

Start and Improve your Business (SIYB)



Period active:	Since 1997 (since 1977 as IYB), ongoing
Technical unit:	Small Enterprise Development Programme EMP/SEED
Donors:	More than 14 donors including: SIDA, DFID, Japan, AusAID, Denmark, Norway, USA, Canada, Luxembourg, Austria
Geographical coverage:	100 countries in West Africa, Eastern and Southern Africa, Central Asia, South-eastern/central Asia and Pacific, Central and South America

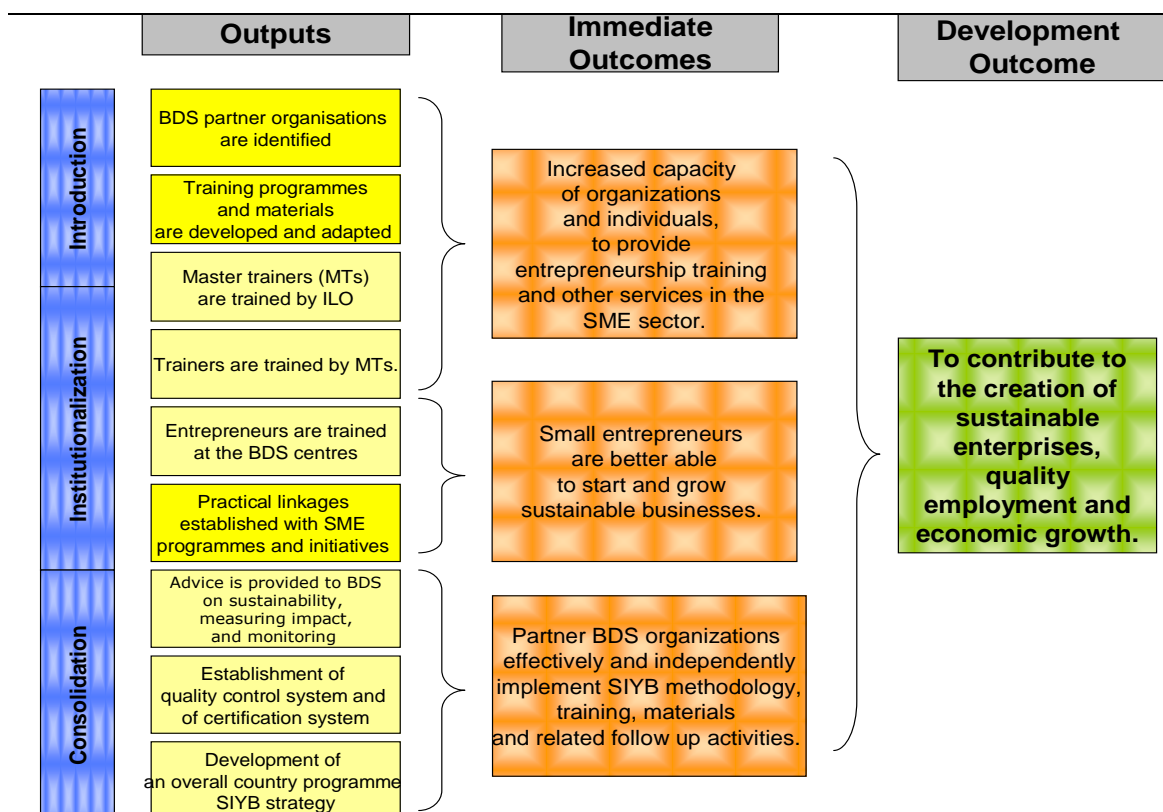
Main features

The Start and Improve Your Business (SIYB) programme is a system of inter-related training packages and supporting materials for small-scale entrepreneurs to start and grow their businesses. It aims at increasing the viability of SMEs through sound management principles suitable for the environment of developing countries. The ILO assists Business Development Service (BDS) organizations to develop the skills required to implement, monitor, administer and finance the training programme, and sets up a sustainable training system on the national level, thus contributing to sustainable economic growth and employment generation.

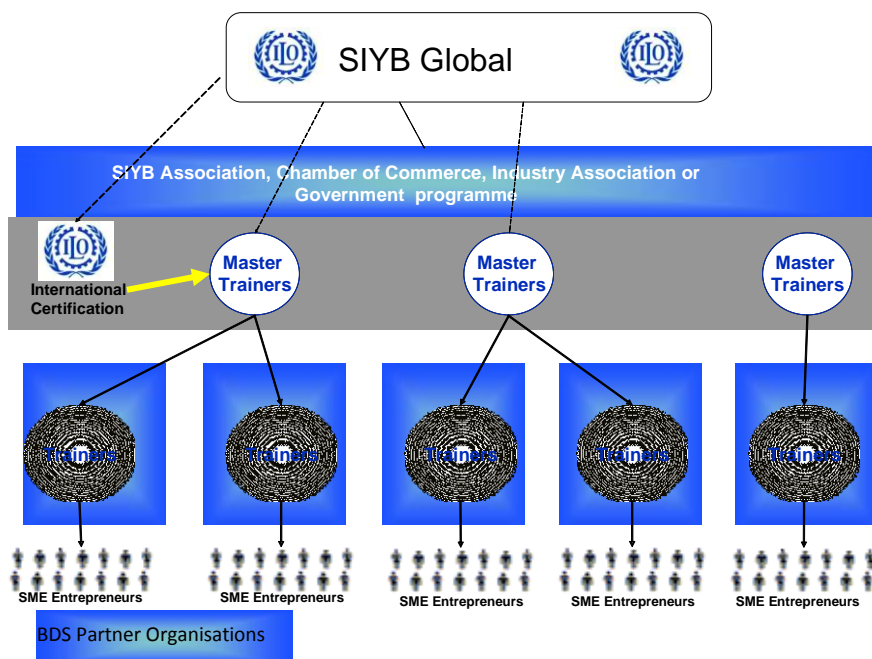
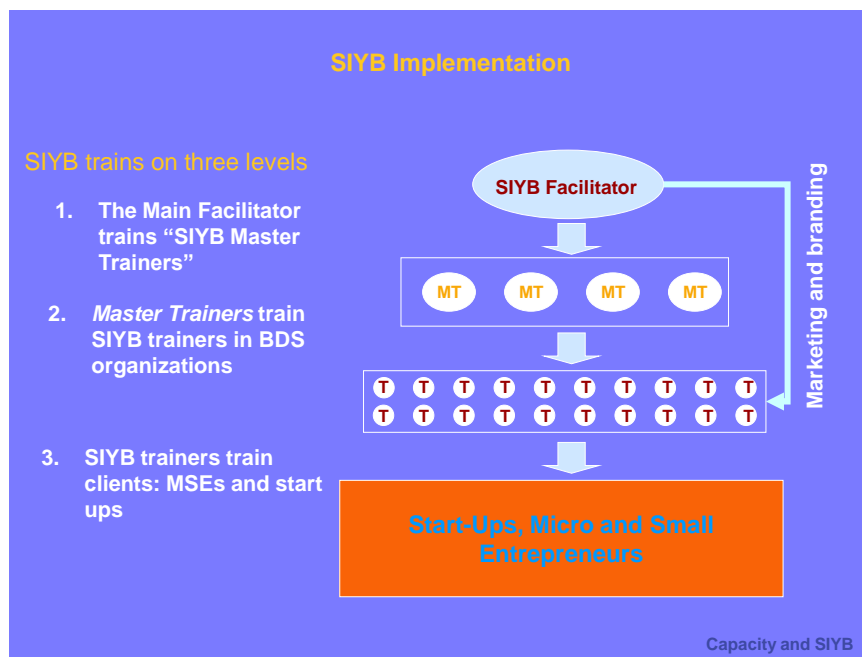
With an estimated outreach of 1.5 mio trainees (end 2008), SIYB is probably the biggest small enterprise management training system in the world. SIYB has been translated into more than 30 languages and adapted to a wide range of national and regional contexts.

Logic model

The logic model provides an overall synthesis of the project implementation; therefore, it is only representative and might not be exhaustive in terms of how it was carried out in one specific country. Additional elements and components may be added or removed in order to better adapt to local realities.



The SIYB programme was designed with an **institutional approach** and a **multiplier strategy**. The ILO undertakes After assessing the market for business services in a given country or region and establishing the demand for customized business management training solutions. The ILO builds the capacity of local Business Development Services (BDS) organizations to effectively and independently implement SIYB training and related activities. In addition, it provides international training and certification to a group of “SIYB Master Trainers”, to whom the management of the SIYB programme and the quality assurance system will eventually be handed over. Using this multiplier strategy, the ILO creates a sustainable training and quality assurance system at the national level. The following diagram exemplifies the implementation of the SIYB methodology.



Methodology & Tools

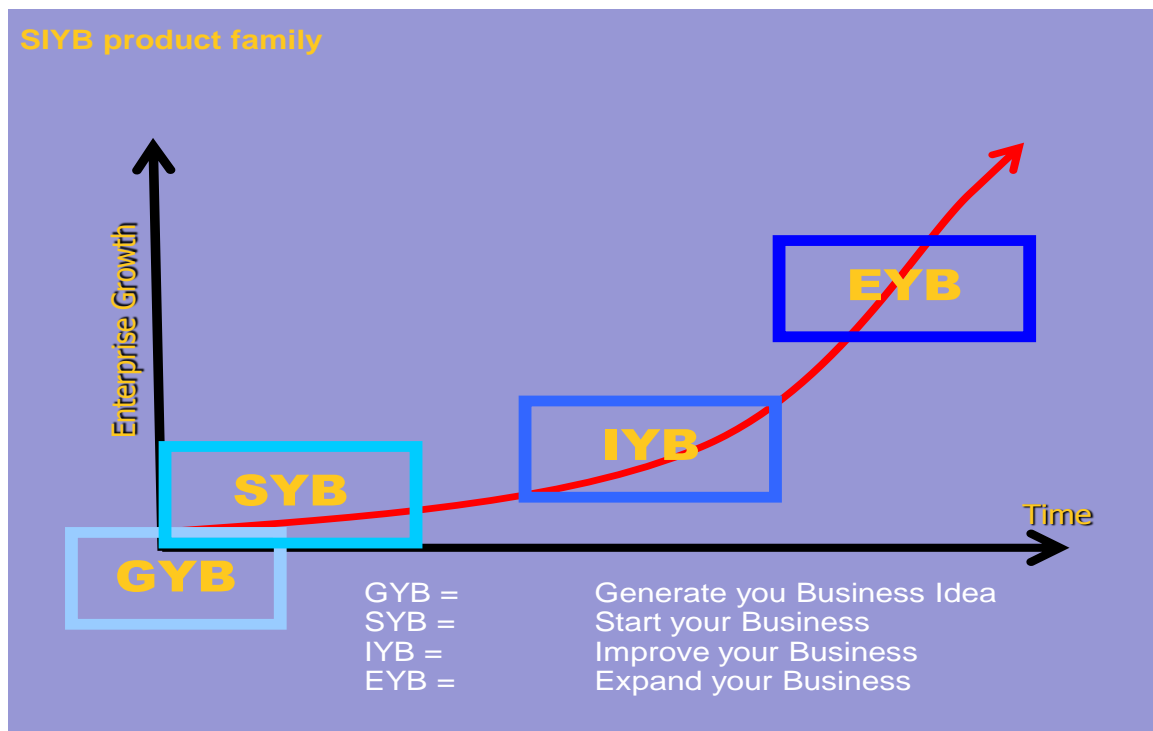
The SIYBs programme core is a range of training packages and instruments, with integrated components for counselling, networking, promotion of service institutions, and policy dialogue. SIYB employs four toolkits, each adapted and translated to specific country needs:

1. **Generate your business (GYB)** is intended for people without a business plan who would like to start a business. At the end of this training, participants are expected to have developed a concrete business idea ready for implementation.
2. **Start your business (SYB)** is for potential entrepreneurs with a concrete business idea who want to start a profitable and sustainable small business. The programme is a combination of training, field work and after-training support activities and consists of two sub-programmes: the *SYB Business Awareness*, where participants assess readiness to start a business both in conceptual and financial terms; and the *SYB Business Planning* that teaches them how to prepare a business plan and assess its viability.
3. **Improve your business (IYB)** introduces already practicing entrepreneurs to good principles of business management, i.e. marketing, costing, stock control, record keeping, buying and business planning. Relevant examples and exercises enable entrepreneurs to identify their own business problems and actively engage in solving them. The IYB package called 'People and Productivity' assists entrepreneurs to increase their business productivity and profitability by making effective use of their staff. The SYB and IYB package also include the **SIYB Business Game**.



IYB training modules

4. **Expand your Business (EYB)** gives growth-oriented small and medium entrepreneurs the practical tools to implement and realize fast business growth and profits. The enterprises are assisted through training in identified management areas and non-training interventions. The main output from the training programme is a business growth plan, which includes marketing, operations, human resources, financial and strategic management. The EYB non-training interventions include individual business counselling, facilitation of business and financial linkages, specialist services, and business support groups.



The SIYB Product family

The **trainers**, who are based in existing BDS partner organisations, which regularly provide services to MSMEs, receive material as to how effectively and independently implement SIYB entrepreneurial training, including training methods that can be used, such as the case study method, role-plays, small group discussion, brainstorming and action learning. The management of the BDS partner organisation where the trainer is based signs a MoU with the SIYB implementer or Master Trainer in which the use of the programme and outreach numbers are agreed upon before the trainer is trained.

SIYB Master Trainers, whose competences are assessed and certified by the ILO use a core set of training material to effectively plan, organize and conduct the training of trainers (ToTs) programmes and follow-up interventions. They are also responsible for marketing the SIYB programme, selecting new partner organizations, quality control of the SIYB programme, material adaptations, and conducting SIYB impact assessment and evaluation. MTs can be identified within the group of regular SIYB trainers and are selected based on a mechanism that includes checking their training skills, commitment and delivery rates of workshops to entrepreneurs.

Target groups/beneficiaries

Target groups: The programme is designed for any business development service (BDS) organization, which is already engaged in business creation and management training programmes. The ILO usually seeks collaboration with social partners (governments, employers and workers organisations) and other NGOs, private sector, profit-making or non-profit making organisations in implementing the SIYB. The SIYB methodology also targets trainers (certified by the BDS) and Master Trainers (certified by the ILO). The ILO undertakes a market assessment in order to assess whether management training is in actual demand before intervening in a given BDS market

Beneficiaries: The ultimate beneficiaries of the SIYB programme are entrepreneurs that want to generate, start, improve or expand their own businesses. The institutional approach of the programme enables it to multiply its capacity to reach small-scale entrepreneurs in large numbers

by working with existing BDS providers and analyzing market dynamics in the management training market before intervening. The SIYB programme also empowers groups excluded from the labour market such as the unemployed, low skilled and migrant workers. It furthermore, encourages women to become entrepreneurs in their own right as well as creating employment opportunities for others.

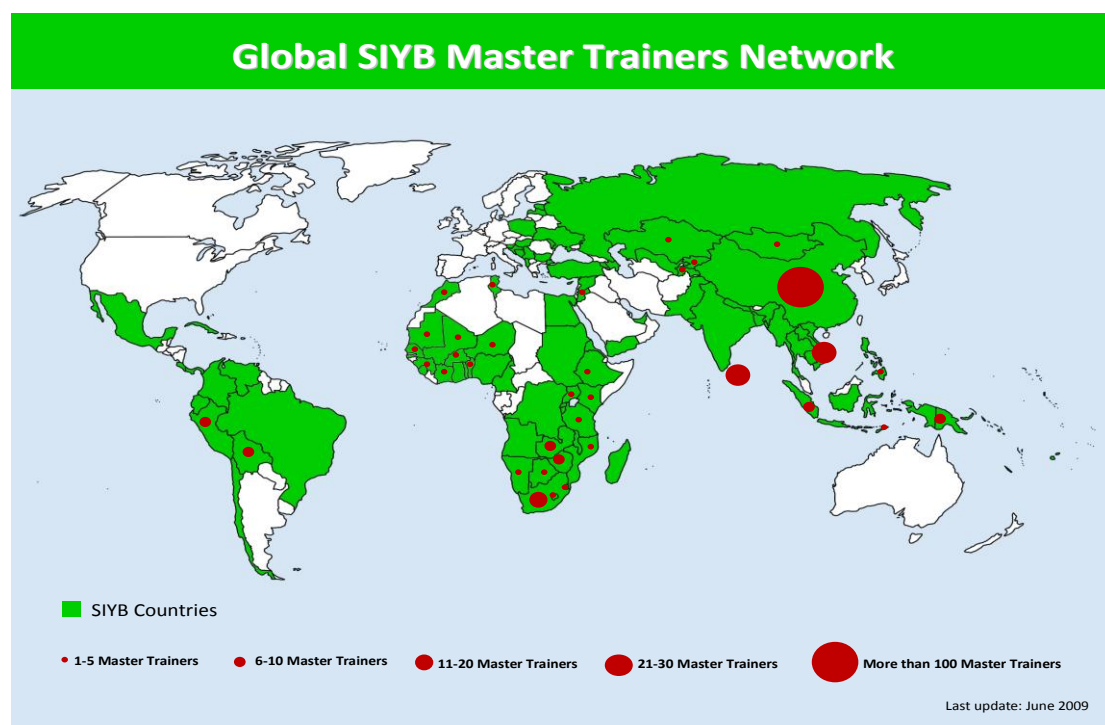
Results

The ILO/SIYB training programme has significant global outreach: over 850 organizations have benefited from the programme in 100 countries, and some 1.4 million entrepreneurs (roughly 53% men and 47% women) have been trained globally in the last 15 years. This has resulted in creating over 300.000 businesses with over 1.5 million jobs created within 15 years.

Over 8,000 trainers (roughly 70% men and 30% women) have been trained in SIYB. On average, 3 out of 4 (75%) certified trainers become active by passing the programme on to potential and existing entrepreneurs.

Translations into over thirty languages have been made, including in: English, French, Spanish, Portuguese, Russian, Chinese, Vietnamese, Kiswahili, Arabic, Sri Lankan, Mongolian, Serbian, Amharic, Dari, Uzbekistan, Croatian, Albanian, Braille, Bahasa Indonesia, Azerbaijane, Nepalese, Thai, Afrikaans, North Sotho, South Sotho, Tamil, Sinhala, Tswana, Xhosa, Zulu,

SIYB country coverage : see map below.



Some Country Specific Examples:

- In 2010 the ILO in **Indonesia** is conducting a tracer study on the activity of 255 certified SIYB trainers in 21 provinces of the country
- In **China** almost all of the participants were re-employed through self-employment and as a result of project rollout around 1 million jobs were created. The programme also had an impact on policy development and contributed to the draft Employment Promotion Law.

- In **Sri Lanka** the SIYB Association – whose membership is made up of all participating BDS organisations in the country (as well as independent trainers) – coordinates SIYB implementation. In 2007 the World Chambers Federation competition held in Istanbul, Turkey granted them the world award for Best Unconventional Project for SMEs.
- The **SIYB Regional Project office for Eastern and Southern Africa** coordinates the implementation of the SIYB regional programme. In Uganda, Zambia, Zimbabwe of the entrepreneurs who newly started or expanded their business after SIYB training in 1999 and 2000, 74% were still operating a business in 2003. In addition, 58% of those who had been in business for 3 to 4 year after training were operating a registered business.
- In **Vietnam** by December 2003 in addition to 14,546 entrepreneurs being trained in 534 SYB and IYB workshops, an additional 3,436 entrepreneurs were in the IYB on the Air radio distance learning programme.
- In **Bolivia** the ILO has an active network of 5 Master Trainers and more than 100 Trainers, that have trained almost 10.000 micro and small entrepreneurs in the country
- In **Papua New Guinea** SIYB is the only nation-wide training programme targeting the micro enterprise/small business sector.

Lessons Learned

Good Practices/ Enabling Factors

One of the factors of success regarding the training material is that it follows a **simple and systematic structure**, it includes numerous illustrations, case studies and highly interactive exercises, and is adapted to the existing business regulations. It includes the **SIYB Business Game** that illustrates the functioning of an enterprise in the form of an interactive and fast-paced game. Variations of the delivery model have included the facilitation of small loans and access to financial services to existing or potential entrepreneurs following the completion of their training programme. In other instances, components of awareness raising campaigns have been included for the promotion of entrepreneurship and SMEs (like radio emissions and TV programmes).

The Key distinctive feature of SIYB in comparison with other small enterprise management training product is its strong focus on a **quality assurance system**. This includes a range of quality mechanisms, control points and the thorough set-up of a training system in order to ensure that management training can be offered in a given country in the long term on a sustainable basis with build-in mechanisms of continuous improvement.

The **diversity of delivery channels** –employers' organization, private sector associations, chamber of commerce, NGOs, small enterprise, government ministries and private consulting companies – helps the programme to optimize its outreach to the ultimate beneficiaries – micro, small or medium enterprises, depending on the training programme.

The methodology has proven to be easily integrated in **UN interagency initiatives** as it's inclusion in a wide range of One UN programme illustrates (For example MDGF programmes in Central America, Egypt and Vietnam) UNDP has used SIYB training modules within its projects in Nepal and India.

The SIYB training has been recognized as an efficient tool for **post-disaster situations**, specifically to re-build the businesses devastated by the tsunami in India and Sri Lanka. It contributed to local economic development while restoring infrastructure, producing basic goods and services crucial for reconstruction.

Since the SIYB programme is a **demand driven product**, the ILO has responded to the identified

demand on a given BDS market adapting it to the demand and supply situation on the BDS market, taking measures to increase programme impact. SIYB has proven to be a highly adaptable methodology, and a range of tailored tools have been developed

- **Simplified SIYB training: “SIYB Level 1”** adapted to the needs of micro-enterprises with limited formal education.
- **Sector-specific SIYBs** for rural businesses, agriculture, eco-forestry, commercial fishing, Eco tourism (in Spanish) and emerging building contractors (in South Africa called Start and Improve Your Construction Business).
- **Issue-specific SIYB materials:** the HIV/Aids workbooks synthesizes the impact of the pandemic on small businesses and practical and useful strategies on how to deal with it at the workplace. SIYB has also been adapted to people with disabilities, including a version in braile.
- SIYB courses have also adopted **long-distance learning** elements and have been conducted by correspondence enabling more people in remote areas to participate.

An evaluation by the Swedish donor agency Sida noted that “firms that have taken part in the training programme tend to have higher growth rates than the national averages for the small-scale industry sector.” The evaluation concluded that the programme had a substantial impact on entrepreneurs in terms of both business performance and profits, and employment generation.

Obstacles/Challenges and their solutions

Maintaining a similar quality level of the programme on a global scale: In spite of the build-in quality assurance mechanisms some partner organisations and trainers become inactive or under-performing. Since SIYB trainers are at the heart of the programme and form the driving force behind entrepreneurial activities, finding adequate quality trainers is essential. A rigorous selection criteria and process is therefore applied – MTs and trainers are not automatically certified upon successfully completing their training, but have to prove that they have the adequate skills to implement in practice what they have learnt in a variety of ways.

Follow-up services: The impact of the SIYB programme may rise if better follow-up services are provided by SIYB trainers. Providing these services to help small businesses overcome a range of common practical problems in the implementation of daily management activities is recognised as a crucial requirement if the benefits of the training are to be enhanced. Linkages can be provided with, financial service providers alike MFIs and banks, insurance companies, accounting firms, advertising agencies, computer related firms and legal services.

Training per se is not the sole solution or need of many entrepreneurs and the lack of **access to finance and start-up capital** is a major bottleneck for potential and existing entrepreneurs. Financial institutions are in fact reluctant to lend to small business operators with limited or no tangible security. In many cases, these institutions are invited to training sessions to make presentations on their lending requirements and other services, thus having more proximity with the programme and its entrepreneurs. An improved linkage to financial institutions has been widely experimented with (including the use of guarantee funds, adapting financial procedures etc.) but is an area that will need further attention in the future.

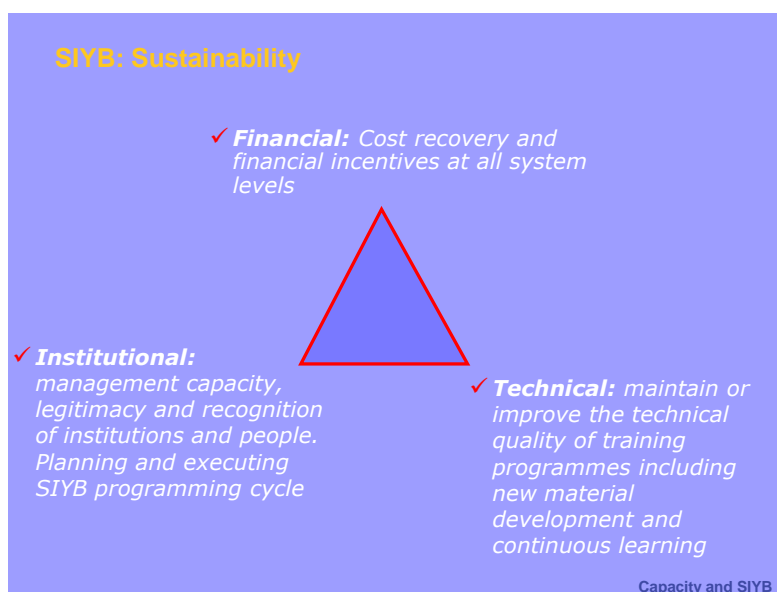
The incorporation of gender issues within the whole SIYB training cycle ensuring that gender is mainstreamed at all levels, including, broadening the selection criteria and recruitment methodologies to encourage women to attend SIYB seminars, is a task that has started but will still need time to permeate throughout the global network.

SIYB should not be implemented when there are no market opportunities and when there is

insufficient infrastructure or inadequate facilities necessary for the successful development of a business.

Sustainability and Replicability

Throughout its global network SIYB works with a three tier strategy that aims to achieve financial, institutional and technical quality sustainability. It does so through its global multiplier strategy and a market and institution-based approach. The approach allows participating organisations to sustain the number and quality of training activities in the field once ILO technical assistance has phased out. Therefore, as important as the impact at the enterprise level, are the effects at institutional level where, participating organizations have been able to meet all costs related to programme implementation at the national level. This is a clear expression of the SIYB degree of sustainability in the BDS market after the ILO exit strategy has been completed.



SIYB has also proven to be replicable in different countries and in diverse settings, significantly because of the extensive collaboration of the global SIYB network, which allows partner organisations to exchange experiences and skills with the ILO's facilitation

Knowledge Management

Knowledge management has been gradually introduced in the SIYB programme. As mentioned above, the **ILO Global SIYB Network** allows for the different countries to share their experience on the programme and trainers to be mobilized in case there is need on another region. In addition, websites are available for the initiatives and associations in Sri Lanka, Papua New Guinea, Vietnam, Southern Africa and China. A range of ILO knowledge sharing tools like the Know About Business platform (www.knowaboutbusiness.org) APYouthNet and the Asian Decent Work Decade Knowledge Network have incorporated knowledge sharing components on SIYB.

An important knowledge sharing tool at the national level within SIYB is the **Directory of Advice and Assistance (DAA)** intended for entrepreneurs and SIYB facilitators. It provides contact information about sources of advice, and key information on topics such as business registration, consulting services, labour law, taxation, marketing, technical training, management training, financial services, and technology transfer. It is updated periodically for each country and widely distributed as reference information.

One of the tools for SIYB quality control and knowledge management is a reporting system based on the **SIYB Activity Report** in which both trainers and Master Trainers are required to report

all training activities (entrepreneurial and ToTs, respectively). The SIYB China program developed a tracking system based on the Balanced Scorecard allowing users to directly report their training activities via the internet to the national program coordination unit. A similar approach for M&E is now being rolled out in 25 enterprise development projects in Africa.

Though these are mechanisms for sharing knowledge amongst SIYB members, there are still gaps in sharing the global experience with external stakeholder. SIYB system internal information sharing and knowledge management mechanisms still need to be enhanced.

Short Background

The SIYB programme stems from a training package called “Look After Your Firm” that was developed in the 1970s by the Swedish Employers’ Federation. In 1977, the Swedish International Development Agency (Sida) funded a project for the ILO to adapt the materials to the needs of small-scale entrepreneurs in developing countries. The adapted training package was called “Improve Your Business –IYB”. In the early 90s, an ILO technical cooperation project in Fiji embarked on the development of the “Start Your Business – SYB” training package. SYB was soon adopted by ILO technical cooperation projects all over the world to complement the IYB training package. In the late 90s, “Generate Your Business Idea - GYB” was developed by ILO and later complemented by “Expand Your Business - EYB. Today, the SIYB programme is globally recognized as an ILO trademark.

In 1998, ILOs Recommendation 189 concerning General Conditions to Stimulate Job Creation in Small and Medium-Sized Enterprises was approved by the International Labour Conference (ILC). It insists on Member States to encourage a more positive attitude towards risk-taking and to “create and strengthen an enterprise culture which favours initiatives, enterprise creation, productivity, environmental consciousness, quality, good labour and industrial relations and adequate social practices, all of which are equitable”. The 2007 ILC discussion on Sustainable Enterprise confirmed ILOs role in job creation and enterprise development.

Further information

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