

# **URBAN II Evaluation**

Project Level Case Study: Metal Work Training  
(Sambreville)



## 1.0 Goals

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One of the most important challenges for the city of Sambreville is its high rate of unemployment (20%), particularly among women (25%) and young people (39%). This high unemployment rate is reinforced by the lack of professional qualifications within the local population meaning their ability to access jobs (or ideally higher paid employment) is very limited.

To stimulate the URBAN programme to take account of these socio-economic problems, meetings were organised between representatives of the programme, local companies and public employment organisations. Several conclusions were drawn from these discussions. The dialogues made clear that companies faced a shortage of workers in 'manual' professions and that young people are no longer interested in these kinds of jobs even though they offered good prospects in the job market. It also appeared that the technical and professional training in more manual jobs did not match the needs of the local companies who found new trainees lacking in the specific knowledge and technical ability they required.

In response to the demands of the labour market, the industrial and commercial school of Auvélais developed a range of different training programmes to address the needs of local companies. These training programmes fell under the second priority of the CIP URBAN II of Sambreville ('Developing human resources and improving skills'), more specifically under the third measure entitled 'Improvement of professional qualifications for workers and unemployed'. It improved the qualifications and thus the employment opportunities for local residents and it responded to the needs of local companies.

## 2.0 Implementation

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After meeting the different local companies and identifying their different training needs, the industrial and commercial school of Auvélais launched a training programme for the metal industry in 2000. This training took place over 18 months and led to a qualification certificate at lower secondary level. URBAN II funds financed 50% of the projects funds with the other half coming from the industrial and commercial school of Auvélais. In total,

30 people started the training and 20 finished it. Of these participants, 80% found a job after having finished the training<sup>1</sup>.

Due to the success of the first set of training activities, the industrial and commercial school of Auvelais decided to organise other training programmes that specifically responded to the needs of local companies. Therefore, in 2003, the project "School-Enterprise" started. This project offered unqualified people a short-term technical training session as well as guidance for job searching after the training programme finished. This training consisted of technical and practical courses at the industrial and commercial school of Auvelais as well as internships in local companies. The project offered different, alternating, training courses free of charge including paver-tiler, plater, welder/fitter and horticulturist.

The industrial and commercial school of Auvelais offered the training programmes in close collaboration with:

- Local companies: who were involved in the development of training to specifically match their needs.
- The FOREM (local public employment services): by offering practical guidance to trained persons after the training to help them find a job.
- Local associations (e.g. MIRENA, GABS): by finding persons who could benefit from the training and by offering support to participants with more deep rooted social problems.

The organization of the training programme was initiated by the municipality of Sambreville and approved by the Walloon region. The organisation of the training amounted to 1.4 million euro of which 50% was co-financed by ERDF funding. The FOREM financed the remaining 50% (local public employment services). Overall, the project represents more than 20% of the total URBAN II funding for the city of Sambreville.

One of the strong points of the project was the new partnerships formed in Sambreville (industrial and commercial school, local companies, FOREM, local associations) which made it possible to organise much more appropriate types of training which better matched the needs of all parties involved.

<sup>1</sup> This statistic is based on the declarations of the trained persons. There is no monitoring instrument that follows the carrier of the trained persons after the training. So it is not possible to know if the trained persons have maintained their job 1 or 2 years after the training.

In December 2008, the last URBAN funded training programme was supposed to be delivered but because another key project for the city (the Wallonie Aerotraining Network) was abandoned it freed up resources from local organisations to continue the welding training.

An atelier has been constructed with URBAN funds under the priority 1 'Economic conversion and local economic development' measure 3 'Improvement of infrastructure and equipments'. Although the atelier is still under construction it will be ready in January 2010. Because of this space, the number of trained students for each programme will double from 15 to 30. Moreover, the atelier will be equipped with machines that students can use to practice very specific techniques on. The atelier will be used by local firms to up-skill their workforces meaning the facility will not only benefit the locally unemployed people but also those who are already in work.

The URBAN II programme financed the capital elements of the atelier (i.e. its construction). For the remaining expenses, other sources of finance have been found. The training equipment will be financed through funds under ERDF 2007-2013 whilst the FOREM will finance the training hours of teachers through funds of the Marshall plan of the Walloon Region<sup>1</sup>. This combination of different sources of subsidies assures the sustainability of this project. It was made clear by stakeholders that the city of Sambreville would not have been able to finance this project without external funding.

## 3.0 Results and impacts

The table below summarizes the main results of the training programmes as outlined in the closing report of the CIP URBAN II Sambreville.

**Table 3.1 Outputs and Results – CIP Urban II Sambreville**

Indicator	Objectives 2008	Realization	Percentage
Number of supervised persons	75	243	324 %
Number of trained persons on internships	25	65	260 %
Number of hours of internships	15.000	28.000	186,7 %
Number of trained persons	450	394	87,5 %

<sup>1</sup> The Marshall plan has been launched in September 2005 by the Walloon Region. It aims to stimulate economic activity and technological innovation.

Indicator	Objectives 2008	Realization	Percentage
Number of hours of training	20.000	21.500	105%
Number of trainings organized	50	49	98%
Average number of training hours	840	950	113,1%

Source: Closing Report Urban II Sambreville

As shown in the table above, the training programmes attained or exceeded their output objectives. In total 394 persons have been trained. 49 training initiatives have been organised for a total of 21,500 hours. As shown in the table, the number of internships in companies has largely exceeded the initial targets. In total, 65 persons have followed an internship in a company (while the initial target was 25) for a total of 28,000 hours (while the initial target was 15,000). The internship offers the trained person excellent experience in a company and creates a significant opportunity for that person to secure a fixed position in the company after the training. In practice, several trained persons have been employed in a local company before even finishing their training.

The training programme is not only successful in terms of outputs and results, but also in terms of impact. According to the stakeholders, a large proportion of the trained people found a job after their training - depending on the type of training programme, 60% to 70% of trainees found employment after receiving the support. For the welding training, the percentage of trainees accessing employment reached 80%<sup>1</sup>, percentages that are very high if the profile of the trained persons is considered (most were unqualified and had been long term unemployed for over three years).

Even for those who did not access employment after the training, the provision was able to motivate them and increase their level of self confidence. The training proved to them that they were capable of learning and that they could help themselves to improve their social status.

### 3.1 Intangible impacts – partnerships and the implementation of a certifying centre of competences in welding

Thanks to the implementation of an atelier for welding training in Sambreville, the industrial and commercial school of Auvelais introduced a request to recognize this atelier as a

<sup>1</sup> This statistic is based on the declarations of the trained persons. There is no monitoring instrument which follows the carrier of the trained persons after the training. So, it is not possible to know if the trained person has maintained his job 1 or 2 years after the training.

certified centre for competences in welding. This agreement will allow the industrial and commercial school to deliver a programme that provides a certificate which is recognized across Europe. This is the only certified centre in for welding in the region which was seen by stakeholders as a way to raise the image and profile of Sambreville as a whole as a place which is proactive in supported unemployed residents.

## **4.0 Identified good practice**

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There are four factors of success for this project.

### **An integrated approach**

The training programme has successfully combined three themes: the economic, physical and social theme. The economic theme was covered by offering training programmes that match the needs of local companies. The training programmes also had a social aspect since most of the beneficiaries were from vulnerable and disadvantaged groups. Moreover, through cooperation with local associations (MIRENA) support is offered to individuals who often had deeper social problems and lack of self esteem. Finally, an atelier has been built with URBAN II funds. The integrated approach between the social, economic and physical theme is a key area of good practice and is in line with the holistic approach promoted through the URBAN II initiative.

This project illustrates how persisting problems (unemployment, lack of education, shortage of workers in manual and technical functions) can successfully be tackled by an integrated and single local approach. These problems can be solved by a motivated partnership between social services, entrepreneurs, schools and local government.

### **Partnership working**

As mentioned earlier, the industrial and commercial school of Auvélais developed a structural partnership with multiple actors in Sambreville: the local companies, the FOREM (local public employment services) and local associations (e.g. MIRENA, GABS). This project created a 'bonding' amongst these organizations to work together whenever possible and as a result established a new local network. This bonding has been maintained even after the URBAN programme. This has led to the development of other training programmes after the URBAN period and thus to the sustainability of the partnership and the 'approach' developed by the original URBAN project.

### **Needs led**

Another important success factor is that the project fulfils the needs of both the local residents and businesses of Sambreville. A bottom-up strategy was developed by the project where the content of the training programme was developed by local companies and public employment organisations. The industrial and commercial school of Auvelais developed different training programmes that directly responded to identified needs meaning it was always likely to a high success rate in relation to the number of trainees accessing employment.

### **A motivated team and a close link with the URBAN team**

The success and the sustainability of the project largely depended on the motivation, leadership and involvement of the project managers. According to the project manager, the support of the URBAN team has greatly helped them in the successful development and organisation of the training programmes. The URBAN team was heavily involved in the project and was often present at key meetings. The project manager received a lot of valuable advice and support from the URBAN team not only in terms of administration but also on the key players the managers should engage with. The project manager had never been involved in European funded projects previously meaning the support which the URBAN team provided him was extremely important.