

ESCUELAS-TALLER
Y CASAS DE OFICIOS.
A TRAINING AND EMPLOYMENT
PROGRAMME FOR THE YOUNG
UNEMPLOYED

The basic philosophy of the Escuelas-Taller y Casas de Oficios (Workshop Schools and the Apprenticeship Centres) Programme is to employ youths «abandoned» outside the job market in restoration projects related to our no-less-abandoned natural and cultural heritage.

Currently, many countries face the problem of finding jobs for their latest generations of school-leavers since the traditional models of industrial development, for various reasons, are unable to absorb the available labour supply. In Spain alone, the unemployment rate stands at about 18% of the working population and young people under 25 comprise practically half of this figure.

Further, our historical, artistic and natural heritage, steeped in wealth, is undergoing a similar process of abandonment and decline. The reasons are manifold, and include most notably the depopulation of rural areas, scarcity of resources and the lack of conservation and protection structures, the combined workings of which relate to the social environment.

The Spanish Government started Programme at the close of 1985, financed by the Ministerio de Trabajo y Seguridad Social through the Instituto Nacional de Empleo, with further cooperation from the Ministerio de Cultura, Federación Española de Municipios y Provincias and the subsequent co-financing by the European Social Fund.

Agreements has been negotiated with Spanish municipal councils, autonomous community authorities, national land trusts and other non-profit-making institutions so as to arouse their interest and promote initiatives that could be developed as part of the proposed Escuelas-Taller Programme.

Basic criteria have been established for the schools which are the following:

- High level of youth unemployment in the locality.
- Existence and need for restoration of national heritage.
- Undertaking by the assisting entities to contribute the necessary means for their implementation, principally, a centre for the school, the formulation of the projects to be carried out and the material and equipment required therefor.
- Lastly, the availability of local professionals and craftsmen to form the interdisciplinary teams of teachers and monitors.

Having resolved the administrative, permit and judicial competence problems, work on the first schools began at the end of 1985. Initially, 12 schools were established and, during 1986, this number rose rapidly to 38 and subsequently to 108 with a total of 5.000 students and almost 2.000 teachers and monitors, following the approval of the Programme by the Council of Ministers.

The dimension reached by the experience made it necessary to formulate a legal and economic framework tailored to the Programme's requirements.

The Ministerial Order dated March 29, 1988 covered these requirements and the legal status of the Escuelas-Taller was regulated as was the financing therefor, jointly charged to the Annual State Budget and the European Social Fund.

Under the terms of this Ministerial Order, the Escuelas-Taller constitute a State-run employment-training Programme, the purpose of which is to avail unemployed people, preferably those under 25, of qualifications. This is done in conjunction both with practical working experience, thus enhancing their employment opportunities in jobs related to the restoration or promotion of artistic, historical, cultural or natural heritage, and with the care of urban or natural-environment landscapes together with the improvement of living conditions in towns and villages.

The Schools may be promoted by the following institutions:

- State Agencies.
- Local Corporations.
- Autonomous Communities.
- Autonomous Agencies.
- State Companies.
- Public or private non-profit-making institutions.

The training process comprises two stages:

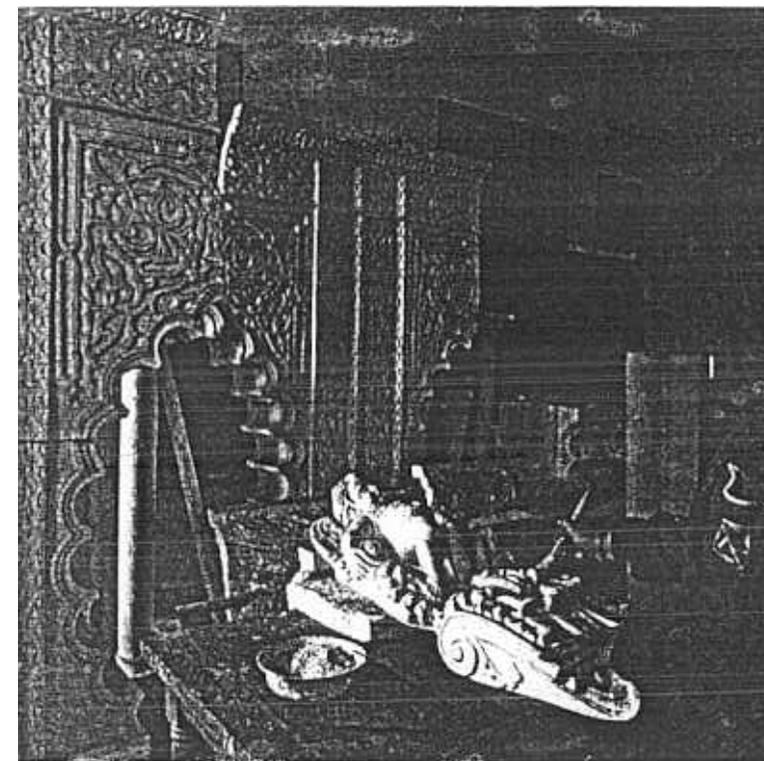
1.—An introductory training stage, with financial bursaries and subsidies including provision for transport and maintenance.

2.—A training stage alternating with practical work geared to a qualification and professional expertise. The contracts entered into with the students are such that, under current regulations, the professional insertion of young people is favoured.

Both stages last three years.

The students/workers are selected by the Dirección Provincial del Instituto Nacional de Empleo in cooperation with the promoting agency.

To set up a Escuela-Taller, the project-promoting agency must file an application with the Dirección Provincial del Instituto Nacional de Empleo, the contents of which should conform to the provisions of the Ministerial Order dated 29-III-88.



The financing of the items included in Article 10 of the aforementioned Ministerial Order is made with a charge to:

- Provisions earmarked annually in the Budget of the Instituto Nacional de Empleo to accommodate the programmes.
- Annually scheduled provisions to co-finance the subsidies granted by the European Social Fund.
- Economic contributions from the promoting entity or, as and where appropriate, from other Institutions or Agencies.

This Programme intends to recover a series of repeatedly undervalued techniques and skills so as to foster a harmonious and overall development of regions with a geographical and cultural unity, thus avoiding depopulation and the abandonment of resources which, if rationally used, could satisfactorily sustain these communities.

The specialists participating in the Escuelas-Taller hail from various professional fields. The Schools address construction and restoration, design and plan-reading, historical analysis in the context of the region at issue and an interactive, dynamic approach to applied didactic methodology.

Open educational programming, the environment seen from a conservationist standpoint, working procedures and the skills of different trades are all considered by architects, surveyors, historians, archeologists, geographers, pedagogues, adult education teachers, biologists, agronomical engineers, agricultural technicians, trade craftsmen and other specialists. The interdisciplinary teams enrich the field of training design, making it radically open and alive and tailoring it to the actual requirements of an area and the individuals who inhabit it, and to the job market and educational needs of youths.



The field of architectonic restoration and renovation calls for procedures and processes used in various trades and crafts that are currently becoming extinct, such as stone hewing, timber arming, traditional stonemasonry and forging.

Further, new professions are being developed in the natural environment as a result of society's change in viewpoint and greater responsiveness to the need for a conservationist, non-destructive approach. The outcome has been a revival and promotion of traditional activities and improvement of the quality of life.

Working students are intended to acquire knowledge and skills of all the above-mentioned trades during each stage of their work, thereby receiving comprehensive training which will enable them to tackle the restoration and conservation of both monuments and popular architecture and of the natural environment, attaining an overall picture of the work at hand.

Whereas in occupational training the teacher/student ratio is always small, in the Escuelas-Taller it is one to seven, facilitating individual monitoring of the educational and apprenticeship process for each student. The breakdown of tuition into theory, practical workshops and on-site work allows work in very small groups which precludes any autocratic teaching approach.

The aforementioned circumstances allow a continuous assessment system to be used, which is enhanced by the speed and flexibility with which any potential shortcomings of the training process can be resolved.

The Escuelas-Taller Programmes are interdependent with regard to theory and practice since the former focuses on the on-site practical work of the project in question and on the conservation of the region and its buildings and natural environment.

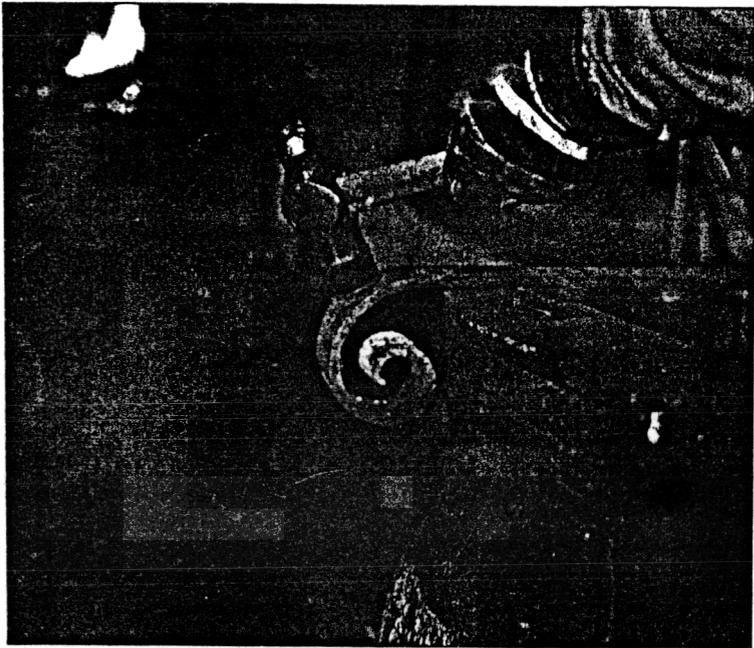
Accordingly, all the subjects addressed have a specific, direct rationale: construction and materials of the related project. Based on the study of each region, students will study the general history of art and archeology, documentation, field research, botany, agricultural sciences, phytopathology, etc., in accordance with their individual needs, current level of learning and practical requirements.

The overriding intention is to achieve the coordination and cohesion that are generally lacking in other educational approaches.

One striking innovation with regard to occupational training is the workshop and on-site work. This is most advantageous since, on the basis of training Programmes, it is sought to successively adapt the students to the working reality of a company, to interpersonal relations and to the use of resources having regard to time and productivity.

Also, there is satisfaction at having completed a useful project; here is no sense of having wasted one's resources, but rather one of having benefited the community.

On completion of the training process, the students are counselled and evaluated, and receive work-related information, company training and technical assistance. The latter must be guaranteed for at least six months, and shall include, inter alia, information and support in the administrative procedures required to set up a business, formulation of viability and market studies, counselling and technical back-up in relation to business management.



Furthermore, for students or workers who have not completed their primary and early secondary schooling, supplementary education is provided under the terms envisaged by the Cooperation Agreements between the Ministerio de Trabajo y Seguridad Social and the Ministerio de Educación y Ciencia (Ministry of Education and Science) or with the Autonomous Community to which authority on this matter has been transferred.

For subsequent potential employment purposes, the Instituto Nacional de Empleo will award professional certificates, and attendance and evaluation reports will also be issued on completion of full courses or individual training modules. Notwithstanding, the Escuelas-Taller will award certificates accrediting the professional knowledge, skills and working experience acquired by students.

To supplement the Escuelas-Taller and, basically, as a means of creating employment in the depressed areas of major cities, the Ministerial Order dated 29-III-88 also implemented the Casas de Oficios Programme. This Programme is similarly structured, although it involves less general training and focuses on the learning of a single trade during a maximum term of one year.

The achievements recorded are considerable. From a national heritage standpoint, work is underway on the restoration and conservation of public monuments in towns, cities and historical/artistic complexes, on the care of urban landscapes, gardens and environment, on national parks and protected areas, and on the improvement of infrastructures and the quality of life. Stock is being taken of regional resources so as to encourage initiatives that ensure appropriate use of such resources.

Of greater importance are the results obtained with regard to youth training and employment: their integration into society is being smoothed, they are provided with money, independence and the opportunity, in short, to lead a decent life away from drugs and delinquency thanks to their integration in a group where they become accustomed to self-discipline and motivation and feel useful doing accomplished work benefiting the community.

PROMOTION AND DEVELOPMENT MODULES OF THE ESCUELAS-TALLER AND CASAS DE OFICIOS PROGRAMME

The Promotion and Development Modules are a new tool to perfect and expand the Escuela-Taller experience.

The modules' are intended to have a flexible function, adaptable to the needs of the scope of the Escuelas-Taller which they support; they are headed by young professionals specialized in fields as required to achieve as full a knowledge as possible of the actual situation in the areas involved. Their specific functions are listed below:

- Analyse and develop possible new action on the local level, integrating and coordinating all the available resources in order to ensure rational and just exploitation thereof.
- Achieve an in-depth knowledge of the Natural and Cultural Heritage in their area, in order to establish priority measures contributing to sustained development.
- Publicise the initiatives of the various Escuelas-Taller located in their area, entering all available information on area resources and needs into a data base, and in particular the needs for jobs and the possibility of creating them; in so doing, they are to consider the resources on the whole, and in this respect to assign each school specific tasks, under the perspective of most rational exploitation, based on the programme's potential to support eco-development plans already under way, or under consideration.
- Participate in programmes for the conservation, protection and planning of urban centres and surroundings, to enhance infrastructure, and inhabitants' quality of life, devoting particular attention to marginal areas by furthering and participating in programmes for the development of infrastructure, social and community facilities and services, for the adaptation of architecture to nature, for the promotion of open areas, establishment of recreational areas, and the construction of parks, gardens and natural reserves. This participation entails carrying out programmes for research training, providing the general public with knowledge and information as a way to aid the underprivileged and provide them with a decent job concomitant with their so-

- Cooperate with the National Employment Office in discovering and furthering employment opportunities in the area, designing an appropriate training programme for our pupil-employees both to meet the demand for the trades they are learning, and to ensure their occupational integration in a job as stable and gratifying as possible.
- Participate in the design of courses in business management, to promote establishment of cooperatives, worker companies or other suitable forms of organisation to enable the constitution by pupil-employees of autonomous worker associations, as well as to provide support for finding jobs for them in both the public and private sectors.
- Collaborate in the follow-up of the jobs found, and furnish guidance and support for these workers, allowing them, for a certain amount of time, to use Escuela-Taller facilities for drafting projects, reports, bids, papers, etc., and providing them with legal and financial advice to solve the problems arising around their new occupation.
- Provide the administrative means needed to organise centres to be used as a headquarters both for training trainers, and for meeting venues for principals, monitors and pupils from the Escuelas-Taller in the vicinity, as well as from schools under the National Programme located in other areas, but with similar objectives; also to fit out buildings and facilities to be used as hostels, meeting venues and accommodations for national, European or Latin American visitors.
- These centres have a communications and public image division which enables them to organise exhibits, publish the corresponding catalogues, edit publications, videos, bulletins, theme reports, radio and television programmes, etc., as a way of advertising the schools' initiatives and publicising their activities.