



ACCELERATING WORK ACHIEVEMENT AND READINESS FOR EMPLOYMENT (AWARE PROJECT) THE PHILIPPINES AND INDONESIA



The Accelerating Work Achievement and Readiness for Employment (AWARE) Project was a pilot initiative of the JPMorgan Chase Foundation and Education Development Center, Inc. (EDC), that took a new approach to improve workforce development in Indonesia and the Philippines.

From 2013 to 2015, the project provided work readiness training and hands-on opportunities in the workplace to youth in a small number of technical and vocational education and training (TVET) schools, intending to bridge an important gap in the workforce talent pipeline.

IMPROVING YOUTH WORK READINESS SKILLS AND PROVIDING OPPORTUNITIES FOR PRACTICAL WORK EXPERIENCE

EDC worked closely with partner TVET schools, national and local governments, and private sector leaders in both countries to equip youth with the skills needed to succeed in the job market. The AWARE project included EDC's work readiness curriculum *Work Ready Now!*, which has been used in several countries to prepare youth for work. The project also introduced a structured work-based learning component, partnering with over 65 private sector companies to provide youth with hands-on learning experiences in a real workplace.

The AWARE project's approach to labor market preparation sought to accomplish the following:

1. **Equip TVET students with more work readiness skills** and improve their access to employment
2. **Establish and strengthen relationships among TVET schools, local businesses, and government** to create a more market-driven TVET system to link students to job opportunities

Among the stakeholders engaged with the AWARE Project—including the Ministry of Education and Culture in Indonesia (MOE), the Department of Education in the Philippines (DepEd), teachers, and businesses—the clearest

AWARE PROJECT

DURING THIS PILOT PROGRAM, 4,275 STUDENTS TOOK PART IN WORKPLACE EXPERIENCES, benefitting both youth and local businesses.



evidence of project success was demonstrated by the organic expansion of each group's participation.

In total, AWARE trained 135 teachers (55 more than targeted), trained 4,357 students (1,157 more than targeted) and placed 4,275 students (2,995 more than targeted) in structured on-the-job training, such as work exposure or work experience. The project also placed students in work-based learning opportunities with 65 businesses, ranging from microenterprises to large companies and representing a variety of industries and technical skill domains.

Two notable business partners included Globe Telecom in the Philippines and the Ritz-Carlton in Indonesia, who asked the AWARE Project for more students after hiring an earlier group of AWARE students. In addition, the Indonesian Chamber of Commerce and Industry (KADIN) requested trainings on AWARE and is considering using the AWARE approach as one of its officially recognized training models and promoting it to all its members.

What are the Components of AWARE?

The two AWARE components complement the technical skills acquired through TVET schools and form the foundation of a series of steps that help youth enter the workforce with skills and experience:

1. **Work Ready Now! (WRN!):** A participatory, learner-centered approach to developing the employability skills young people need, such as communications, goal setting, leadership, and professionalism in the workplace
2. **Work-Based Learning (WBL):** A series of steps in which students gain gradual experience and responsibility in a workplace setting while also being supported by teachers, employers, and the AWARE team

Making the Most of Business Partnerships

AWARE leveraged both relationships with businesses and access to determined youth to bridge the gap between youth and employability (see figure below).

Encouraged by the promise of the AWARE approach in this two-year, 12-school pilot, the JPMorgan Chase Foundation plans to sponsor a second phase, which is slated to start in late 2016. AWARE II will add a focus on building a pipeline of skilled youth for the information and communications technology (ICT) industries in Indonesia, the Philippines, and Thailand.

RESULTS

- 135 teachers trained (69% more than targeted)
- 4,357 students received a boost in work readiness skills (36% more than targeted)
- 4,275 students placed in structured on-the-job training, such as work exposure or work experience (339% more than targeted)
- 65 partnerships with businesses, small to large, representing a variety of industries and technical skill domains

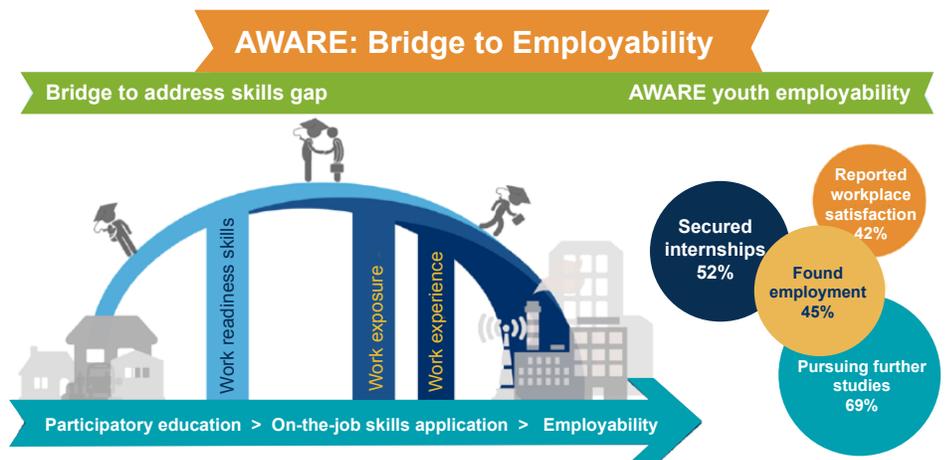


Figure 1. AWARE: Bridge to Employability

FIVE STRATEGIC LESSONS LEARNED FROM AWARE THAT OFFER A FOUNDATION FOR FURTHER WORK

Focusing on the “pilot” character of AWARE, EDC, JPMorgan Chase Foundation, and country partners sought to gain an understanding of the factors that could lead to large-scale improvements in the wider systems of education and workforce development. At least five lessons emerged from the initial two years of work in Indonesia and the Philippines:

Lesson 1: Timing is (almost) everything.

When selected for initial piloting, both Indonesia and the Philippines were considering how to reform their technical and vocational education systems. AWARE—with its promise of developing systems to equip students with employability skills and to link them with work through practical experience—was the right solution at the right time.

In the Philippines, the shift from a K–10 education system to a K–12 system resulted in far-reaching implications for secondary education, creating an appetite for promising models. In the case of Indonesia, recent policy changes in TVET followed an investment by the Asian Development Bank and similarly reinforced a willing interest in innovation. However, in both countries, nearly everyone involved agreed that two years was too short a time frame and that there was a need to include more than six schools per country.

Lesson 2: Practical reform needs to include *bottom-up* as well as *top-down* strategies.

National ministries in both countries had substantive reasons to embrace the AWARE strategies; however, the most significant support came from local and regional government agencies. In Indonesia, the AWARE team worked directly with the Ministry’s Jakarta Local Education Office and the Teacher Training College (P4TK) to implement work in six selected TVET schools in the capital city, Jakarta. The Deputy Minister of TVET was supportive of AWARE’s entry into these schools, but he asked EDC, “... when will we get to the other 9,500 TVETs?” From that vantage point, the team was able to successfully advocate integrating EDC’s WRN! modules into the national curriculum, but there was a desire for an even wider reach.

Similarly, in the Philippines, following the advice of both JPMorgan’s country office and the Department of Education (DepED)’s Bureau of Curriculum Development, the AWARE team engaged DepEd Regional Divisions in Cebu and Manila to select three TVET schools in each city. The regional division directors also arranged to pilot WRN! with general high schools. It seems probable from AWARE’s experience in both countries that a national endorsement is more likely to follow local success than the other way round.

Lesson 3: Positive workforce development requires a practical working partnership with employers.

From the beginning, AWARE established cross-sectoral working groups to facilitate dialogue between companies and schools in both countries. This had the benefit of acquainting employers with the work readiness training being offered to students, and it also became the basis for success in the WBL component of AWARE. The resulting partnership of businesses and schools placed youth in work experiences and internships as the first steps to finding postgraduate employment.

“The AWARE Project helps us to find talents with the required skills. The Ritz-Carlton Jakarta, Pacific Place requires staff with good competency not only in technical areas, but also with great hospitality & working attitudes.”

—Agustinus Haryanto, HR Director of The Ritz-Carlton Jakarta, Pacific Place



Check out
edc.org

THE RITZ-CARLTON AND STEPHEN'S STORY

The Ritz-Carlton in Jakarta Indonesia, collaborated with the AWARE project to introduce customized training that built on its pre-existing *Community Footprints: Succeed Through Service* program. *Succeed Through Service* focuses on teaching life skills to marginalized students using a hands-on approach.

AWARE placed two students in the Ritz-Carlton as part of a structured week of work exposure. One of the participants was Stephen, an engineering student at a TVET school in East Jakarta, where he learned **machine operation** and **small machine repair and maintenance**. During his week at the Ritz-Carlton, Stephen used the work readiness skills he acquired through AWARE, including **communications, teamwork, and problem-solving**.

As a result of the strong work ethic shown by AWARE students during their placements, the Ritz-Carlton continued to conduct specialized WRN! training open to youth in all partner schools. Participating youth were eligible to interview for the *Talent Bank* program and qualify for one-year internship placements at the hotel. The Ritz-Carlton will continue working with AWARE schools as part of the *Talent Bank* program.

“AWARE gave me an opportunity to apply the skills and technical knowledge I learned at the Ritz-Carlton Jakarta, Pacific Place, for five days with real employers. The hotel also interviewed me and chose me to continue in a six-month school internship.

When I studied in school, I thought my engineering skills could be applied in factory work. Now I know that what I learned in my internship at the hotel can be applied in other careers as well.”

**—Stephen, AWARE Participant,
Jakarta, Indonesia**

Private sector and industry association partners included BMW, Globe Telecom, Indonesian Chamber of Commerce and Industry (KADIN), LG Electronics, and Schneider Electric. In the Philippines, companies receive the support of an especially active employee volunteer effort.

Lesson 4: Enlisting committed engagement of TVET teachers is key to substantive and political success, and it requires conscious effort.

Both work readiness instruction and management of the WBL activity required new knowledge and a different approach to teaching for many teacher participants in AWARE. Learning how to engage students in a non-traditional, active learning process began at the outset of AWARE with teacher leadership in adapting the WRN! curriculum to local contexts, and it continued through a series of training-of-trainer workshops for TVET teachers on the adapted WRN! curriculum and active learning methodologies. Being engaged from the beginning in this way meant that teacher participants took ownership of the process. This feeling of program membership and ownership made the next steps in WBL—placing students in the workplace to develop their skills in a real work environment—more effective.

Lesson 5: Despite the intensity of the process, a short pilot can successfully form the foundation for further work and provide a deeper understanding of challenges and solutions.

Two years is clearly not enough time to design, refine, and fully implement an initiative requiring the practical commitment of complex organizations such as education systems and the school-to-work pipeline. It is also not long enough to build authentic, working partnerships between schools and private employers. However, it *is* enough time to plan and adapt existing materials and approaches to new contexts and to discover what will work under diverse circumstances. Building on this brief but successful pilot, EDC and JPMorgan Chase Foundation are optimistic that further investment will produce additional answers about how to productively engage TVET schools, private employers, and young people.



Education Development Center, Inc.
43 Foundry Avenue, Waltham, MA 02453-8313
Ph: (617) 969-7100 Web: edc.org

Boston | Chicago | New York | Washington, D.C.