

SIFA

NEWSLETTER



INNOVATION IN EDUCATION

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The 4th newsletter of the AUDA/AUC Skills Initiative for Africa programme will focus on innovation in education. But what is innovation? One definition says innovation is “the creation, development and implementation of a new product, process or service, with the aim of improving efficiency, effectiveness or competitive advantage.” And that is what is needed for improving skills development not only in Africa but worldwide. There are estimates that 2/3 of our children at school will work in jobs that have not been invented today. When I was at school nobody dreamed of something like the notebooks, internet, cell phones or email communication. When we studied the main tool to capture thoughts were a typewriter and you had to physically go the library, look for a book and take photocopies. And when the book was not available you had to wait for weeks to get it from somewhere. Times have changed: information is available 24/7 provided that you have data, the right equipment and electricity.

Innovation and lifelong learning have already been at the center of the discussion for some time. In this newsletter we are looking at innovation from different sides. We look at the Innovation Expo which will be conducted this year for the second time as a virtual event. Good practices can be a key enabler for innovation for instance, the role of innovation to link the informal sector with TVET institutions. Innovation will continue to be in the center of our intention. AUDA NEPAD will open SIFA FC's Funding Window III for innovation in 2021. This Funding Window will focus upon innovative practices to support youth employability across eight countries. It will especially apply to female and underprivileged youth and respond to the labor market challenges created by COVID-19.

SIFA FC will open Funding Window III for innovation in 2021 and AUDA-NEPAD will support a wide range of innovative projects in skills development, so watch out.

In addition, we are also reflecting on country TVET profiles, Labour market issues in Ethiopia as well as the impact of Covid-19 on the development of labour markets, just to name a few. We look forward to your feedback and sharing of experiences as you reflect on these articles.

Unami Mpofu, AUDA-NEPAD and Ernst Hustaedt, GIZ

Highlights of the African Union’s Education Innovation Programme in 2020

INNOVATING EDUCATION IN AFRICA

Innovating Education in Africa (IEA) was established in 2018. IAE’s vision is to identify, promote, and support replication as much as scale of technically and socially sustainable innovations, in all aspects of education and training in Africa.

The Innovating Education in Africa Expo, hosted by Senegal and Botswana in 2018 and 2019 respectively, brought together stakeholders from the education sector to share experiences, and interact with local innovators. Together, they are addressing critical challenges in Africa’s education and training systems.

Since its inception, the program has identified and promoted 128 innovations across Africa. IEA has provided USD 423,000 in grants to support 24 of the most promising innovations. The identified innovations are compiled in the annually published Africa Education Innovations Handbook, with two publications to date. Furthermore, the Africa Education Innovators Network (AEIN) platform provides a space for innovators to collaborate and share experiences.

In the current crisis of the COVID-19 pandemic, the annual Innovating Education in Africa Expo was held as a series of virtual activities and events, including call for applications, capacity building, dialogue and pitch. The African Union, in partnership with partner organisations (ADEA, Ashoka, GeSCI, GIZ, Mastercard Foundation, UNESCO, UNICEF and UNDP), established a joint group of experts which longlisted 50 innovations and 10 finalists out of 339 innovations, received from 31 African countries. The selection focused on the ability of the innovations to respond to challenges prevalent in the African context, and proof of their potential to be scaled sustainably.

On 24 November 2020, a virtual dialogue was held under the theme: “Building Innovative Education and Training Systems to create Impact at Scale”. The panellists were drawn from previous first prize winners in 2018 and 2019 – Dext Technologies and Goldyouth, and representatives of Safaricom, Cisco, Coursera, Wikimedia, AUDA-NEPAD, as well as the Technical and Vocational Education and Training Authority of Kenya. More than 400 attendees joined the event from across and outside of Africa. The conversations focused on the need for private sector engagement in the education and training system, especially to teach more industry-relevant skills in the curriculum, and increase employability. Furthermore, there was a focus on strengthening education in entrepreneurship, as a critical element for empowering young Africans to start their own enterprises. The role of government was highlighted in enabling the adoption of education innovations to create impact of scale.

The Pitch event was held from 21-22 December 2020 which



Second prize winner IEA 2019. Photo: wLimu, Kenya

offered 10 shortlisted innovations the opportunity to present their innovations before a joint jury, and attendees from across Africa. Three outstanding education innovations emerged as awardees including:

BAG - Building A Generation (Rwanda) - a gamified platform that offers real-time access to experience-based learning for university students; Learnable (South Africa) – a teaching assistant that allows teachers to compose and distribute lessons via a dedicated mobile app and WhatsApp; and Chalkboard Education (Ghana) - a remote teaching and learning toolkit aimed to support teachers and parents during the COVID-19 crisis.

In addition to these events, pilot projects are planned to provide innovators with opportunities to partner with African Union Member States. Within the national education and training systems, trial runs of innovations provide stakeholders with reference points for their adoption and scalability. The projects will be funded with a total of USD 120,000 grants under the AU-EU Partnership, while technical support is provided by the Skills Initiative for Africa (SIFA).

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LINKING INFORMAL SECTOR INNOVATIONS WITH TVET INSTITUTIONS

The informal sector is omnipresent and very dynamic in Kenya. Commonly known as Jua Kali (for hot sun in Swahili), it plays a significant and even increasing role in job creation, production and income generation. According to the Kenya National Bureau of Statistics, the country has a large and burgeoning informal sector, which generated 83.6% of total employment in 2018 and 33.8% of GDP in 2015¹. Informal economic activities, units, enterprises

forms of employment without secure contracts, worker benefits and social protection. The growing unemployment in the country has forced large numbers of youth as well as women to pursue employment in the informal sector, mostly through self-employment or entrepreneurship.

In Kenya, informal sector operations cut across almost all sectors of the economy, and sustain the majority of households². Activities



Spoons made from cow bones left to dry near a pile of white dust after being dyed. This is a process that creates desired patterns on the product. Photo: Brian Otieno, Storitellah.com

and workers (both professionals and non-professionals) are not regulated or protected by the State. Informal work includes all forms of unregistered or unincorporated small-scale productive, vending, financial and service activities, and also comprises all

contribute to the provision of certain goods at cheap prices hence leading to household savings. The sector also provides competition to the formal sector, incrementally leading to innovation in the form of product enhancement. New innovation generally takes the form of import substitution. Nevertheless, there are traces of entirely novel innovations borne of the artisans' ingenuity³. The

informal sector innovation is also associated with frugal innovation which focuses on engagement with the informal economy for the ‘co-creation’ of low cost, decent quality goods, and services for the poor⁴. According to the UNDP Accelerator Labs⁵, there are many, very specific innovations in the informal sector.

Remarkably, waste products are being recycled in a new way and valuable new products, ranging from floor tiles to roads to roofing, are being created. Collectively, these small innovations have a large impact on the important social and economic problem of waste management.

in the innovation, are documented and propagated by the TVET institution through new curriculum and courses in the national programmes.

The informal sector innovators, through their Jua Kali associations, should approach the TVET institutions seeking cooperation and collaboration in developing innovations further, while receiving support in their commercialization. On their part, the TVET institutions, through their Industry Liaison Officer, should engage and consider the informal sector as an important partner with innovative potential, offering attachment to trainees, and exposing



*At Victorious Bones Crafts, Dennis Ojala is softening and cutting bones into different shapes and sizes. This process produces a lot of white dust which is harmful to the lungs.
Photo: Brian Otieno, Storitellah.com*

The minimal relationship and interaction between TVET institutions and the informal sector usually happens through TVET graduates. After completion of training, some end up joining the informal sector as wage or self-employed. These graduates and other informal sector innovators should be encouraged to link up with a local TVET institution to: (i) refine their innovative idea if necessary (ii) seek to use tools, machinery and equipment in developing the innovative project (iii) seek assistance in contacting the relevant authorities in registering the innovation (iv) engage with the private sector companies for commercialization of the innovation, and more importantly (v) ensure that the knowledge and skills gained

them to the professional work environment. Further, the TVET institutions should offer short skill upgrading courses to the informal sector, enabling them to upgrade their product and service quality. In this valuable linkage and collaboration, both players will mutually benefit from one another.

1 Economic Survey 2019

Kenya National Bureau of Statistics

2 Informal Sectors Skills and Occupations Survey (ISSOS)

Basic Report 2020

Kenya National Bureau of Statistics (KNBS)

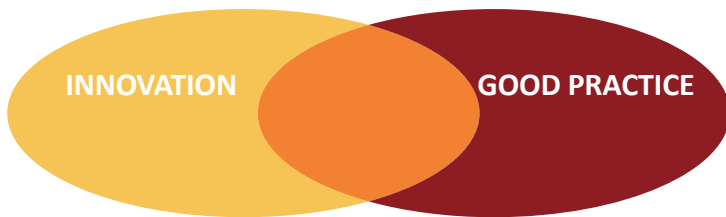
James Wamwangi, SIFA Country Consultant, Kenya

GOOD PRACTICES - AN ENABLER OF INNOVATION

All stakeholders involved in youth skills and employment on the African continent are charged with leveraging the youth dividend. This duty necessitates incremental, and even radical transformation of current practices, systems, and policies. The challenges, barriers, and weaknesses within the system are well documented and known. With renewed energy and resource mobilization, it is critical to identify and promote innovations that fundamentally improve the skills and employment ecosystems.

Innovation and good practice are actually two sides of the same coin, closely related although different. The relationship between good practice and innovation raises a few questions:

- Could it be that every good practice was potentially an innovation?
- Could it be that every good practice can inspire an innovation?
- Could it be that every good practice is at the confluence of knowledge and innovations?



Some may argue that good practices, once identified, become institutionalised and routine, undermining the essence of innovation. Good practices relate to past achievements and norms, defining the current moment; innovation is about the future. However, considering good practices as means of an agile and dynamic process of perpetual improvement rather than an end, strengthens the connection between innovation and good practices.

The ASPYEE (African Skills Portal for Youth Employment and Entrepreneurship) is part of the SIFA (Skills Initiative for Africa) programme, implemented by the African Union Commission (AUC) and the African Union Development Agency (AUDA-NEPAD). The portal provides a unique continental platform that enables knowledge generation, through co-creation processes. Both, policy and practice in key thematic and intervention areas, are identified in the Continental Education (CESA) and Continental TVET Strategies.

The portal aims to serve a diverse audience of stakeholders working in the youth skills and employment ecosystem, including policy makers and implementers, technical and vocational college managers, as well as their lecturers and practitioners.

Visit the ASPYEE portal <https://nepad.org/skillsportalfor youth>

Within this context, good practices are a treasure trove to study from, especially about novelty approaches surrounding skills gaps, employability, and entrepreneurship. Significantly, through mechanisms of dialogue and engagement, it also facilitates a common understanding of what these might mean for future practices. It is evident that current innovative practices can influence future standard practice; however, it is only through a more rigorous and deliberate reflection of these current good practices that will enable future innovations. While innovation is neither simplistic nor linear but complex and dynamic, a deep understanding of the various contexts and the agility is needed to respond.

Henry Ford once said, “If I had asked people what they wanted, they would have said faster horses.” How do we utilise the complex and dynamic cycle, that promotes good practices further into perpetuating innovation in our future practice in the skills development and employability domain? The following building blocks compose a possible model in the culture of organisations and institutions:



Consider the Kolb Learning Cycle below. The model provides a process for the ASPYEE portal to use good practices in unlocking future innovations. By continuously studying good practices and exploring different approaches to them, ASPYEE has the potential to generate many disruptive and innovative ideas.



1. Concrete Experience – good practices (provide concrete experiences) are identified from across the continent. The good practices describe fresh and alternative approaches and methods to traditional ones. They are solution-oriented responses to the challenges and barriers encountered in the skills and employment ecosystem.

2. Reflective Observation of the New Experience – once good practices are recognized- we need to ask:

- What are we learning from this experience?
- How does/can this affect future practice?

Reflection pushes us beyond merely collecting good practices, to an analytical process allowing us to draw lessons, and learn from the experience. Critical dialogue among the diverse stakeholders may spawn meaningful discussions, that shift perspectives and practices. Engagement in these fora enable the process of seeding ideas for innovation.

3. Abstract Conceptualization: the reflection gives rise to new ideas or a modification of an existing abstract concept. The

reflection process will allow us to:

- extract inconsistencies between experience and understanding;
- integrate several diverse observations and thoughts; and
- draw conclusions to create models and theories.

From here onwards, we are able to contemplate, replicate, and scale emerging models and approaches, and most important, can analyse the contextual factors critical to these processes.

4. Active Experimentation – The models, theories, approaches that we arrived at, can now be put to the test in various trials. Through the implementation across different regions and member states, new innovations will arise as stakeholders grapple with their contextual realities and constant change of environment. Therefore, leading to the identification of new concrete experiences, that define new good practices. And here the cycle closes and can continue to repeat.

Current trends and good practice in the field shape the future skills and employment landscape for young people in Africa. The opportunity to construct a better, more efficient, and effective environment that encourages agility and innovation is determined by the how, what and why's of what we do, say and think today. Therefore, deliberate, and planned processes driving innovation are a necessity, not as something extra-ordinary but, as an approach to find solutions to systemic deficiencies. Innovation is a key driver and fundamental facet in leveraging Africa's youth dividend. At the same time, innovation is drawing on as many experiences and stakeholders as possible, giving rise to dialogue and interaction, critical to take skills development and employability to the next level.

Kindly share good practices and your contact details should you wish to be part of our upcoming reflection and dialogue series.

Contact us: aspyee@nepad.org

Zarina Khan, GIZ Senior Technical Adviser to AUDA-NEPAD

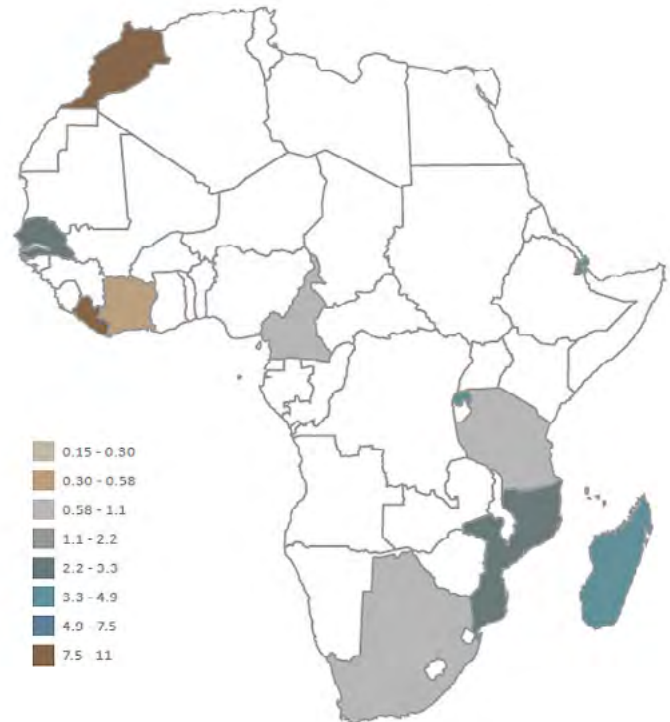
A NEED FOR MORE ACTIVE LABOUR MARKET POLICIES IN AFRICA

In North America, Europe as well as in large parts of Asia, the size of the workforce is already in decline. On the contrary, the African continent will soon be the only continent with an increased working population, and a positive dependency ratio. However, with limited jobs available, the impact on economic growth will be noticeable. Government policy and resource allocation need to create optimal conditions to allow a higher growth rate, leading to an increase in labour demand. Otherwise, the potential energy of the demographic dividend will not be captured through the medium of productive work. The available jobs, in demand as a result of government policy, should ideally be fostered in value creating occupations to further contribute to job creation. The fact, that millions of young people are looking for jobs in Africa, should not be perceived as a ‘youth employment’ crisis but actually as a ‘missing jobs’ crisis.

To explore the possible options, SIFA has asked JET consultants to analyse the issue from an aerial perspective. The report “Putting youth job creation at the centre: Enablers to accelerate youth employment at scale” will be published soon.

One of the key findings include the creation of active labour market policies (ALMP) which support unemployed persons in their job search. The OECD defined ALMP as “all social expenditure (other than education) which is aimed at the improvement of the beneficiaries’ prospect of finding gainful employment or to otherwise increase their earnings capacity. This category includes spending on public employment services and administration, labour market training, special programmes for youth when in transition from school to work, labour market programmes to provide or promote employment for unemployed and other persons (excluding young and disabled persons), and special programmes for the disabled.” The approach of ALMP acknowledges that markets cannot address the issue of unemployment alone. While it is true that most of jobs are created by the private sector, it must also be acknowledged that markets are following different triggers, and that they might fail. The failure might not be perceived from a shareholder perspective, rather from the perspective of a society’s wellbeing and prosperity. In markets, supply and demand still play a major role for job creation, however governments will have to intervene to bridge and fix market failures. Most of the programmes currently implemented by European countries, the US, and the industrialized countries in Asia, follow active labour market patterns.

Coverage of unemployment benefits and ALMPs (% of population) - Africa



Source: Index Mundi (2020) Data are based on national representative household surveys.

Moreover, as ALMP are expensive, most African countries will be challenged to afford them.

The graphic above shows, that coverage of unemployment benefits and ALMP in Africa leaves room for improvement. While ALMP will not be the golden bullet for youth unemployment in Africa, it is at least a viable option for some countries.

The report will be published in May on the ASPYEE webpage.

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BRIDGING BENIN'S SKILLS GAP

Partnerships with private enterprises in agricultural TVET delivery

In Benin, an innovative partnership approach has changed the landscape for TVET delivery through on-the-job training provision. Despite unemployment in many African countries, the high demand for a qualified workforce in the agricultural sector is not sufficiently met. This disparity is partly due to a mismatch between education curricula and labour market needs, particularly practical skills and work experience. Partnerships between agricultural enterprises and Agricultural Training Centres (ATCs) are essential in resolving this mismatch. Engaging companies in skills development can enhance trainees' skills and gear training towards labour market needs.

entrepreneurship in agriculture, specialised curricula and practical partnerships between ATCs and thriving agri-businesses are important.

In Benin, the existing skills mismatch was tackled through partnerships with private enterprises. "Training programmes did not correspond with the qualification profiles demanded by the private sector", says Marcellin A. Hyle, who is the Technical Secretary for ATVET promotion at Benin's TVET Ministry. "In Benin, we found ourselves in this situation until 2014, when the ATVET project, through the Ministry of Agriculture, started to work on the



Innocencia Agbohessou of Ferme Agri-Angelus teaching young interns.

The Agricultural Technical Vocational Education and Training (ATVET) project identified income-generating value chains in 12 AU partner countries based on national labour-market priorities. ATVET has a strong focus on competency-based training to meet labour market needs. To achieve real impact for employment and

question of how to help the professional agricultural school system to become more aligned with the professional world".

In Benin's case, there was a specific focus on the farming of rice, meat (poultry, sheep and pigs) and compost production. Benin's approach is an excellent example of how African countries can

adopt simple but innovative practices to optimise the bridge between agriculture sectorial needs and the labour market supply. Charlie Bonou teaches at one of Benin’s ATCs - Lycée Agricole Médji de Sekou (LAMS) – which benefited from the new approach: “If I want to teach animal castration, I only have four animals but 30 students. Through this AUDA-NEPAD led ATVET programme which is supported by GIZ, the school initiated a one-month internship immersion through partnering with private companies to train the students.



ATVET trainees at the ATC Lyc,e Agricole M,dji de Sekou (LAMS)

Training delivery: Entrepreneurs and professionals are involved in the training delivery by running training courses or sharing their entrepreneurial experiences in some ATCs. Learning from established entrepreneurs is a key asset for the effective preparation of young people starting on their own. In this perspective, the training of entrepreneurs and professionals in delivering courses is at the core of ATVET project intervention as the on-the-field training relies on them.



ATVET trainees at the ATC Lyc,e Agricole M,dji de Sekou (LAMS)

Below is an overview of the types and levels of cooperation that were implemented in Benin. The different forms of partnership illustrate how the private sector can play a crucial role in on-the-job training provision.

Internships: Allow agricultural enterprises to host trainees to practice the theoretical knowledge gained through their training. Trainees can acquire skills related to a given profession in the selected value chains in four phases. The four phases include: (1) establishing efficient outreach channels to enterprises, (2) preparing legal documents, (3) initiating cooperation, and (4) consolidating the cooperation. These phases help ATCs engage efficiently with private enterprises.

Curricula development: The contribution of entrepreneurs and professionals in the agricultural value chains is a crucial form of partnership that has been intensively performed with the ATVET project’s support to develop curricula that meet the agricultural labour market’s needs. Financial and technical support has been provided to hold workshops to amend old curricula and elaborate new ones in the selected agricultural value chains. Leadership, entrepreneurship, management, marketing, e-trade, gender awareness, and public speaking are aspects of the new curricula.

Mentoring: An entrepreneur or a professional in selected agricultural value chains (the mentor) offers their acquired experience and expertise to promote a trainee (the mentee) who needs to acquire skills or knowledge for professional purposes. The project has initiated mentorship programs to link successful entrepreneurs to trainees who are willing to develop expertise in their area.

Management: In this form of partnership, representatives of private enterprises are involved in the management board of ATCs. It is a rare form of partnership that has been encouraged to make the voices of entrepreneurs heard and taken into account in the ATCs management policies.

For other AU member states that are interested in these forms of partnership, AUDA-NEPAD has published a Toolkit with recommendations, guidelines, a checklist and a memorandum of understanding (MoU) template. By hosting interns, enterprises expose trainees to real-life industry contexts, including skills needed and machinery used. Successful agripreneurs provide an understanding of agriculture as a market-oriented business to which young and skilled people can make a significant contribution and generate revenue.

“The partnership is a win-win”, says business owner Innocencia Agbohessou, whose Ferme Agri-Angelus offers internships to trainees. “A trainee who did his internship here, is now employed by us. We don’t need to invest time and energy to find good employees anymore because we get to see and assess their qualities right away”, she says. Business owners like Innocencia can inspire youth to engage in agriculture as a profitable business and to become entrepreneurs by sharing their stories, challenges and experiences. “I am here on the farm Agri-Angelus to follow a training that was supported by AUDA-NEPAD and GIZ”, says trainee Athanase Sjegui. “The difference between what we do here and what we do at school is that here, we get hands-on experience of what we learnt in the classroom.”

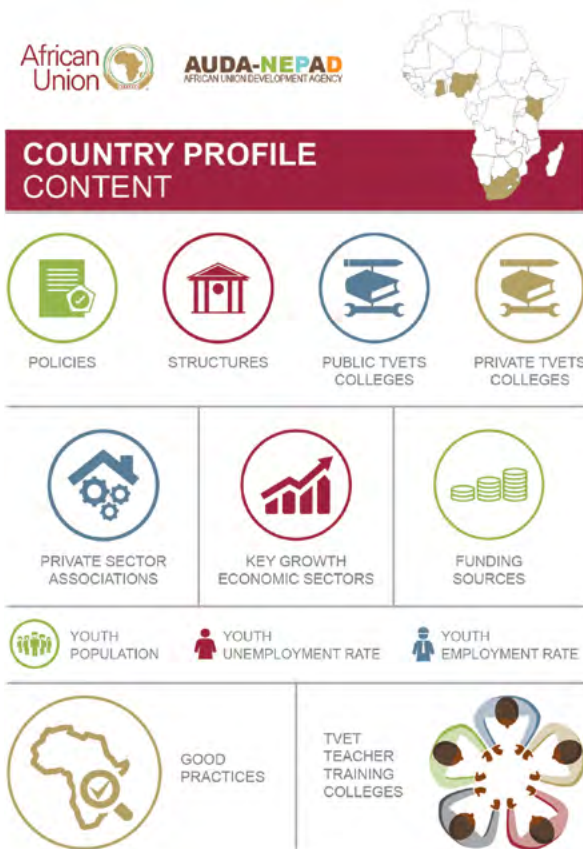
Integrating private enterprises into ATVET delivery has allowed Benin to move forward in bridging the skills gap. The approach was so successful that it led to policy impact. “The experience is so enriching, even at its stage now, that we have adopted it as a basic principle in the relaunched national TVET strategy, which now puts the company at the heart of the training system”, says Marcellin A. Hyle of Benin’s TVET Ministry.

Ronald Kouago, Junior Technical Advisor, ATVET4W Benin

Sara Jabril, Technical Advisor, ATVET4W

Chengetai Chikadaya, Consultant with ATVET4W

COUNTRY PROFILE DATA ON TVET AS AN INTERACTIVE TOOL ON ASPYEE



Information about existing TVET systems, including laws, regulatory frameworks and number of TVET colleges is made available, however it is scattered and not easily accessible. In 2020, SIFA established therefore a process of developing country profiles to summarize recent data, and statistical analysis on the African countries’ TVET system.

The TVET country profiles aim to provide a country-level baseline of data, including governance, strategies, implementation modalities, and information on the fundamental aspects that shape TVET in each country’s context. The content aims to provide an overview of critical building blocks that impact on TVET within the skills and employment landscape.

TVET country profiles will be collated for 55 member states, and published on the African Skills Portal for Youth Employment and Entrepreneurship (ASPYEE).

Member countries will be involved in the process of collecting, validating, and updating data. The aim is to build on the baseline information to develop a database of indicators, related to more detailed information in the form of a dashboard on ASPYEE /of the status on TVET/ in line with the Continental TVET strategy/ as part of the Continental Education Strategy for Africa (CESA).

The process will be supported by follow-ups and surveys to keep up with the most recent information. It will provide the opportunity to engage key stakeholders on framing challenges while defining solutions in a collegial space. It aims to establish an evidence-base for collaboration and discussion amongst member states. Additionally, it will inspire private sector dialogue on employment-oriented skills development.

To date, five country profile drafts have been developed, and are pending validation. After validation they will be published on <https://nepad.org/skillsportalfor youth>

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RESPONDING TO THE IMPACTS OF COVID-19 ON THE LABOUR MARKET



ILO developed a Guidance Note on how to conduct rapid skills surveys that can quickly assess the reskilling and upskilling needs arising from the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on the labour market. Photo: Adobe stock

In a matter of months, COVID-19 has changed the way the world of work and the sphere of learning operates. The pandemic has caused massive labour market disruptions which, according to the recent ILO COVID-19 Monitor (January 2021) indicates that 8.8 per cent of global working hours, equivalent to 255 million full-time jobs were lost in 2020.

This situation has challenged individuals, employers and workers into adapting the way they operate, and calls for quick development responses to help countries address the labour market impact of the pandemic, which has clearly gone beyond health boundaries, into a major social and economic crisis.

Time is of the essence in this response and skills development has an important role to play in all this. In the short term, to help lessen the impact of COVID-19 while the pandemic is active, and in the medium to long term to build the resilience of workers and firms, and to prepare for economic and employment recovery.

In keeping with the need to provide a speedy response to the devastating impact of COVID-19 on the labour Market, ILO developed a Guidance Note on how to conduct rapid skills surveys that can quickly assess the reskilling and upskilling needs arising from the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on the labour market. At the height of the COVID-19 pandemic and in response to requests

from AU member states, SIFA programme through the Skills Anticipation Component used the Guidance Note to conduct rapid skills assessments in Cameroon, Ghana and Kenya in mid-2020. The rapid skills assessments conducted in these three countries built on findings of the macro economic studies conducted earlier by SIFA and DNA Economics (AUDA, 2020), which projected how long it would take prioritized economic sectors to return to pre-COVID-19 performance levels and which presented a basis for targeted SIFA interventions to improve skills levels in the targeted countries.

As the COVID-19 pandemic escalated and the possibility of second waves became evident, SIFA received additional requests from Namibia, Nigeria, South Africa and Uganda asking for support to rapid assessments of reskilling and upskilling needs arising from the COVID-19 impact on the Country's labour markets. This called for collective action in which SIFA promptly partnered with GIZ bilateral Programmes and ILO to initiate the assessment of the COVID-19 induced labour market skills needs.

By the end of 2020, emerging results from the first set of rapid skills assessment conducted in Cameroon, Ghana and Kenya signalled that the most affected workers were those who had recently entered the labour market, mostly youth. The studies also highlight

role of technology enhanced learning and digital skills in fostering faster economic recovery.

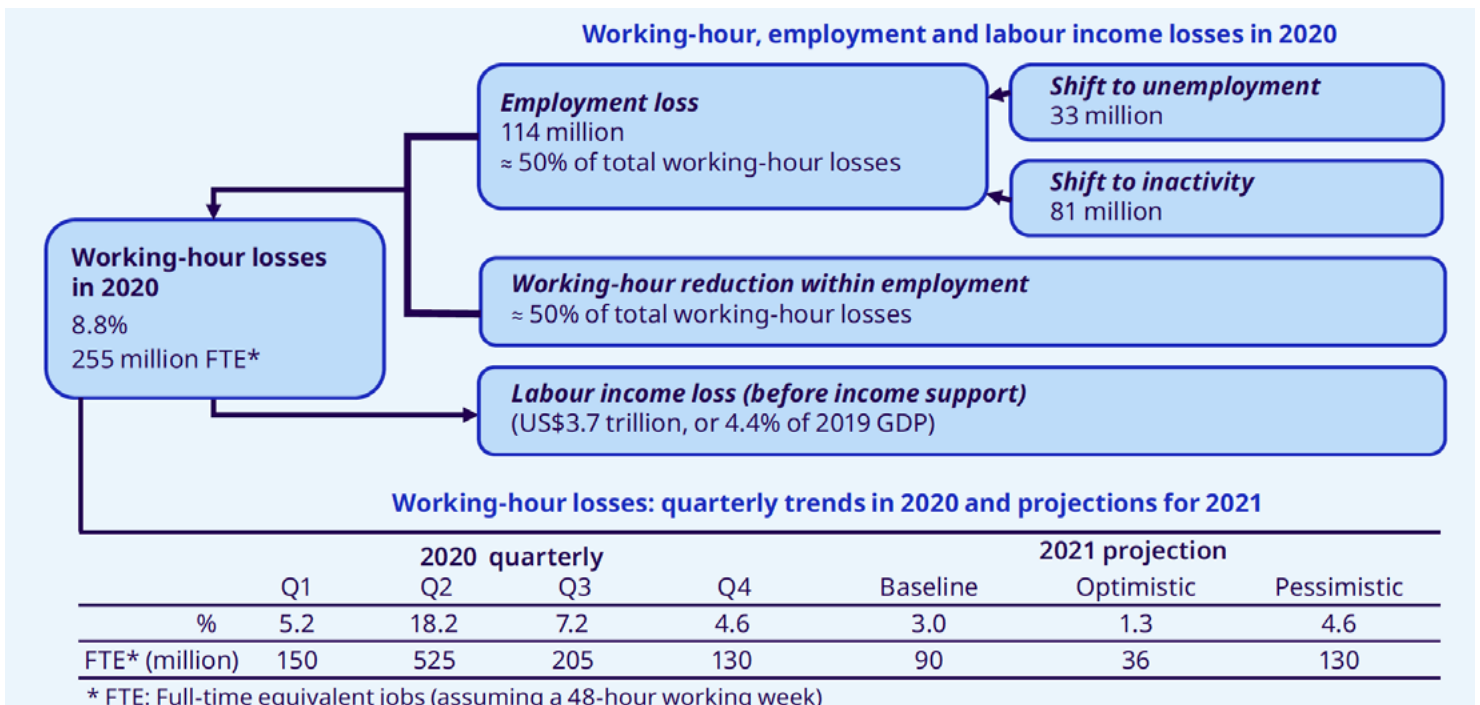
Arising from the rapid assessment surveys, actionable recommendations to help limit the career scarring effects of prolonged unemployment and skills mismatch for affected individuals and to support speedy recovery for affected sectors were developed.

In addition, a comparative analysis of surveyed countries to help understand the broader picture of the COVID-19 impact the economic sectors in general and on young people in particular has been planned. This will help to extrapolate the study findings to countries with similar contexts to get better understand the continental picture.



The studies also highlight role of technology enhanced learning and digital skills in fostering faster economic recovery. Photo: Adobe stock

Estimates of the working hours, employment and labour



Source: ILO, 2021

What is evident from the survey results is that enterprises and employers will need to enhance their involvement in educating, training, and in the reskilling of workers to get the skills needed to support recovery. At the same time, workers will need to proactively upgrade their skills or acquire new skills in order to remain relevant and employable in the current dynamic labour market environment.

All this has direct relevancy to the upcoming “Africa Creates Jobs” dialogue, of the African Union, which will be exploring solutions for the continent’s youth employment and skills development agenda.

The recommendations from rapid skills assessments surveys and from the macro economic studies are a “Call to Action” and provide practical steps towards the development of a continental action plan for reskilling and upskilling measures that respond to labour market skills needs.

Naomy K. Lintini, ILO

INNOVATION IN TVET PROFESSIONAL CERTIFICATION OF INDIVIDUALS



*Training and awarding vocational certifications to young people improve their employability.
Photo: I-stock*

In order to improve the employability of young people, the adoption of a vocational certification approach in the training process makes it possible to not only establish a framework for the recognition of skills accepted by the labour market, but also to ensure that people have a decent jobs that meet their expectations.

Historically, vocational certification was introduced to attest the mastery of skills related to a regulated occupation in a precarious field of activity such as the pressure equipment and the oil sector. Gradually, this notion became an integral part of several companies' human resources management practices, for instance in the IT sector where these practices are used to ensure that people in charge of systems' security have the required skills.

A look at these certification processes of individuals shows that while the competency-based approach to training has enabled the development of pedagogical approaches, skills training and assessment with reference to vocational certification criteria remains a new challenge for the TVET system.

In this respect, the innovation consists in developing processes of training engineering with regard to the requirements of a quality assurance system which meets both the requirements of the degree and those of the professional/vocational certification. The

certification reference system also makes it possible to validate the quality of curricula, the competence of trainers, the quality of services offered and the efficiency of the training provider's management.

The integration and implementation of this innovation aimed at the certification of individuals is based on the standard ISO 17024:2012 guidelines which seeks to secure the accreditation of the training structure according to an established training reference system.

This certification of individuals and accreditation of organizations' approach aims to establish sustainable new partnership practices and to improve youth's confidence in the accredited TVET system. Today, SIFA could offer support to such innovations in the TVET system, particularly by integrating the vocational certification process of individuals to leverage employability.

For example, some pilot activities have been carried out in Tunisia, especially in training and awarding certifications to young people in several sectors, namely welding, video surveillance systems and photovoltaic installations. This pilot phase relied on contributions from companies, training centres as well as the national accreditation body as guarantor of the professional certification process of people trained in the aforementioned sectors.

Sofia Bahri, SIFA Country Consultant, Tunisia

JOBS FAIRS

A TOOL TO BRING TOGETHER BOTH THE SUPPLY AND THE DEMAND SIDE OF THE EMPLOYMENT VALUE CHAIN

With the high unemployment rate of young people on the African continent, and the added impact of Covid-19, the need to provide a joint platform for TVET colleges, employers and students has once again come to the fore. Job fairs can address an employers' issue in finding suitably qualified students to fill vacancies. Additionally, job fairs help to develop strong networks for TVET students, and identify employment vacancies. They create an enabling environment to bring together, both the supply and demand sides of the employment value chain.



*The new Jobs Fairs Handbooks for TVET colleges explains how to run job fairs virtually.
Photos: Adobe Stock*

SIFA is developing a series of Jobs Fairs Handbooks for TVET colleges and/or employers to organise and convene job fairs based on a partnership approach. The handbooks incorporate current best practices and lessons learned e.g. from Kenya, where the TVET institutions are working together with the employers federation to arrange jobs fairs. Likewise in Uganda, where TVET institutions are partnering with employers to arrange joint engagement sessions with students. In South Africa, the experience of the Centres of Specialisation initiative will provide lessons learnt on matching, but more importantly, they will provide guidance on running jobs fairs virtually. Even during lockdown periods, the virtual events will allow TVETs, employers and students to keep establishing vital links

and form partnerships. Additionally, the alternative of virtual job fairs assist in recovery strategies, as we negotiate our way out of the paralyzing pandemic.



The series of handbooks will include:

- A guideline for holding jobs fairs/career days on TVET college premises
- A guideline for hosting jobs fair/career days virtually via digital means
- A guideline for hosting jobs fairs/career days on employers' premises with a particular focus on SMMEs

Topics include:

- where to advertise job fairs
- how to attract the right people
- agenda for a job fair/career day
- attractions for young people e.g. music
- food/drinks availability
- budgets and ways to ask for contributions (participating companies, embassies, donor organisations)

The guidelines will include check lists, templates of letters, advertisements, budgets and agendas. The handbooks will be available by July 2021, and will enable TVET colleges and employers to arrange events for the current cohort of 2021 students. The handbooks will be available in both English and French.

Cheryl James and Sabine Klaus (GIZ Advisors)

A South African experience

TURNING DISADVANTAGES INTO ADVANTAGES FOR TVET STUDENTS THROUGH DRIVING SIMULATORS

**“After acquiring my apprenticeship at college, I tried to get myself a job, but not having a driving license became a barrier towards employment as many trades require one to have a drivers license”.
(A TVET college graduate in an interview)**

Many TVET graduates are faced with similar frustrations as expressed above in their effort to find employment. Almost one in six jobs in South Africa require the applicant to have a driving license – sometimes even if one does not have to drive in the job one has applied for. Many jobs list driving license as ‘desirable’, as many jobs need employees to be able to meet clients, customers and suppliers. Having a car, and by extension having a driving license, makes employability potentially easier as one has more control over the journey. Over and above, artisanal jobs nowadays

journey means arriving on time is more likely.

For this reason, TMI Dynamics, a leading service provider of engineering simulation solutions, training simulators and e-learning systems, in partnership with the Transport Education and Training Authority (TETA), have integrated car simulators in the TVET college curriculum as an innovative approach.

During the first quarter of 2020 in South Africa, the number of unemployed persons increased by 344 000 to 7,1 million. As a result, the official unemployment rate increased by 1 percentage



The simulated driving programme can help to give unemployed young women and men a better chance to find a job. Photo: Adobe Stock

are becoming more flexible. It’s no longer just 8 hours spent in the company premises, roles are changing, and travelling is often involved. Public transport is notoriously unreliable, with strikes, accidents, road works and irregular schedules, planning your own

point to (30,1%) compared to the fourth quarter of 2019. In the first quarter of 2020, there were 20,4 million young people aged 15–34 years. These young people accounted for 63,3% of the total number of unemployed persons. The unemployment rate within

Simulation based Driver training programme



**E-learning
for Theory**



**Simulators
for Practical**



**“On the Road”
Training**



**SAQA
Accreditation**

this group was 43,2% in the 1st quarter of 2020. Almost half of the young population is without a job in the formal sector.

The simulated driving programme can help to give at least some of these unemployed young women and men a better chance to find a job, particularly TVET learners who have completed their academic programmes but are unable to be absorbed into gainful employment because of the driving license requirement. The programme seeks to remove barriers that some students face in getting their restricted driving licenses - which is a key ingredient for entering the work force in South Africa.

The simulators are integrated in the TVET curriculum as part of life skills, and feature the vehicles' real controls, accurate geo-specific terrains, automated traffic, virtual instructor and automated assessments.

The programme is located at the Innovation Hub in Pretoria, <https://www.theinnovationhub.com/>

TMI Dynamics has invested in state-of-the-art computer-aided simulation and engineering tools to improve teaching and learning efficiency at TVET colleges. This programme is pursued under the banner of “Drivio” which is South Africa’s first flagship interactive, simulation based, driving school catering to the needs of both TVET learners and professional drivers operating all vehicle types. This programme removes barriers of unemployability for TVET learners, especially when it is considered that possession of a drivers license might be the one critical qualification a TVET student needs to receive an invitation to a job interview.

Back in 2012 and as part of South Africa’s National Development Plan (NDP), TMI Dynamics was tasked by the South African Department of Transport to train 600 final year students in high



school, TVET colleges and universities to obtain their driving licenses. The objective was to determine the value a driving license carried when applying for a job.

Learners are able to demonstrate that they can drive a vehicle by conveying a specific motor vehicle. The learners can also show that they are able to adapt, make decisions and solve a problem. Over and above, graduating TVET learners attaining their desired jobs that seek driving licenses, shown upon completion of their academic programmes.

Over and above, the programme’s formal qualification in recognition of professional competence enhances the TVET student drivers’ employment prospects and marketable skills as well as augmenting their professional status as a driver of commercial vehicles.

Thabang Matobako, SIFA Country Consultant, South Africa

HOW TO CHANGE TVETS IN TO LABOUR MARKET ORIENTED TRAINING

To differentiate and broaden industrial production, trained and skilled manpower is one of the most prominent bottle-neck. In Ethiopia, one of the fastest growing country in Africa, the number of TVET institutes and TVET students is alarmingly increased over the decade. In spite of these number, the quality of TVET training in the country is under question specifically the skills of the workforce related with the need of the labour force.



Young man learning how to operate a machine in Yirgalem Industrial college, Sidama Region, Ethiopia. Photo: Ayele Gizachew

Considering this gap, the government of Ethiopia is focusing on cooperative training schemes. Cooperative Training scheme is defined by the Ministry of science and higher education of Ethiopia as a mode of training delivery of the Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) that combines training in companies and institutions based on a training plan collaboratively designed and implemented by industries and respective TVET institutions. Effective Cooperative Training systems are needed to bring TVET closer to the industries, bridge the skills gap and improve its labour market relevance. In Ethiopia, core processes of the cooperative training are currently owned by the Government which made the involvement of the industries very limited. In addition,

research and feedback from the industries show that the present cooperative training approach does, to a large extent, not provide the qualified workforce needed for the economic transformation process. Therefore, a cooperative training schemes should involve the industries where there is full involvement of the industries in planning of the training plan collaboratively with respective TVET institutions.

In order to be system relevant, the models must be effective, scalable (Relevant), replicable, sustainable and compliant. Cooperative training has advantages for trainees, TVET institutes, and the government. Trainees are systematically exposed to the world of work and learn the occupational practice in a real-life situation. Experience shows that this lead to significantly better trainings outcome, practical skills, work attitude and theoretical comprehension of the occupational requirements. Furthermore, enterprise get to know the trainees, which often lead to employment after graduation. Through cooperative TVET schemes companies can also contribute to the further development of TVET system. Finally, apprenticeship and other forms cooperative training tend to be more effective than school-based TVET, as TVET institution need not invest in sophisticated machinery and training periods in the institutions will be shorter.” In addition, the strategies consider “TVET schemes, notably apprenticeship programs helping to decrease unit cost in TVET.” Hence, it makes the system more cost effective. This can be considered as minimum benefit the TVET providers could benefit out of the cooperative training. Employer benefits, as might be expected, are fairly pragmatic in nature and most concern the work readiness of graduates. Overall employer benefits are financial in nature (lower recruitment costs, increase productivity etc.) but also issues to do with image (E.g. addressing equity in employment, enhanced public image of major multinational corporate etc). (Braunstein & Loken, quoted in Coll, 2007). Advantages for the Government is inevitably improved employability of youth leading to more stability in the country, reduced unemployment poverty rates.

According to Endeshaw (2013), Unmatching of what is delivered in TVET institutes with the world of work was major factors that affect the implementation of the program. In addition, lack of collaboration between stakeholders, lack of capable supervisor, lack of appropriate machines and training materials, shortage of budget, lack of promotion activities, lack of training for trainers,



Youth during cooperative training in food industry called FAFA in Ethiopia. Photo: Ayele Gizachew

and lack of subject matter and pedagogical knowledge of trainers has also affected implementation of cooperative training program. In conclusion, the success in cooperative training has its own implication in the achievement of the objective of the TVET system. To implement cooperative training there are various input needs to be full filled. It also needs the participation of various stakeholders. Stakeholders such as trainees, enterprise/companies, governmental and non-Governmental organizations which have to be aware of the basic logic of cooperative training as well as practically see the benefit of the system to all stakeholders directly and indirectly involved. Moreover, a successful cooperative training demands the harmony relations between stakeholders, mainly TVET institutions and enterprise /companies, appropriate input and infrastructures, skilled and committed trainer and managers and so on. With all these input and human coordination that cooperative training can minimize the existing structural and other problems that TVET system had faced in developing countries like Ethiopia.

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Ayele Gizachew, SIFA Country Consultant, Ethiopia

SIFA – GICAM PARTNERSHIP

DEAL DONE AND DUSTED

The German Development Cooperation (GIZ) through the Skills Initiative for Africa (SIFA) represented by Mr Alfonse Tata Nfor, Regional Coordinator of SIFA for Central Africa and the Employers' Union of Cameroon (GICAM) represented by Mme Aline Valerie Mbono, Executive Director of GICAM, at the headquarters of GICAM in Douala on the 12th of April 2021, concluded the signing of a memorandum of collaboration (MoC) between their two institutions. This agreement which comes to formalize the already existing partnership between the GIZ and GICAM, will serve as a platform upon which further collaboration between the two institutions shall be promoted.

As a programme of the African Union Commission (AUC) and the AUDA-NEPAD with support from the German government and the



Aline Valerie Mbono, Executive Director of GICAM, Right: Alfonse Tata Nfor, Regional Coordinator of SIFA for Central Africa

European Union, SIFA seeks to promote occupational prospects of young Africans through the support of innovative skills development programmes in collaboration with the private sector as an integral key stakeholder in job creation on the continent.

It is worth noting that prior to the signing of this partnership agreement, the GIZ had already begun rolling out specific technical and material support to GICAM. The full equipment of the SMEs

Incubation Centre of GICAM inaugurated by Mr Celestin Tawamba and Mr Alfonse Tata Nfor – President of GICAM and Regional Coordinator for Central Africa of SIFA last December stands out as the most recent example of such a collaboration.

GICAM and GIZ shall conclude specific agreements for the joint implementation of actions and activities contributing to the purpose of the partnership. For purposes of efficiency and the mutualization of technical, financial, material and human resources, these agreements may involve other interested parties working in the domains of interest to both institutions.

Specifically, inter alia:

1. GICAM, as the voice of the Cameroonian private sector, will play a leading strategic and institutional role within the partnership. One of which will be to encourage and facilitate the development of productive relationships and collaborations between GIZ and the Cameroonian private;
2. GICAM shall provide office space accommodation for the SIFA Regional Coordinator, including the provision of other logistical and administrative needs to allow him or her to perform his or her duties in an effective and efficient manner;
3. For purposes of monitoring and evaluation, a joint GIZ-GICAM Committee will meet at least once every six months to assess the status of the partnership, the progress of activities and to study new prospects for collaboration. This duration may be revised by agreement between the parties. The convening of the Committee is left to the discretion of each of the parties.

From the GIZ side, the signing ceremony was witnessed by a cross section of partners of SIFA such as the representatives of the Ministries of Employment and Vocational Training (MINEFOP), Youth Affairs and Civic Education (MINJEC), the UNDP, Junior Chamber International (JCI), Youth Employment Service Cameroon, the Cameroon Youth Economic Forum, the King Black Welfare Association, Local Youth Corner Cameroon, ECAM and the National Employment Fund (FNE) – all of them members of the SIFA TVET Working Group for Cameroon. Speaking to the press at the ended of the signing ceremony, the representatives of SIFA and GICAM both reiterated their commitment to put in all what it takes to see the partnership succeed.

Alfonse Tata Nfor, Regional Coordinator for Central Africa
GIZ - SIFA - Skills Initiative for Africa

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