

Case Study: Career Development Programme



A partnership for people with disabilities

The Career Development Programme (CDP) is the result of a partnership between the Innovation Foundation and the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC). It supports people with disabilities in achieving their full potential in society by providing career training, enhancing employer and governmental awareness, increasing access to jobs to enable a more inclusive workplace, and providing self-employment support. The ICRC CDP is an integral part of the ICRC's wider Physical Rehabilitation Programme (PRP) and provides economic security for people with disabilities in PRP-supported countries, including developing countries, fragile states, and conflict zones.

Launched in 2019, the ICRC CDP is a result of the Innovation Foundation functioning as a Social Innovation Lab – identifying underserved populations and the challenges that keep them out of work, co-creating solutions to meet these needs, and then accelerating the prototypes into viable products or programmes to take forward in partnership.

3 goals for one underserved population

The Innovation Foundation established three main goals of the Career Development Programme which served as the pillars behind how the programme was structured.

- Help people with disabilities to be more employable and gain access to the job market
- Raise awareness among employers about the added value of hiring people with disabilities

- Create lasting change in the experience of people living with a physical disability in fragile and low-income contexts

The Social Innovation Lab runs a complete cycle

Scan: The scanning stage was all about the needs. The needs of people with disabilities, the needs of our partner, and the needs of employers.

The Innovation Foundation and the International Committee of the Red Cross joined forces to add the dimension of reintegrating people with a disability into the labour market to the ICRC's already-existing services for physical rehabilitation and reintegration into society via sport.

Using a pilot consultation workshop and interviews done as part of a wheelchair basketball camp in Ethiopia, in 2018, we identified the unmet needs of people with disabilities and the barriers to employment and social integration. Insights were gathered on:

- The local needs and legal frameworks
- How to better tailor the content for the audience
- How to complement the ICRC's existing Physical Rehabilitation Programme offering
- The needs of local employers and employer associations

Build: The build step of the Social Innovation Lab focused on creating a bespoke training programme. Based on the insights from the initial scan phase, we adapted the curriculum from the Adecco Group's Athlete Career Programme* which had been designed with the International Olympic Committee (IOC) for athlete career transition.

We co-designed and launched the ICRC Career Development Programme in Jordan in 2019. The programme was focused on job acquisition skills such as career aptitude identification, CV writing, networking and interview performance. Furthermore, we trained more than 35 ICRC Inclusion Advisors, representing 26 countries, who would act as the trainers of the curriculum. Our build phase ended by codifying the complete methodology and train the trainer package

*The Athlete Career Programme is now called the Athlete Programmes and is run by LHH

Scale: To ensure the sustainability of the programme, it was essential to close the circle between people with disabilities and employers. This entailed the expansion of the programme to provide continuing education for Inclusion Advisors on how to better impact employers, governments and educational institutions on the value of an inclusive workforce and the benefits of engaging persons with disabilities.

We also distilled the key learnings, tools and best practices from our national Adecco Group Foundations. This included a comprehensive workshop with the Foundation heads, deep dives into tools and best practice, the creation of a basic tool kit, and recommendations for future pilots

The future of the Career Development Programme with the ICRC

As of the end of 2021, the Career Development Programme was fully funded and staffed by the ICRC under its Physical Rehabilitation Programme. An extensive handover was performed by the Innovation Foundation to ensure that the ICRC has the materials, know-how, and support to continue the success of the CDP and to build out the employer engagement dimension in a sustainable and embedded way.

During the year post-handover, the Innovation Foundation continues to act as a sounding board and advisor with periodic interactions during the year and the ICRC's Career Development Programme will remain part of our growing community of incubated ventures.

"Through this partnership, the Innovation Foundation is able to leverage its career transition and employability expertise, alongside the reach and credibility of the ICRC, to improve access to the labour market for people with disabilities in some of the most difficult circumstances around the world."

- Cynthia Hansen, Managing Director Innovation Foundation

"Ahmad is a person with a disability who participated in the Career Development Programme. He is a wheelchair basketball player with a lower limb deficiency and has a real passion for sport. When Ahmad enrolled in the CDP, he was still struggling to find new employment. Thanks to the training and support of the CDP, I can happily say that Ahmad is now the proud owner of his very own bakery and is autonomous in supporting himself and his family through his new job. The CDP combines the experience and expertise of the Innovation Foundation with the reach and know-how of the ICRC to help people like Ahmad overcome obstacles to find meaningful employment. And I'm proud to be a part of it all."

- Story of Ahmad, participant of the CDP in Lebanon, told by Haya Rawi, ICRC Inclusion Advisor