

## PRESS RELEASE

### ***Unique training initiative for unemployed young people in Germany receives donation worth millions***

- *J.P. Morgan donates USD 3.5 million to expansion of JobAct® initiative throughout Germany*
- *Federal Minister of Labour and Social Affairs Ursula von der Leyen assumes patronage*
- *Expansion starts today with the opening of office in Hanover*

Frankfurt/Witten, 17.01.2011 – A sign of many things to come: following on from the success of a regional pilot project, financial institution J.P. Morgan has decided to donate 3.5 million US dollars (approx. 2.8 million euros) towards the expansion throughout Germany of a training initiative known as JobAct®. The aim of the scheme is to offer training to the young long-term unemployed. Based on a ground-breaking method developed by social entrepreneur Sandra Schürmann, JobAct® uses theatrical teaching techniques to prepare young adults for career and life challenges. Over the past five years, an average of 65 percent of the scheme's participants have entered the employment market or moved on to higher education. The average placement rate for unemployed young people who take part in conventional training is no more than 30 percent.

JobAct® projects have now been running for five years as part of a scheme offered by PROJEKTFABRIK, an independent registered educational association based in the city of Witten. The projects are targeted specifically at unemployed young adults and are based on a three-block educational method developed by Sandra Schürmann. Participants learn professional skills (Block 1) in combination with social skills (Block 2). These are underpinned by individual, creative approaches to boost self-confidence (Block 3). This is achieved by drawing on techniques used in theatrical teaching and personal development. Most JobAct® training actually takes place on stage. As part of their joint challenge to produce a play, the young adults not only learn practical skills (ranging from stage design to lighting, costume, marketing and PR), they also develop key soft skills. The underlying emphasis, however, is on stimulating participants' intrinsic creativity, thus empowering them to take control of their lives, their learning and their work. The projects last ten months and also include training on submitting job applications, plus an industrial placement at a potential future employer or a company offering training.

The aim of the financial backing is to roll out the scheme nationwide. Other companies are expressly invited to join the scheme, and J.P. Morgan is actively trying to recruit other companies to the JobAct® project to maximise the likelihood of long-term success.

Overall, 112 JobAct® projects have now been completed since the PROJEKTFABRIK scheme was set up in 2005. These took place in 39 towns and cities and involved over 2,000 young adults. Of these, 43.8 percent entered the job market, while another 23.2 percent moved on to inter-company vocational training or further education to gain school-leaving qualifications.

### ***Federal Minister named patron***

Over and above support from industry, the project is also receiving backing from politicians: Dr. Ursula von der Leyen, the Federal Minister of Labour and Social Affairs, has agreed to act as patron for the initiative "in recognition of the special social involvement of J.P. Morgan" and support the planned expansion of the scheme. In December 2010, von der Leyen awarded the director of PROJEKTFABRIK, Sandra Schürmann, the Federal Cross of Merit for her support given to long-term unemployed young people.

### ***Dr. Altenburg: an investment in the future***

The commitment made by J.P. Morgan is the largest single donation the bank has ever made outside the United States.

Central to J.P. Morgan's decision to back JobAct® was the visionary underlying principle and the above-average success rate in finding placements after the project. Outlining the bank's decision, Senior Country Officer Karl-Georg Altenburg states: "In a society and job market dictated by rapid change, education must empower people to keep pace with this change. This only works if knowledge and skills are in line with personal motivation. Also, as far as possible, every individual has to be in a position to apply what they've learnt, develop new ideas and deal with setbacks. The job market is crying out for training concepts capable of equipping young people in particular for a job market in a state of upheaval. And companies also need people capable of working innovatively, creatively and – more than anything – with a strong sense of personal commitment."

According to Altenburg, by backing JobAct®, J.P. Morgan wants to help develop and implement techniques and formal systems to smooth this path. "For us, our involvement is primarily about giving something back to society from our business success and taking social responsibility," he continues. "We had the pleasure of getting to know the JobAct® team during a live regional project, and our impression was one of outstanding professionalism in tackling a core

training and employment issue, for which some highly successful approaches are being created.”

### ***Local offices, a new college, more projects, and assessment of results***

For Sandra Schürmann, financial backing is an opportunity to forge ahead with her plans to expand her methodology throughout Germany and put in place the required training infrastructure. “The support we’re now getting from J.P. Morgan is a quantum leap for us in continuing to expand our training and extend our geographical coverage. We’ll be setting up five regional offices, and during the coming year, we already hope to set up a mobile teaching unit to train staff to work on our projects. The number of JobAct® projects currently stands somewhere between 25 and 30, and over the next three years we want to raise this step by step to at least 100 – as well as invest more time evaluating our results and improving methods. We’re confident that this will enable us to have a lasting effect on the German job market, both qualitatively and quantitatively,” explains Schürmann. “Also, we’re currently mulling over future ways to transfer the educational principles on which JobAct® is based beyond the training arena and into other areas of education.”

### ***New office opens in Hanover***

The first tangible results of this expansion strategy can be seen in the opening today of a PROJEKTFABRIK regional office in Hanover, along with an exhibition of work which will be attended by the State Premier of Lower Saxony, David McAllister.

To find out more and see photographs, visit: [www.projektfabrik.org](http://www.projektfabrik.org)

### **About PROJEKTFABRIK**

A registered association, PROJEKTFABRIK is an independent educational establishment based in Witten, in the German state of North-Rhine Westphalia. Founded by businesswoman Sandra Schürmann in 2005, PROJEKTFABRIK runs training programmes for the long-term unemployed under the age of 25. The programmes are based on a training technique first developed by Schürmann and now offered under a scheme called “JobAct®”. The clients of PROJEKTFABRIK are primarily local employment consortia and other training centres. Services provided by PROJEKTFABRIK range from project management to the acquisition of suitable training partners, public relations work, and bringing together local consortia, educational institutions and businesses.

PROJEKTFABRIK currently employs 28 full-time workers and 30 freelancers. There are currently 22 projects underway throughout the whole of Germany. PROJEKTFABRIK has also already expanded its operations to Spain and the Netherlands. Further PROJEKTFABRIK operations are in the pipeline in other countries.

The PROJEKTFABRIK association first received recognition for its JobAct® programme in 2006, when it was awarded the first National Award For Youth And Work (the "Deutscher Förderpreis Jugend in Arbeit") by the Federal Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs (BMAS) and the Federal Employment Agency (BA). In 2008, PROJEKTFABRIK directors Sandra Schürmann and Simon Rieser were finalists for the Social Entrepreneur prize awarded by the Schwab Foundation and the Boston Consulting Group. Since 2009, the Private Equity Foundation has been helping to expand processes and systems to support the expansion of Sandra Schürmann's training technique through JobAct® projects.

Since 2009, Sandra Schürmann, founder and managing director of PROJEKTFABRIK, has been a member of Ashoka Fellows, the world's largest organisation for supporting social entrepreneurship.

More information on PROJEKTFABRIK is available at [www.PROJEKTFABRIK.org](http://www.PROJEKTFABRIK.org)

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