

Youth**Action**Net®

CASE STUDY SERIES

Joule Institute:

*Moving Youth toward Impactful
Careers*

A partnership between:



GEORGETOWN UNIVERSITY

School of Foreign Service
Global Human Development Program



Introduction

This is one of a series of case studies produced by students enrolled in the Global Human Development Program at Georgetown University through its partnership with the International Youth Foundation. Students enrolled in a course exploring the role of social enterprises and social entrepreneurs were paired with young leaders of social ventures identified through the IYF's YouthActionNet® program. The students were given the assignment of analyzing the venture's assets, successful methodologies, and opportunities for investment to increase impact. Through this experiential learning process, the student consultants gained hands-on experience and exposure to the needs of social enterprises. The ventures, too, benefited from student insights into their strengths, areas for growth, and recommendations for enhancing their impact and sustainability. The Georgetown practicum is part of YouthActionNet's larger efforts to partner with institutions of higher learning around the globe to integrate social change into the academic experience and career interests of students.

International Youth Foundation

The International Youth Foundation (IYF) invests in the extraordinary potential of young people. Founded in 1990, IYF builds and maintains a worldwide community of businesses, governments, and civil society organizations committed to empowering youth to be healthy, productive, and engaged citizens. IYF programs are catalysts of change that help young people obtain a quality education, gain employability skills, make healthy choices, and improve their communities.

www.iyfn.net

YouthActionNet®

Since 2001, YouthActionNet, a program of the International Youth Foundation, has provided founders of social ventures, ages 18 to 29, with the training, networking, coaching, funding, and advocacy opportunities they need to strengthen and scale their impact. These young social entrepreneurs have pioneered innovative solutions to critical local and global challenges, resulting in increased civic engagement, improved health, education reform, economic opportunity, environmental protection, and more inclusive societies. Our work is carried out through a network of 23 national and regional youth leadership institutes that collectively support over 1,350 young social entrepreneurs globally.

www.youthactionnet.org

Global Human Development Program at Georgetown University

The Global Human Development Program of Georgetown University is home to one of the world's premier master's degree programs in international development. An innovative, academically rigorous skills-based graduate program, the Master of Global Human Development degree prepares the next generation of development professionals to work with public sector agencies, private businesses, and non-profit organizations that advance development. Through coursework, extracurricular activity, and practical fieldwork experiences, our graduates develop the insights, skills, and experiences necessary to become leaders in development and make a difference in our global community.

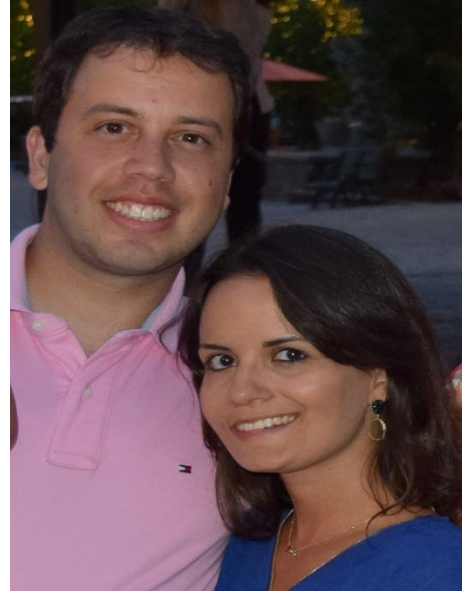
<https://ghd.georgetown.edu>

INTRODUCTION

Meet Shirley and Fernando Schneider, Co-Founders of Joule Institute

Shirley Schneider grew up in the Brazilian state of Bahia, where poverty and stark inequalities abound. Conscious of her privileged access to educational and professional opportunities, she became determined to be part of the solution to the social inequities around her. She became a mentor, working with underprivileged high school students to plan and materialize their goals. A Business Administration graduate from the Catholic University of Rio Grande do Sul, Shirley worked at Dell, Eichenberg, and Convector before launching Joule Institute with her husband, Fernando.

Fernando Schneider overcame financial constraints and limited opportunities from his humble upbringing to study Business Administration at the Federal University of Rio Grande do Sul, where he met Shirley. After completing university, Fernando secured a succession of competitive jobs in the tech sector at Google, Dell, and Brazil's UOL. He credits his achievements to the individuals who voluntarily coached, mentored, and urged him toward personal growth.



In 2015, Fernando achieved his longstanding goal of pursuing his Masters in Business Administration at the Tuck School of Business. There, he and Shirley designed and launched Project Joule, a free sharing economy platform that connects socially conscious professionals with determined youth who are entering the job market and are in need of hard-to-come-by guidance. The platform also targets unemployed young professionals who are struggling to get their careers back on track. In 2017, Project Joule changed its name to Joule Institute.

Within three years of its launch, Joule Institute has attracted thousands of mentors and mentees from across Brazil, as well as a number of corporations who have offered partnership and financial support.

Joule Institute is Moving Youth toward Impactful Careers

The Problem

Entering and remaining in the job market is a major challenge for Brazilian youth, especially as the country recovers from a recession that saw 3.5 million formal jobs leave the marketplace between 2015 and 2016.¹ Brazil could be experiencing an historic demographic dividend, as a record number of people are coming of working age—instead, never have so many young people been out of work.

¹ <https://g1.globo.com/economia/noticia/brasil-perdeu-2-milhoes-de-empregos-formais-em-2016-pior-resultado-em-40-anos.ghtml>

Youth unemployment hit a 27-year high at the end of 2017, reaching 30 percent of youth 15 to 24 years old, more than twice the world average of 13.1 percent.²

Brazilian youth are legally able to enter the formal job market as apprentices at age 14 and as full-time workers at age 16. However, job hunting, preparing resumes, interviewing, and cultivating a professional network can be difficult tasks.

Within this context, firms and organizations that promote employability, job training, and network building can play a pivotal role in increasing market access to youth and in helping businesses find new talent. Popular employment services, such as Catho, focus on publicizing job opportunities and connecting applicants to vacant positions. Others, like CIEE, do the same for free. Coaching and mentorship services, however, are generally expensive and inaccessible to lower-income youth.

“We embraced the idea of the joule, which represents work through force and movement. We wanted to be the force that helps youth move into the job market and create impactful and successful careers.”

Shirley Schneider

The Solution

Shirley and Fernando recognized the lack of available and accessible mentorship services as a market opportunity, and designed Joule Institute to meet the needs of both youth and employers in the Brazilian labor market. Its approach to youth employability explores the power of the sharing economy to provide mentorship and promote professional networks for underserved youth.

The main activities undertaken by Joule Institute are overseeing and guiding the mentorship process and securing partnerships to provide complementary services to mentees. All mentors help prepare their mentees to enter the job market or move forward in their careers, and some also provide mentorship to MBA candidates and entrepreneurs, depending on each mentee's aspirations.

One key to success has been the large and growing body of volunteer mentors. New mentors and mentees alike may join for free at negligible cost to Joule Institute. Because of its reliance on volunteerism, the organization operates on a budget of only \$2,000USD per year, which is less than \$1 per mentee. This means there is potential for continued scaling without significantly elevating costs or changing how the organization fundamentally works.



² http://www.ilo.org/global/publications/books/global-employment-trends/WCMS_598669/lang--pt/index.htm

In developing its solution to the youth employability problem, Joule Institute has drawn on Fernando's experience in the tech industry and both his and Shirley's corporate relationships. Since its launch, efficient use of social media and professional connections have helped spread the word about Joule Institute and attract volunteers and beneficiaries. Thanks to the partnerships and donations Joule Institute has acquired, mentees have enjoyed a diverse set of free courses and workshops on topics such as building attractive resumes and LinkedIn profiles, making career plans, and preparing for job interviews.

In the short term, Joule Institute aims to become a benchmark organization in the development of well-prepared professionals who enjoy wide access to educational and labor market opportunities. It is on track to achieving those goals. In three years, Joule Institute has enlisted over 1,250 mentors from 250 cities and 3,500 mentees, of which 70 percent were employed at post-mentorship check-ins. The organization also has more than 10,000 followers across its social media channels.

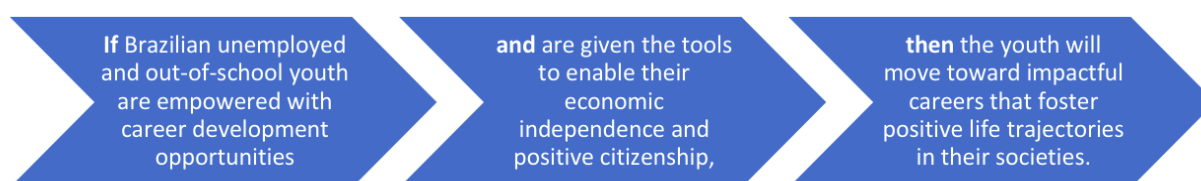


Figure 1 - Joule Institute Theory of Change

OPERATIONAL MODEL

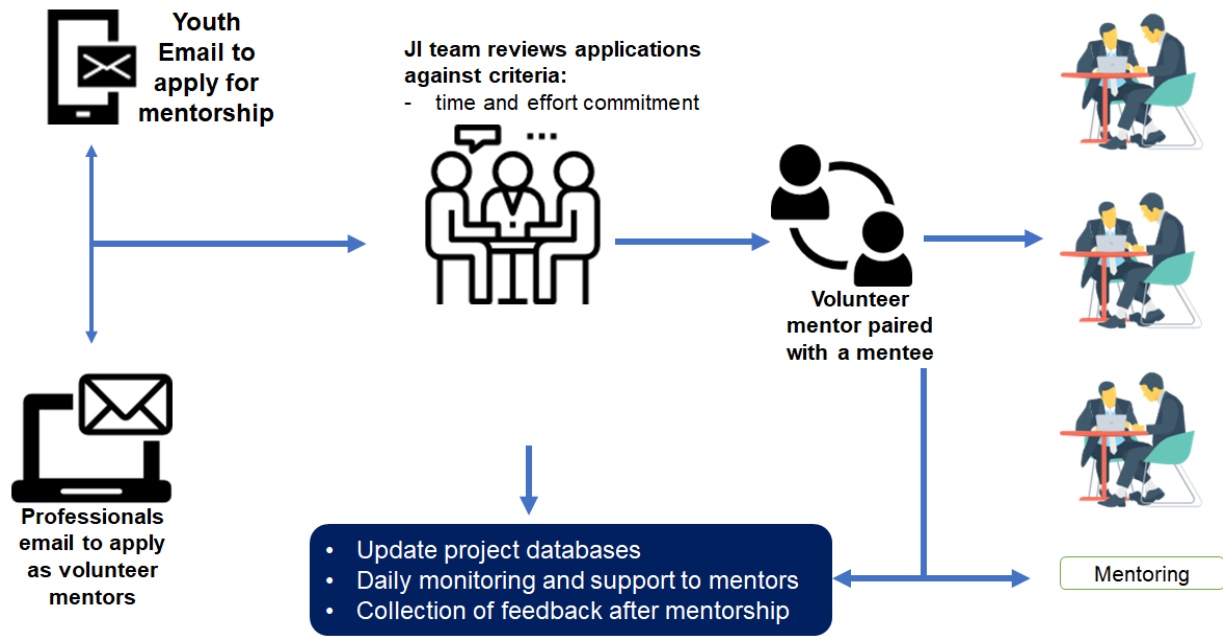
Structure

In 2017, the team took several large steps forward in its organizational evolution. They expanded the management team, formally registered as a nonprofit organization, and changed its name from Projet Joule to Joule Institute. Joule Institute is presently composed of its Board of Directors and one assistant. The Board consists of the two co-founders, who serve as President and General Director, a Director for Partnerships, and two Fiscal Counselors. They meet at least once a month, and have the following roles:

- **Fernando Schneider** is a co-founder and serves as President. He oversees the strategic direction-setting and ensures the organization has enough revenue streams to run its programs.
- **Shirley Schneider**, co-founder and the General Director of Joule Institute, takes charge of the day-to-day operations of the organization. With the support of an administrative assistant, she handles the connection of volunteer mentors to youth mentees and provides them with feedback and support. Shirley leads the screening process that accepts new members to the network. She is also developing the organization's metrics for performance monitoring and impact evaluation.
- **Beatriz Aguirre** is the Director for Partnerships. In addition to organizing Board meetings, Beatriz supports the co-founders in building new partnerships, handling logistics, and in marketing and branding activities of the organization.

- **Renato Romero** and **Bruno Barreto** serve as Fiscal Counselors and general advisors to the Board. They provide guidance on legal matters, government relations, and financial accountability.

Systems and Processes



Joule Institute’s flagship program is its career mentorship program, linking volunteer professionals to youth in need of jobs and employability services. To reach youth, it advertises on its social media channels, including Facebook and Twitter. At the same time, the organization partners with businesses, NGOs, and multinationals to recruit professionals to volunteer as mentors.

For aspiring mentors and mentees to apply, they must send an email to Joule Institute following the guidelines provided on the website. Mentee applications are considered based on their need and their commitment to completing the mentorship, while mentor applications are considered based on work experience and whether volunteers can commit time to organize meetings and provide support to mentees, whether face-to-face or virtually. Joule Institute reviews all applications and pairs each qualifying youth to an appropriate mentor based on a matching of mentee aspirations to mentor strengths.

The average mentorship lasts eight weeks and is structured in the following modules:

- Career planning
- Writing a CV/resume and creating a LinkedIn profile
- Preparing for an interview
- Creating networks
- Job hunting

Each mentor has the flexibility to use the modules as they see fit and is encouraged to adjust the content of the mentorship based on the needs of the youth. Upon successful completion of the mentorship, the mentee is considered a graduate, ready to start the process of job hunting. At this point, mentors will typically take on another mentee, though most mentors do stay in touch with their graduated mentees and offer support whenever needed.

“I’ve been connected to Joule Institute for about a semester. At first the process was intense. They showed me how to look at the job market in a practical way, and how to build a resume and search for opportunities. These things seem simple, but I didn’t know the importance of paying attention to details. When I started, I was unemployed and finishing my university studies. Joule helped me organize my time and plan my career. I found a job within a few months, and just recently had a new job offer. I believe the professional posture I gained through Joule opened these opportunities up to me.”

Renan Campos, Mentee

Ways of Working

Shirley Schneider manages the platform through which mentors connect with young people. Communication happens mostly online, usually via email, Facebook, or WhatsApp. Shirley’s team meets both at the office and virtually to review applications, provide regular support to the mentors, and maintain records of all activities.

Joule Institute is currently exploring options to leverage cost-effective and user-friendly technology to facilitate the connection between mentors and youth. The organization hopes to adopt mobile apps for scheduling, real-time reporting, access to content, and session planning.

At the end of each mentorship session, the Joule Institute team evaluates the impact that the mentorship had on the youth and keeps records of any changes that can be associated with the mentorship.

KEY ASSETS & SUCCESSFUL METHODOLOGIES

Joule Institute counts on three key assets - or jewels - that, together, uniquely position the organization to serve opportunity-hungry youth. A large volunteer network of experienced professionals guarantees quality, value, and capacity to meet demand. Also, strategic partnerships with corporations, human resource institutions, and job listing firms enable Joule Institute's work by securing donations and connecting mentees to available job placements. Finally, Joule Institute's original mentorship methodology facilitates the onboarding process of new mentors and guides their relationships with mentees.

Large Volunteer Network of Experienced Professionals

Joule Institute was launched with the hopes of gradually attracting a significant number of volunteers and mentees. However, within a few days of the launch, hundreds of professionals and youth had already signed up, and soon the first mentorships were underway. Mentors poured in from hundreds of cities both inside and outside of Brazil, bringing experience from a wide range of professional domains, from finance and management consulting to legal practice and journalism.



The initial public excitement around the Joule Institute platform can be partially attributed to the co-founders' skillful use of marketing on Facebook, as well as to their corporate connections. Months before the launch, Fernando and Shirley were already reaching out into their professional networks to spread the word of the forthcoming program.

Joule Institute has also attracted mentors by playing on the incentives that drive volunteerism in the context of professional networks. Shirley and Fernando realized that mentors would be interested not only in fulfilling an inner drive to share their expertise, but also in the possibility of connecting with other experienced professionals. Joule Institute has organized happy hours and other social events to provide mentors with opportunities to do networking of their own.

Joule Institute also works to keep mentors and mentees engaged. All applications are initially screened to ensure that only youth who are motivated receive mentorship, and only volunteer applicants with relevant experience and sufficient time to dedicate to the mentorship process become mentors. As a result, only 5 percent of mentees have abandoned the process once it has started.

The average Joule Institute volunteer mentor is in their late twenties to mid-thirties. There are an equal number of men and women, and most mentors have postgraduate degrees and over seven years of professional experience.

Joule Institute recently launched the Ambassadors program, through which the most dedicated mentors are invited to lead local workshops and help secure new partnerships with businesses within their professional networks. With 10 Ambassadors already in the program, the organization's aim is to learn from this initial pilot experience before gradually inviting more mentors to join the team of Ambassadors.

Strategic Partnerships

The members of Joule Institute's management team each have significant work experience at large corporations, giving the organization direct access to professional networks at McKinsey & Co., Google, Microsoft, Dell, Goldman Sachs, UOL, Laureate, Santander, Iguatemi, Eichenberg, Convector, Symantec, BYU, and FranklinCovey. With the recently created Ambassadors program, this list continues to grow. This network of partners has been used to spread the word about Joule

Institute and attract new mentors. Joule Institute has also relied on these companies to fund its operations.

Beyond this network, Joule Institute has secured a handful of key partnerships that enable it to provide services to youth that complement the mentorship process. Siemens and DXC in Brazil actively encourage their employees to join Joule Institute's volunteer network; Cielo offers special job opportunities for Joule Institute's mentees; and Café com Vagas helps match Joule Institute graduates to job opportunities in the labor market.

Future partnerships may provide more sustainable and long-term funding contracts as more human resource firms look to tap into Joule Institute's network of young talent. Joule Institute's network offers value to such firms that would otherwise spend more time, energy, and financial resources hunting talent.

Original Mentorship Methodology

Joule Institute's mentorship methodology was developed by its management in collaboration with a group of experienced volunteer mentors. It includes step-by-step guidelines for mentors to reference in their mentorship processes, including detailed guidance for each module (career planning, CV/resume writing and LinkedIn profiles, interviews, networks, and job hunt). It is complemented by instructional material that is distributed to mentees to help them deliberate on their professional trajectories, preferences, strengths, and weaknesses.

Having a community-designed and self-owned methodology means Joule Institute can continually adapt and perfect the way it helps members connect to each other. Lessons learned are collected and used to improve the method over time. Also, since it is customizable to each mentor-mentee process, the method can serve as a foundational guide for new mentors, while allowing more experienced mentors to adapt and conduct the mentorship as they see fit.

“I have had the opportunity to mentor five young people, all of whom were seeking their first employment. They come from different social classes and distinct career ambitions. I have a lot of freedom in how I conduct our interactions, but whenever I need support from Joule Institute, their response is quick and helpful.”

André Andrade, Mentor and Ambassador

CONCLUSION

In an economy in which 30 percent of youth are unemployed, and in which a limited number of institutions specialize in helping them find a place in the labor market, Joule Institute is a promising enterprise. It offers a novel and scalable approach to Brazil's youth unemployment problem and requires only modest resources to maintain.

Joule Institute's model employs sustainable means to leverage the power of the sharing economy to help youth access career opportunities. However, as the organization grows, improving its metrics, streamlining operations through the use of information and communication technology systems, and guaranteeing operational funds will be vital to maintaining and expanding its service to Brazilian youth.

In the coming two years, Joule Institute will seek to develop a sustainable fundraising strategy and implement effective monitoring and evaluation systems. Success in these areas will help ensure the continued growth of the organization's network and impact.

FURTHER INFORMATION ABOUT JOULE INSTITUTE

- [Joule Institute Website](#)
- [Joule Institute Facebook Page](#)
- [YouthActionNet Fellow Profile of Shirley Schneider](#)
- Press: [Laureate Brazil 2017 Award](#)
- Press: [Tuck School of Business about Projeto Joule](#)
- Press: [Launch of Projeto Joule](#)

AUTHORS

Muzabel Welongo

M.A. Candidates in Global Human Development
Walsh School of Foreign Service, Georgetown University
mw983@georgetown.edu

Tiago Cordeiro

M.A. Candidates in Global Human Development
Walsh School of Foreign Service, Georgetown University
tbc33@georgetown.edu

Made possible by:



LAUREATE
INTERNATIONAL
UNIVERSITIES®