuba, Tome Alberto,
Issa Ali, Gilda Inteca, Bernardeth Alua, Graça Ricardo

Contributors:

Mety Gondola – State Secretary of Nampula
Katharina Walker – Helvetas

Pictures: Amir Amido Zamane

Design: Envinion

Nampula/Bern
September 2021

Cooperative Group Approach

Accessible, flexible, and inclusive training linked to employment

Table of Contents

List of Abbreviations.....	5
Foreword.....	6
Acknowledgements.....	7
Introduction.....	8
Context.....	8
Youth in Mozambique.....	9
Rationale: upgrading informal mechanisms.....	10
Cooperative Group Approach.....	11
The actors of the Cooperative Group Approach.....	14
The Cooperative Group process.....	18
Main steps of Cooperative Groups.....	19
Cooperative Group – the steps in detail.....	19
Features of the approach.....	29
Accessibility.....	29
Flexibility.....	29
Inclusion.....	30
Link to employment.....	31
Quality control: linking formal and non-formal education systems.....	32
Interview with Mety Gondola, State Secretary of Nampula.....	34
Implementation in fragile context.....	37
Key takeaways.....	40

List of Abbreviations

CAP-CD	Capacities for Cabo Delgado Project
CG	Cooperative Groups
CGA	Cooperative Group Approach
CG-MOZ	Cooperative Groups in Mozambique Project
DPE	Provincial Directorate of Education
Helvetas	Helvetas Swiss Intercooperation
HOJE	Habilidades mais Oportunidades resulta em Jovem com Emprego - Project
IDP	Internally Displaced Person
ILO	International Labor Organization
OGA	Opportunity Group Approach
PIREP	Programa Integrado da Reforma da Educacao Profissional
SDC	Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation
SDEJT	District Service for Education, Youth and Technology
TVET	Technical and Vocational Education and Training
VSD	Vocational Skills Development

Foreword

Youth face many challenges in their introduction into the world or work such as little literacy preventing them from accessing formal educational institutions, poor economic situation of young heads of families, or young women who interrupted their studies after an early marriage. If economic and social barriers are mostly pointed out as main reasons for school dropouts, physical distance to the training place is too often neglected in developing training models. This situation is often aggravated in times of crisis like the recent COVID-19 pandemic.

Helvetas introduced the Grupos Cooperativos or Cooperative Group Approach (CGA) in the HOJE project in Mozambique. It is a further development and adaption to the context of Mozambique of the Opportunity Group Approach (OGA). The approach proved to be very successful in training and empowering disadvantaged young people in rural, semi-urban and urban areas in a process of learning by doing. The main characteristics are its accessibility, flexibility, and inclusiveness.

The Cooperative Group Approach responds perfectly to times of crisis when young people do not have access to formal training schemes. It provides them with skills, knowledge and, at the same time, allows them to continue or start an income-earning activity, keeping them away from poverty trap and social problems. The approach allows youth to join a trade, connect with peers and an experienced master, benefit from life skills training, learn and share technical competencies, experience real work-related challenges with adequate supervision, develop entrepreneurial techniques, and relate them to practical market actions: customers, material, equipment, production, savings, and investment.

The approach allows committed youth to access training within their community without moving long distances, less than 30 minutes from their home. It proposes them to choose a trade that they can learn in their own neighborhood or in nearby communities. In case of satisfactory performance, they remain connected to their training provider and thereby strengthen the competitiveness of its micro-business. Alternatively, they can decide to launch their own small business activity with or without training peers.

Small entrepreneurs and local government institutions expressed their wish to carry the approach forward and support young people in their insertion in the job market. Therefore, we have developed this step-by-step manual for any other institution, organization, or initiative. We are confident that it will provide clear, concise, and practical guidance to those interested in using the Cooperative Groups Approach to support the insertion of young people into employment and self-employment.

Ines Domingos

Manager of HOJE Project & Advisor for Gender and Social Equity
Helvetas Swiss Intercooperation

Acknowledgements

The manual's primary source is the Opportunity Group Approach¹ Manual developed by Mimoza Mirashi and Katharina Walker in 2018, which was inspired by the LearnNet – The Learning Network Approach by Edda Grunwald, Marian Nell, and Janet Shapiro developed in 2004 and financed BMZ/GTZ².

The authors are especially grateful to the SDC Education Fund: Innovation meets Education, for unlocking a COVID-19 window, proposing a fast response to a challenging situation, and providing the opportunity to demonstrate once again that crisis is a breeding ground for innovation.

They are also thankful to the Medicor Foundation for its continuous support to the HOJE project which initiated the approach and scaled it up through co-funded CG-MOZ during the 2020 pandemic.

This manual has been produced by the project staff of **HOJE, Cooperative Groups in Mozambique Project** (CG-MOZ) and **Capacities for Cabo Delgado Project** (CAP-CD). It includes testimonies of the local authorities, local training providers and youth in Cuamba, Malema, Ribaué and Nampula.

A special thank you goes to the HOJE, CG-MOZ and CAP-CD project partners, public and private, who tested the approach and provided regular feedback to the project team and through various workshops. Their insights in different context and trades will serve for future initiatives in supporting young people. This would not have been possible without their dedication to accompany youth into employment and self-employment, using their working places as resources to support training and production.

¹ <https://www.helvetas.org/en/switzerland/what-we-do/our-topics/youth>

² Edda Grunwald, M. S. (2004). LearnNet - The Learning Network Approach. GTZ. GIZ. (n.d.). <https://www.giz.de/expertise>. Retrieved from The learning networks approach (Learn-Net): <https://www.giz.de/expertise/html/12752.html>

Introduction

Helvetas has been active in Mozambique since 1979 and currently implements several projects on vocational skills development (VSD), water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH), market systems development in agriculture, and governance. These initiatives focus on the three northern provinces of Cabo Delgado, Nampula and Niassa. The following three VSD projects utilize the Cooperative Group Approach.

HOJE project started in 2017 with the aim to answer to the problem of youth unemployment, preparing young people aged 15 to 35 to the world of work through short-term courses. This leads to employment and income of young people.



In 2020, COVID-19 outbreak had as main consequences the closure of the schools reinforcing the relevance of the Cooperative Group Approach launched under HOJE. The approach was scaled up with CG-MOZ, a project co-financed by SDC Education Fund: Innovation meets Education. Near their home, youth benefit from the knowledge and experience of qualified professionals with a successful business, but also of their social networks, their access to clients and potential markets allowing them to find employment or viable self-employment opportunities.

In 2021, Helvetas was awarded by UNICEF the CAP-CD project that aims at contributing to the development of life skills for adolescents in three districts of the Province. It supports young people (75% Internally Displaced People) in an emergency context resulting from armed attacks.

Context

Mozambique's economy showed since 2016 a slowdown, a worsening of the government's fiscal position, and raising debt levels. The country continues to rely on the extractive industry. Other sectors are unable to generate a sufficient volume of jobs and the agriculture sector remains the largest employer, generating 75% of employment but accounting for only about 20% of GDP.

The Government of Mozambique currently implements a program of TVET reform, the Programa Integrado da Reforma da Educacao Profissional (PIREP), to address the lack of skills in the national workforce. However, as about two-thirds of the Mozambican population of more than 31 million live and work in rural areas, complementary non-formal mechanisms are required to ensure accessible and inclusive training offers. To bridge this gap, the Cooperative Group Approach was implemented in Nampula, the most populous province in Mozambique, Niassa and Cabo Delgado provinces³.

³ <https://www.portaldogoverno.gov.mz/>



Youth in Mozambique

The VSD projects implemented by Helvetas in Northern Mozambique respond to government's objectives to provide accessible education in line with market needs. The International Labor Organization (ILO) estimates that 43% of the 15 to 24-year-old labor force is unemployed, twice as high as the general unemployment⁴. Those particularly affected are youth in the low-skilled low-pay labor market segment.

The CG-MOZ project surveyed 545 trainees, leading to valuable information to understand the profile and the needs of youths attending Cooperative Groups training.⁵ Their median age is 20 y.o. and 78% are school dropouts, mainly due to economic reasons (85%) or distance from the school (8%). Only 7% of these live in a home made of cement, 69% sleep under a straw roof and only 4% have direct access to water (75% have electricity and 64% have toilets). Despite their evident poverty, 59% of them have a mobile phone and even 18% have a smartphone demonstrating the potential of digital learning. 98% of the trainees come to the training place on foot as they need less than 30 min (78%) or less than one hour (17%) confirming the accessibility of Cooperative Group Approach.

⁴ <https://www.ilo.org/emppolicy/countries/mozambique/lang--en/index.htm>
⁵ <https://kobo.humanitarianresponse.info/>



Rationale: upgrading informal mechanisms

The Cooperative Group Approach is one of many examples of using traditional skills transfer mechanisms and upgrading them in coordination with local actors. The approach's rationale is based on *“the opportunities offered by informal apprenticeship systems for improving skill provision in the informal economy to offer young people ways to more productive and decent jobs.”*⁶

By using the key principles of dual training, it relies on private actors such as SMEs, artisans or associations, tapping into their know-how and trying to build on existing training models (see box 1). Fostering improvements from within the current system is generally the preferred option. It intends to upgrade and structure these informal apprenticeships without making them too heavy and administrative. As such, the Cooperative Group Approach is a compelling non-formal alternative for the youths who cannot access formal vocational skills training. Too old to qualify for basic education, having missed the entry into self- or wage employment they risk becoming a lost generation beyond the COVID-19-crisis.

INFORMAL APPRENTICESHIP

Informal apprenticeship is an important training system in many urban and rural informal economies. It is based on a training agreement between an apprentice and a master craftsperson. In this agreement, which may be written or oral, the master craftsperson commits to training the apprentice in all the skills relevant to his or her trade, while the apprentice commits to contributing productively to the work of the business. Training is integrated into the production process and apprentices learn by working alongside the experienced craftsperson. While formal apprenticeship is based on training policies and legislation, agreements in informal apprenticeship are embedded in local culture and traditions, with the incentives to participate on both sides rooted in the society's norms and customs [ILO, Policy Brief].

⁶ ILO. (2011). Upgrading informal apprenticeship systems, Skills for employment - Policy Brief. Geneva: ILO

Cooperative Group Approach

The Cooperative Group Approach, inspired by the opportunity group approach⁷, shares few essential benefits directly observed in Mozambique:



It is ideal for **trade diversification and specialization**, creating more job opportunities and enhancing competitiveness. In Northern Mozambique, most of the formal training providers offer the same types of training in already saturated professions.



It facilitates **access to vulnerable groups**, in particular for the ones with low education that cannot enter the formal system, for those whom a daily income-generating activity is of vital need, and the rural youth living too far from a formal training center.



It provides **market-oriented on-the-job training**, allowing highly skilled artisans and micro-enterprises to share years of practice with youth of their community, in a structured manner.

The carpenter story: from self-business to a six-associates company

A young carpenter in Ribaue was self-employed. After learning on-the-job from a craftsman, he was working on his own for few years with limited tools. It was hard work for him to make only one bed in three weeks or one door in four days. Sawing and sanding are particularly tiring activities.

Forming a Cooperative Group, he trained younger peers for four months and quickly realized a huge increase in its production translating into financial benefits. He re-invested the training fees into equipment. The most experienced trainees specialized in measuring and cutting while the younger one oversaw the sanding.

After six months, they all decided to stay together, being able to produce one bed or three doors per week. Each associate also participates in sales, trying to get new clients from the neighbourhood. While the initial trainer keeps a small margin, the money earned is then shared equally among the group members.



⁷ <https://www.youthpower.org/sites/default/files/YouthPower/files/resources/Opportunity%20Group%20Manual.pdf>

Cooperative Groups have a strong market-orientation and use work-based learning⁸. An artisan or a small business act as training provider for the youth of its community and train them on-the-job in a non-formal setting. The training courses last six months: theoretical and practical training with the trainer for four months followed by a two-month internship with the same trainer or in another workshop, or the start of the income-generating activity.

Cooperative Groups empower local authorities in a facilitating role to link unemployed youth “staying at home” with local business having a long-standing reputation in the region. Another key feature of the model is the importance given to community bonds. Social networks play an important role for employment and entrepreneurship anywhere in the world, but they are at the heart of Cooperative Group Approach.



Labor-market insertion does not only depend on the skills and behavior of youths but also on their resources and the support from the people they can access. Social capital is essential in Mozambique. Therefore, youth will strongly rely on trainers' and companies' linkages to become better-connected individuals. Young people keep being linked to their trainer benefiting from a continuous expertise and often a small income for their work. This also gives more flexibility to the trainer who can take more important orders and be recognized by the community as providing an essential social service. It results in a small cooperative around the trainer who strengthens a position in the market and benefits from additional resources. Youth and their families often advertise for the trainer's business and help to get new clients in the neighborhood.

In the context of COVID-19, the cooperative aspect increased with new needs. Participants committed to support each other's families in these difficult times and chose a “Godmother/Godfather” from the neighborhood for career advice and care. This life coach does not only guide youth in professional life and provides guidance regarding socio-professional behavior and communication; it also delivers basic life skills regarding civic engagement. Thus, youth are stimulated to get involved in their neighborhood's development projects and support community members who might need additional support during or after the crisis.

⁸ <https://cte.ed.gov/wbltoolkit/>



Additional benefits include:



The low number of youth (5) ensures a proper follow-up by the trainer and high training quality. Although resource-intensive for monitoring, the diversification and decentralization of the training increase insertion rates.



Community bonds get strengthened, building on social networks, and reinforcing civic engagement.



The trainer is also a mentor, a life coach and the first employer or business partner of the youth. Capacity building of training providers in life skills and entrepreneurship help them in managing their business but also make them responsible for the future steps of their trainees.



Youth benefit from the resources of the training provider (network, tools, equipment, infrastructure) who often open them their workshops after the training to allow young people to develop their own activity.

The actors of the Cooperative Group Approach

Youth

The primary stakeholders, i.e. the people who will directly benefit from the interventions, are young Mozambican women and men aged from 15 – 35 who are not in education, employment and training (NEETs). Most youth in the Northern Mozambique could be considered as disadvantaged as almost $\frac{3}{4}$ of the people older than 15 years are without complete primary education, meaning less than 5 years of general schooling and only 0.2 % with technical education. As women are most affected by scarce education, training and employment, the approach aims to achieve that of all (self)-employed youth, 40% are women.

The selection criteria are the following:



Selection criteria for youth

Be Mozambican between the ages of 15 and 35

Come from a family with no or low income

Live in the locality where the project takes place

Not attending any course or educational establishment (being out of school)

Not benefiting from a program like those developed by Helvetas

Be interested in acquiring or increasing skills and committed to attend the training in its entirety

Be vulnerable: young heads of household, single women and widows, young orphans, early motherhood/paternity

Agree to contribute towards their training (women 5% and men 10% of the training fees)

To ensure a full completion of the training and related insertion, the most serious and motivated youth are selected to sign an agreement with training providers who will be remunerated based on the results.

Training providers

The training providers are private actors of different sizes such as artisans, SMEs or a leading company. To group some of them in associations has also shown good results. The criteria for selecting trainers of Cooperative Groups are:



Criteria for selecting non-formal training provider

5-years of experience in the trade

Adapted infrastructure and equipment to train 5 youth

Good reputation within the community

Motivation to transmit knowledge to young people

Experience in training others

Relationships established in the industry for job placement

Important demand (ex. customer flow) to ensure on-the-job training

Their interest is not necessarily financial as the amount paid to them covers only what is required (equipment, time, material) for the training. But other benefits have emerged during feedback workshops and can be instrumental to engage new training providers:

- Youth bring new ideas such as digital knowledge, helping artisans to boost their marketing and sales;
- Youth often bring more clients, either from their social networks or by pro-actively helping with sales;
- More people translates into more workforce and inputs, transforming into a business booster: faster manufacturing, increased production, easier handling, permanent opening, more free time for the owner;
- Contributing to youth education increases the reputation of the artisan, bringing own satisfaction but also visibility;
- As they contribute to youth development, micro-businesses often receive additional orders from local authorities (public work) or from the community.

Training providers were satisfied with the model and pro-actively suggested to group in associations under a legal form with local leadership. Cooperation between businesses that offer trainings improves knowledge transfer and adoption of new technologies but also facilitate career guidance (local authorities can propose a full set of professions) and job placement (a business might place one of the trainees in another business of the association).

Furthermore, such collaboration can help these enterprises to access bigger contracts, reduce seasonality, find more qualified employees, benefit from diverse equipment, share risks and have more weight towards public actors or policy makers. All of these supporting their competitiveness.



INCREASED OPENING HOURS FOR HAIRDRESSER AND BEAUTY SALON

In Nampula, one single beauty salon did not have enough customer flow to properly train five youth. Four salons hence decided to join forces in an association, the trainees rotating between them according to the demand.

Trainees started with simple tasks (washing, cleaning) before performing more complex activities. One of the key benefits observed by the training providers was to be able to attend a lot more clients when needed (weekend and evenings). Also, they were not bored when there was no customer (mornings and afternoons) as they were delivering the theoretical part of the course.

After the training, owners of beauty salon allowed the trainees to come for work during peak hours and called them on request when there we a lot of clients or for a special occasion (ex. preparation for a wedding). The owner was keeping 40% of the revenue and the trainees the remaining amount.



Local authorities

To ensure local ownership and set the basis for future scaling up and institutionalization, the presentation of the project to government actors at various levels (Provincial, District, Administrative Post and Locality) is of crucial importance. The lower levels can provide key field information as they have direct and regular contacts with the community and the artisans. In Mozambique, neighborhood secretary (*secretario de barrio*) played a crucial role though their knowledge of the labor market at micro-level. Governmental actors' involvement makes the innovative model credible and non-formal training more attractive. Concluding, enhancing the quality and the reputation of informal apprenticeship go together.



The Cooperative Group process

The choice of the Cooperative Group process in the Mozambican context is driven by an important need for job diversification and specialization that formal educational institutions are not able to offer (supply side) but also by the limitations for youth with low education (below grade 7), economic difficulties or distance to join the formal vocational skills training (demand side).

The starting point of the approach is to identify a qualified professional with a successful business, showing interest in training and the willingness to expand the activity. After developing a simple training framework, this skilled person welcomes five youths and trains them on-the-job during few months considering the future needs in terms of production. While teaching them a specific way of working according to the

VSD IN TIMES OF COVID-19

From a COVID-19 contamination risk perspective, the groups of five people can be organized locally, and there is almost no need for travelling. The approach allows for neighbourhood training taking advantage of social structures and building on their support system. The courses themselves can be organized in a way that ensures social distancing. Disinfection can be assured and, in case of one participant getting sick, a relatively small group is affected and can be isolated. Messaging about COVID-19 and appropriate behaviour are included in the curriculum.

requirement of the company, the entrepreneur also benefits from additional labor at reduced cost and a small payment (by the project) for the time spent. In exchange, stipend or meals might be given to youth by the company which is essential for the disadvantaged ones who are relying on schools for their daily meal.

After the training, graduates can be recruited by the company, become an associate, or be placed in a connected enterprise. The scheme is adapted to occupations that need practical teaching methods and that aim at disadvantaged women and men. It is possible to include newly identified occupations very rapidly as it is administratively simple.

Main steps of Cooperative Groups

The graphic below illustrates the main steps in the construction of Cooperative Groups.



Cooperative Group – the steps in detail

For the creation of Cooperative Groups in a given community, a Rapid Market Appraisal⁹ is first carried out to:

- Recognize existing skills available;
- Assess the skills gap to be developed;
- Identify potential training providers;
- Survey existing employment, entrepreneurship, and financial support services.

⁹ <https://beamexchange.org/resources/192/>

Based on the of the Rapid Market Appraisal's results, Cooperative Groups are implemented as follows:

1 Presentation to public and institutional actors at various levels

To ensure involvement of all stakeholders, three main steps are generally used:

- Elaborate a letter and leaflets describing the Cooperative Group Approach to be shared and endorsed by Institutional actors at higher level;
- Meet with Government Institutional actors to coordinate actions for the implementation of Cooperative Groups;
- Request support from government actors at local level (Administrative Post, Neighborhood secretary) to identify reputable artisans and vulnerable youth to include them in the selection.



Tips

- The involvement of government actors generates more commitment from the artisans to become training providers and more trust from the youth and their families.
- During the whole training process, it is important to maintain contact with government actors to exchange relevant information.

2 Selection of artisans to become training providers

As formal training providers are not always available in the specific target regions, artisans and small businesses often represent the best set of market-oriented competencies. To identify and select them, context knowledge from local authorities is of great help:

- Share with local government actors the criteria for selecting non-formal training providers;
- Request local government actors for a list of artisans or small businesses matching the criteria;
- Visit the workshops of the potential training providers, verify the data presented for validation and select those that respond to the selection criteria required by the project;
- Meet with training providers to present the approach: responsibilities of the training provider, criteria for selecting young people and result-based payment method.



Tips

- The final selection of training providers is made by the project team based on assessment grid.
- To engage private actors, a list of arguments to convince them to participate has been created based on the tools developed by DC dVET¹⁰ and Work-Based Learning Toolkit.¹¹



The tailor story: from irregular revenue to public orders

An experienced tailor in Malema had a very good reputation in his community due to high-quality manufacturing. He was running a small workshop with three different sewing for various types of work. Sometimes, a young woman was coming to help him, but she was never available when he had a lot of orders, as demand was varying a lot from a week to another. He then had to subcontract part of the production to another tailor, but the quality was not always satisfactory.

Local authorities recommended him as training provider and five young women started the training. Not only was he proud to have been chosen but very happy to transmit his taste for quality work to vulnerable youth.

After the training, the five women gathered money from their families and bought one sewing machine that they shared waiting to have enough money for their own. As they all live less than five minutes walking distance from each other's, some use it in the morning and other in the evening. They promote their own creation through Whatsapp and Facebook.

The trainer regularly subcontracts them for part of his production as he knows they deliver the expected quality: *"I just accepted to make 100 uniforms for the local schools. The municipality asked it to me as they know I am empowering young women. Before, I would have said that it is too much work but now it keeps the six of us busy for one month!"*

¹⁰ <https://www.dcdualvet.org/en/topics-experiences/engaging-the-business-sector/>

¹¹ <https://cte.ed.gov/wbltoolkit/engaging.html>

3**Selection of youth**

Local authorities and community leaders lead the process to mobilize and select youth and thereby guarantee that vulnerable groups are reached following the criteria of the project. Involvement of training providers in the selection is crucial to ensure that youth correspond to employers needs and expectations. Training providers can also propose interested youth from their neighborhood willing to get trained:



The project shared with training providers communication tools and presentation of the approach so that youth passing by the workshop are aware of this training opportunity.

Share the selection criteria for youth already defined by the project with the potential training providers and local government actors (Head of Administrative Post/Neighborhood Secretary/Associations);

- Organize, promote and conduct awareness campaigns through local media (ex. radio), word of mouth, leaflet and community networks;
- Request local government actors and potential training providers to mobilize youth;
- Request local government actors and potential training providers to hold meetings with young people to explain the approach, present the learning opportunity, the skills that are on offer and draw a list of interested young people;
- Request local government actors to share the list of youth with the project team for data verification and validation;
- Meet with young people in the workshops of potential training providers to verify their provenance through an oral questionnaire: how did you find out about this opportunity? Are you a relative of the training provider? Are you a student and what is your motivation?

**Tips**

- Training works best when the trainer takes an active role in selecting the youth. However, any conflict of interest must be avoided, for example that the selected youth is a relative of the training provider.
- Youth should live near the training provider's workshop to facilitate their involvement.

4**Training planning**

The training is developed in collaboration with the training provider taking into accounts his or her capabilities and resources. Project staff or a formal training institute can support the process:

- In coordination with the training provider define the training needs and objectives as well as the schedule, workload, location of training, location of internship, follow-up of young people during and after training;
- Identify the activities that the training provider develops and align them in a sequenced and structured way for the 6 months;
- Support the training provider in the design of the curriculum and program content;
- Present the Result-Based Service Provision Contract (cf. box on results-based financing on page 24):
 - Establish the contract according to the number of young people containing clauses on the responsibilities of the training providers and the project, result-based payment modality, duration of the contract and attach the curriculum with the program content;
 - Meet with the training provider to carefully explain the contract;
 - Sign the contract between project team and training provider.

**Tips**

- Training should only begin after the contract has been signed.

5 Start of Training

Capacity development of training providers is essential, in particular regarding life skills, pedagogical skills, mentoring and entrepreneurship. These capacity building activities can be done before or during the training.

- Build capacities of training providers with a 2-day pedagogical training aimed at giving them the basis to follow the curriculum, to plan the day's activities and to assist the young people so that everyone learns;
- Survey youth in training with the Kobotoolbox tool for creating the baseline¹²;
- Monitor the start of the training (number of young people, terms of commitment, completion of attendance lists, monitoring of curriculum, feedback from trainees regarding the training provider's performance);
- Pay the first instalment payment after two weeks of training to the training provider;
- Organize the life skills training of the youth (2 days) with the aim of providing them with socio-professional competencies, health and safety at work, proactivity, and a vision for the future.



Tips

- Life skills, pedagogical skills and entrepreneurship training can be conducted by a technician from a formal training institute or by an external expert.

6 Training delivery

During the training the project team should:

- Monitor the training sessions in person and sometimes by telephone (timetable compliance, dedication and commitment of the young people, completion of attendance lists, monitoring of the curriculum, operation of equipment or tools);
- Facilitate the evaluation of the youths' competencies and commitment of the training provider after 3 months to verify the quality of the training. This evaluation is generally conducted by a technician from the formal training institute;
- Support the training providers completing the evaluation sheet and allocating the young people in an internship lasting 2 months. The internship can take place with the same training provider intensifying the practice and giving specific activities or with other craftsmen in the region;
- Organize the entrepreneurship training of the young people and training providers. A 2-days training has the objective to learn how to create and manage a business, i.e. identify business opportunities, manage costs, and prepare a business plan;

¹² <https://www.kobotoolbox.org/>

- Survey the satisfaction of the youth with the training after five months in the training process;
- Pay the second instalment after completion of the internship to the training provider.



Tips

- In the monitoring process some surprise visits should be conducted to obtain real data from youth and training providers.
- If skill gaps are found during the evaluation of some youths' performance, the training should be extended for these trainees for an additional month to reach the desired level.
- Depending on their capacities and experience with the approach, local authorities, associations, or formal training centers related to the program can take part of the monitoring responsibilities.

7 Labor market insertion

The advantage of the Cooperative Group Approach is to reunite youth to facilitate their insertion. However, it is not limited to it and it can take various forms:

- 1. Cooperative Group with or without the training provider (cf. story of the carpenter):** working jointly create relationships among the trainees and with the trainer. All learn from each other, get motivated to form groups and often decide to continue working together after the training, defining a financial scheme so that all members can get some income.
- 2. Self-employment linked (or not) with the training provider (cf. story of the tailor):** working with the training provider's machinery or equipment or getting subcontracted part of the production is the most common form. This encourages continuity of coaching and requires agreements on fees for use of materials. While continuing working, youth try to find financial support services within the family to start its own activity.
- 3. Employment in the place of training (cf. the story of the mason):** absorption of the youth by the training provider: written agreement formalizing absorption with duration and fees established between the training provider and the young person;



- 4. Employment in another business (cf. story of the room attendant):** if they cannot hire themselves, training providers should find other businesses (in the same field) within their network who can recruit youth during the probation period: written agreement formalizing absorption with duration and fees established between the training provider and the young person.

The payment of the third instalment is only made two months after the youth has been inserted in the market, hence eight months after the start of the training (four months training, two months internship and two months employed).



Tips

- The means of verification for market insertion include a written contract signed between the parties involved (youth and training provider) and monitoring visits to the workshop where the young person is operating;
- Insertion can take more time depending on the case. The long-term commitment of the training providers to employ or place the graduates is important. It can translate into an agreement with the youth to continue the mentoring process.



The room attendant story: difficulties to find qualified employees in rural areas

If you travel to Cuamba in the Niassa Province, you will be very surprised to find a hotel with excellent infrastructure in such remote area. The owner is proud of its newly opened unit but insists that the quality of service is more important for customers: *“Employees from NGOs, from the Government or businessmen regularly travel to our area. But if you want qualified staff here, you must train them yourself. The nearest tourism school is on the coast (8h - 530 km) and none of the graduates wants to come to our city. And even if they would, they have not been trained with enough practice.”*

Five vulnerable youth have been trained in both room attendant and waiting staff. They proudly prepare the rooms, the breakfast and take care of the laundry and public areas. Always smiling, they directly saw the benefits: *“Since I started the training, I could bring some money home every week. And I get meals in the restaurant. There is so much to learn for us in a hotel. I started helping in the kitchen to prepare the breakfast”.*

The owner could only keep the two best trainees but had no difficulties to find jobs for the others in the other hotels of the city: *“We all know each other, and all have the same difficulty to find good employees. They were happy to get already trained staff. My hotel is becoming the training school of the region!”*

8

End of training

- Prepare the logistics for a graduation fair fifteen days after the end of the training;
- Advertise the fair through the local media (radio);
- Request local authorities, training providers, youth, community members, and people of interest (local small entrepreneurs) to participate in the fair;
- Exhibit the work done by the trainees (ex. during internship period);
- Distribute the Declaration of recognition and participation to young people and training providers during the fair.



Cooperative Group members proudly show their Declaration of recognition and their work made during the internship at the graduation fair

Features of the approach

The approach is aligned with SDC Education Strategy¹³ which strives towards '*equal opportunities for all to access and complete relevant quality education that fosters social, economic and political participation*.' At this stage, the projects contribute to at the micro level thanks to effective implementation and provision of quality education. Promoting the approaches also impacts policy frameworks and institutionalization of non-formal training models at the macro level.

Accessibility

In Northern Mozambique, the recent reform led to the closure of many training centers in rural area, creating a new obstacle for rural youth to access education. There are important differences between urban (peri-urban) and rural areas in terms of competencies needed and available infrastructure, but the Cooperative Group Approach is adaptive to most of the trades and ensures that everyone has access to organized learning. Improved and effective informal apprenticeship systems are cost-effective to expand the skills base of local economies. It reaches learners where they live, ensuring that access is not hindered by distance, financial or social restrictions.



Flexibility

Geographical dispersion also helps to diversify trades and facilitate insertion. It contributes to job innovation and specialization, hence contributing to boosting the micro-economy, where most of the formal education providers offer analogous trainings.

In Mozambique, several trades (tailoring, hairdressing, welding, carpentry) have shown to be more adapted to rural demand but new jobs in high demand have been identified such as building painter, coachbuilder, tiler, glazier, motorbike repair, baker, or room attendant for hotels. While looking into new locations, the model anticipates occupations that fulfil some of the following conditions:

- are not taught in local formal training centers;
- have potential in a remote area but there is no training available in the region;
- are very specialized to the locality and need only few people;
- have potential for self-employment with minimal investment;
- are in a growing sector led by a leading private company requiring qualified employees.

¹³ https://www.eda.admin.ch/dam/deza/en/documents/themen/grund-und-berufsbildung/strategie-deza-bildung_EN.pdf

Inclusion

Accessibility and flexibility facilitate inclusion. The Cooperative Group Approach accommodates young people without schooling levels and women with well-adapted skills development and trades that are not possible to find in formal training institutes (ex. pottery, handicraft). The choice of women-friendly trades increases the participation of young mothers with or without their children, further supported by flexibility in the training schedule (upon agreement between the trainer and the trainees).

The diversity of youth profiles (age, gender, school level, disabilities) revealed to foster group dynamics, contribute to inclusiveness, and strengthen community bonds. Non-formal training is a socially accepted practice for skills transfer from one generation to the next, introducing at the same time business culture and network.



THE MASON STORY: A FIRST FOOT IN THE CONSTRUCTION WORLD OF WORK

A local contractor was always in need of more manpower, regularly asking a job placement agency which linked him with the Helvetas project. He had his permanent qualified employees but often needed supporting labour. He also required youth interested to get more in-depth knowledge in professions such as tiling, painting or roofing because masons are often multi-skilled and requested to do everything in Mozambique.

When asked about work satisfaction and if they received some income during the training, youth responded: "The trainers are nice with us. They motivate us and take their time for explanations. The owner sponsors us at least one good meal per day for our work, which is not always the case when we stay at home. Sometimes, we even get some small money to bring back home."

At the end of the training the youth performing well and the most motivated ones got proposed a contract in the same area or on another construction site. The contractor wants them to get specialized in one trade as he knows it is the only way to deliver quality work for wealthy and demanding customers.

Link to employment

Familiarity with these environments increases youths' chances of employment once the traineeship is complete. Nevertheless, their trainer, who also acts as a mentor, remain the best entry-door to the work market. To guarantee that training providers assume their role to facilitate youth insertion, Helvetas applies results-based financing, an effective mechanism if properly monitored. It makes trainers care about youth employment, sharing advice, network and even absorb more of their trainees. This requires a clear and written contract and reminding trainers of their obligation during training implementation. However, any outside intervention in existing training systems needs to be based on a sound understanding of local practices and of the incentives to participation for both training providers and trainees.

Results-based financing

VSD projects are increasingly designed with an emphasis on post-training employment. Results-based financing is one approach to increase their impact by linking payment to the end result rather than the activities, ultimately improving the overall performance.

A number of implementation white papers¹⁴ on the payment mechanism have been developed over the past decade. These guides typically describe the expected benefits such as increased aid effectiveness, spreading of risk, alignment of expectations, greater flexibility, or potential for innovation. As a complement, Helvetas developed the "Results-Based Financing for Youth Training and Employment in Ethiopia: A Practice-Oriented Manual"¹⁵ explaining how to tie the disbursement of funding to the achievement of clearly specified and verified results or outcomes related to vocational training and subsequent employment.

The results-based financing is a gradual payment approach. In Mozambique, the training provider receives 40% (45% for women) of the payment a few weeks after training starts to cover initial training costs such as supplies and investment in equipment, 25% of the payment after completion of the training when youth go on internship, and the remaining 25% three months after the training. The training providers only receive the full payment for the trainees that pass a skills test (second installment) and for the graduates that are gainfully employed (third installment). Youth contribution is of 5% for women and 10% for men, paid directly to the training provider.

In Mozambique results-based financing showed an increased insertion rate of among graduates from Cooperative Groups in Nampula and Niassa provinces but also demonstrated positive impact in view of:



the reduction of dropouts during the training;



commitment of training providers;



mentoring process and on youth follow-up;



training institutes from the HOJE project securing internships for youth.

¹⁴ Instiglio [2017, 2018]; Helvetas [2018]; GPOBA [2018]; SIDA [2015]; and USAID/Palladium [2019]

¹⁵ <https://www.helvetas.org/en/switzerland/how-you-can-help/follow-us/blog/Other/Results-Based%20Financing%20Brings%20Economic%20Inclusion%20for%20Women%20and%20Youth>

Quality control: linking formal and non-formal education systems

Monitoring is not limited to visiting the training places to check if youth are physically there or if they are really employed. It implies to control the quality of the training including technical know-how transfer, academic follow-up, and pedagogical skills of the trainers. This is always a challenge in non-formal education relying on training providers who have variable levels. A mix of evaluation and capacity building methods have been used to guarantee certain standards.

Evaluation of the training

Project staff conducted skills tests for youth and surveyed their level of satisfaction with the training and the process as a whole. But to really evaluate the relationship and skills transfer between training providers and young people of Cooperative Groups they contracted experts of formal training institutes.

The quality of the training of Cooperative Groups was evaluated by experienced trainers and management of formal centers. If both formal and non-formal approaches were originally separated, this interaction between educational institutions and the private sector is at the heart of a well-functioning TVET system. Reconnecting both part of the system encourages permeability of the pathways (some youth of Cooperative Groups wanted to continue further training in centers), synergies between entities (centers requested micro-businesses to provide internships for their students), facilitates sharing of experiences and gives more credibility to Cooperative Groups, avoiding that the model grows in silo through a parallel system. The evaluation of the training quality focused on technical and academic aspects.



NON-FORMAL EDUCATION

Non-formal education is any educational action that takes place outside of the formal education system. Non-formal education is an integral part of a lifelong learning concept that ensures that young people and adults acquire and maintain the skills, abilities and dispositions needed to adapt to a continuously changing environment. It can be acquired on the personal initiative of each individual through different learning activities taking place outside the formal educational system. An important part of non-formal education is carried out by non-governmental organisations involved in community and youth work. [Council of Europe, Glossary on Youth]

Capacity building of training providers

Some non-formal training providers need capacity development and coaching. This includes curriculum development and pedagogical knowledge before the training and the following points during the training delivery: support to build a conducive training environment, advice to motivate youth and create a learning group dynamic, coaching to provide constructive feedback or assistance to properly follow the curricula.



Like for quality control, capacity building activities can be performed by staff from formal training centers or external pedagogical or technical experts. Coaching on pedagogical skills and on academic monitoring is of particular importance for artisans with low literacy level.

Technical capacity building of micro-businesses also adds value as many of them started on their own, without proper training. Trainees rely on teachers' knowledge who might not be up to date with modern techniques or have certain deficiencies that might be passed on to their trainees. Bringing new skills into informal apprenticeship can be done by formal training centers or by forging links with larger or better-quality enterprises that can offer improved access to modern technology and materials. This ultimately fosters overall competitiveness of a sector and boosts local economy.



Interview with Mety Gondola, State Secretary of Nampula



Why do you think Cooperative Groups are complementary to the usual training centers?

Many young people do not have access to training centers for several reasons, namely, the reduced number of training centers in relation to the demand for training needs, the distance of the places of residence to the training centers, and the high costs associated to training, which are beyond the capacities of many youth from rural areas.

The training in centers forces the trainees to stay away from their families, most of the time without earning anything for their livelihood. They also require a minimum level of initial education, which many young people do not have, especially in rural areas. Additionally, the centers lack providing real work experience.

The Cooperative Groups offer more and better opportunities as they do not require a minimum level of schooling. They can be set up anywhere without the need to travel long distances. The Cooperative Group Approach allows a greater number of people to benefit from it in a decentralized manner as it can be spread out to villages. Training in this setting ensures a real context, combining skills development with practical day-to-day experience, with greater possibility of mentoring.

The approach further stimulates entrepreneurship, the emergence and growth of micro-enterprises and boosts employability and, above all, self-employment. As young people and trainers are already together, they have more resources to increase their activity.



Why do you think Cooperative Groups are adapted to rural areas?

Because it is a flexible model: it can be adapted to any trade and even some trades that are required in only one specific region. As trainers and trainees live in the same geographical area, they speak the same language and own the same reality, which facilitates the training process and the sharing of experiences.

The model certainly becomes inclusive as women, even with a baby in their arms, can attend this type of training. It also gives some young people opportunities to immediately generate income to support their families.

What are potential challenges to disseminate the approach further in the country?

Implementation and extension throughout the province need additional capacities to initiate and sustain the approach. A potential barrier is the resources required for close monitoring and rigorous execution. As not all provinces currently have this capacity, the support from actors having already successfully experienced the approach will be needed. In parallel, the approach should be disseminated through the media, youth organizations, communities, religious leaders, and partners.



What is your message to young people in Mozambique learning through Cooperative Groups?

Education for young people must constitute a starting strategy for seeking employment or self-employment. In this process, youth should bet on Cooperative Groups, because through these, their training is ensured at low cost, without displacement from their community and with facilities to get trained according to appropriate standards, reconciling skills development and their daily experiences. **Join those who know, learn, and gain skills to transform your life and the one of your family.**

Implementation in fragile context

In January 2021, Helvetas was awarded a new project by UNICEF in the Province of Cabo Delgado. The need of a flexible model to provide inclusive and market-oriented training was an opportunity to test the Cooperative Group Approach in a fragile context.

Context

Cabo Delgado province is one of the poorest provinces in Mozambique, with a history of higher illiteracy rates, economic marginalization, and high unemployment. The region was affected by the impacts of cyclone Kenneth in 2019 and, since 2017, from the impacts of violent attacks in the northern areas. From the 857,084 internally displaced persons (IDPs), 91% of them are currently in Cabo Delgado province and 48% of them are children. In August 2021, 145,047 IDPs were present in the three districts being, 69,500 in Ancaube, 31,617 in Chiure and 43,930 in Montepuez.¹⁶

The CAP-CD project

The CAP-CD project aims at contributing to the development of life skills for adolescents in three districts of Cabo Delgado (Ancuabe, Chiure and Montepuez). It supports young people in an emergency context resulting from armed attacks.

The Cooperative Groups Approach seemed to be particularly appropriate for this milieu with high insecurity and COVID-19. Vulnerable and marginalized youth are disproportionately affected by disrupted education. They do not only rely on schools for social services but also have less means to adapt to the challenging situation. Their skilling must be practical as their literacy and numeracy level does not allow for theoretical training. The chosen model is administratively simple; it includes newly identified occupations, responding very rapidly to the evolving needs and promoting the competencies brought by IDPs.

For its implementation, the project relies on the collaboration of local micro-enterprises to train adolescents in the resettlement centers. Some of the trainers are also IDPs and have been equipped to deliver training within the centers. Others are artisans located in the district villages who also join forces in the training. Besides the development of life skills, the project has a component of psychosocial support for all the people in the resettlement centers.

¹⁶ Resumo de Pessoas deslocadas internas, Centro Nacional Operativo de Emergência,04.08.2021

Adaptation of the approach to IDPs and resettlement centers

CAP-CD was designed based on the successful experiences of the projects CG-MOZ and HOJE implemented in Nampula and Niassa province. While sharing the same approach, CAP-CD's target beneficiaries and context differ from the others. Adapting to these new parameters, Cooperative Group Approach evolved with the following features:

	CG-MOZ	CAP-CD
Beneficiaries profile	600 vulnerable youth aged 15-35 y.o.	850 youth aged 13-18 y.o. with trauma, including 75% of IDPs
Gender inclusiveness	Inclusive scheme: women pay only 5% of the fees and men 10%	No fees but cultural barriers brought difficulties to involve women
Context adaptation	Designed to respond to COVID-19 disruption	Takes into account security issues and provide psycho-social support to displaced youth and trainers
End goal for results-based payment	Insertion in employment or self-employment	Completion of the training
Payment modality	Instalments of 40/45%-25%-25% with a contribution of 5-10% from the youth	Instalments 10%-20%-70% with no contribution from the youth
Training providers	Micro-businesses available in the municipality delivering training independently from each other.	More difficult to find training providers. Part of the Cooperative Groups were formed with displaced trainers in the resettlement centers.
Equipment	No support to training providers who generally reinvested training fees into their own business.	Support with equipment only for trainers located in the centers.
Monitoring	Unexpected visits at any time during and after the training	Need of a focal person, and related budget, to visit resettlement centers.



A major difference is the need for CAP-CD to provide psychosocial support to youth with trauma in a sensitive context. For this, an education Cluster led by the Provincial Directorate of Education (DPE), and UNICEF, developed a manual to guide psychosocial support activities. As a complement, the CAP-CD is holding direct support such as chat sessions with victims, as well as sport and dance equipment to stimulate group and cultural activities.

Joint visits in the resettlements centers must be carried out together with technicians from the District Infrastructure Service (SDPI), the entity responsible for the management of IDPs. This is to avoid any misunderstandings during the implementation phase of the project. As soon as the project is underway, the District Service for Education, Youth and Technology (SDEJT), the entity managing youth issues, was also integrated.

Community leaders and families are involved in all activities and are responsible for the daily supervision of the training. Due to the large number of Cooperative Groups, weekly visits are made by the project team to ensure that training providers are carrying out the activities as foreseen in the collaboration contract.

During the market research, it was found that 99% of the potential trainers in the resettlement centers did not have the necessary equipment and material to adequately train youth in the various professions possible in the centers. Therefore, the project allocated training material that will be handed over to the young people at the end of the training so that they can organize themselves into Cooperative Groups and start their activity.

Key takeaways

Concluding, we hereby highlight the key takeaways of this manual:

- A** The approach is flexible enough to provide a direct response to a disrupted educational system, to adapt it to a fragile context or to build the first steps of post-crisis recovery.
- B** The approach is also valid in a non-crisis context, where informal economy is dominant, such as in rural areas. It has the potential to complement and, if possible, link to the formal TVET system.
- C** Building on informal apprenticeships, the approach is well anchored in the local context (institutionalization), can be scaled-up easily (scope), and training is likely to continue once project support is over (sustainability).
- D** The profits are beyond youth insertion as it can dynamize local economies, stimulate entrepreneurship and improve competitiveness of micro and small businesses. It consolidates productive and innovative enterprises, especially those that can diversify to respond to current and future changes in demand and are therefore more likely to grow and create jobs.
- E** The approach reinforces the role of local authorities in youth development and its link with private actors.
- F** The approach carries multiple advantages for the training providers such as funding for new equipment, more manpower, new ideas, good reputation, new network or increase in sales, all together fostering their competitiveness. Training providers are likely to continue training youth after the project end.
- G** A key criterion for selecting the training providers is to have sufficient demand (customer flow).
- H** Results-based financing provides evident added value to the approach (reduction of dropouts, improved training and mentoring, better insertion).



HELLETAS

HELLETAS Swiss Incorporation
Weinbergstrasse 22a, P.O. Box 3130, CH 8021 Zürich
Maulbeerstrasse 10, P.O. Box 6724, CH 3001 Bern
Tel. +41 (0)44 368 65 00, Fax +41 (0)44 368 65 00
info@helletas.org, www.helletas.ch