

## 2nd Regional Exchange Workshop on Improving the quality of TVET systems for youth employability in Africa *Nairobi, 18-20 June 2019*

### GENERAL SYNTHESIS OF THE WORKSHOP

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Dear colleagues, Ladies and Gentlemen,

The three days we have spent together have generated a great wealth of experiences, ideas, findings and recommendations, that merit much more time than I will give them here.

Among others, I know that you will look forward to sieving through the shared folder for further information on the contributions of donors and partners, and the nature and breadth of country experiences and best practices.

**At the end of these three days of intense exchange, a few key-words arose:**

Challenge : Youth Employability, entrepreneurship

Technicalities : Legal frameworks, occupational standards, soft-skills training, Training of trainers

Opportunities : Renewed apprenticeships, dual training, joint certification processes

Vision : Partnerships, Confidence-building, Leadership, Value chains

<b>DAY 1 - Certification mechanisms to guarantee the quality of learning and skills, reflecting economic needs</b>	
<b><i>Public-private partnerships</i></b>	<p>Beyond a national qualification <i>framework</i>, it is necessary to reflect on the certification <i>process or mechanism</i>, of which the framework is the end result :</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- So, starting with the identification of labor needs, the definition of occupational standards, of skills profiles, and certification checklists (référentiels)</li> <li>- Involving the private sector every step of the way</li> </ul> <p>Certification will then be fully relevant, ensuring a smooth transition to work</p>

	<p>A certification mechanism will operate particularly well when all partners are fully engaged, and when <u>VTCs are autonomous</u>, such as with Morocco's Delegated-Management Institutes (Instituts à Gestion Délégée)</p>
<p><b>Management of qualifications and assessments: NQF and RQF development and management</b></p>	<p>For qualifications to gain in value, several enabling conditions need to be met, ensuring that TVET systems are robust in terms of policy, institutional anchorage, partnership frameworks, and the existence of a NQF and mechanism.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Ghana and Nigeria, to cite just a few countries, are in the process of adopting laws that define such a favorable context</li> </ul> <p>There is an emerging trend whereby the private sector (companies and sector bodies):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- increasingly demonstrate interest in sharing responsibility for the appraisal of skills</li> <li>- including at local and regional levels, as well as national</li> <li>- with VTC-enterprise joint procedures, on-the-job appraisal, and joint appraisals of specific skills not covered by national qualifications</li> </ul> <p>In Tunisia for instance, a process to certify trainers to appraise learners involves employers</p>
<p><b>Recognition of Prior Learning / VAE</b></p>	<p>The recognition by employers of prior learning, or of skills acquired outside formal training, requires addressing a fundamental <u>credibility</u> issue.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- This can be partly achieved by involving them in the certification process, whose aim should be to assess the same technical skills as those offered by formal training, and enable learners to acquire the same qualifications.</li> <li>- This in turn, requires the process to be clearly regulated. Several countries have experiences worth mentioning in this area, including Maurice, Cameroun, Namibia and Tanzania.</li> </ul> <p>This process may be of particular value for the informal sector, given its prevalence in African economies, while at the same time involving particular challenges in this area, and solutions, such as indirect assessment approaches, focusing on practical on-the-job evaluations, testing for very focused skillsets, or decentralization.</p>

<p><b>DAY 2 - Strategies and tools to increase the quality of vocational training institutes (for the professional integration of learners)</b></p>	
<p><b>Cornerstones of excellence in management</b></p>	<p>Two particular aspects of excellence in the management of VTCs stand out, based on the country experiences of Morocco, Mauritania, Tunisia, Congo and Burundi, among others:</p>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Solid business plans and performance contracts are tools that enable VTCs to achieve greater levels of day-to-day autonomy in terms of pedagogical, administrative and financial management. And reasonable levels of autonomy are found to be correlated with better quality and results</li> <li>- Public-private partnerships, whether legal responsibility resides with private company, like IFMIA from Casablanca Morocco, or the state, demonstrate improved results in terms of the training-to-work transition. These can be easily set up, supported or not by donors.</li> </ul>
<p><b><i>Development of 'corporate' training approaches</i></b></p>	<p>Several countries are experimenting with new and varied approaches to involving industry in training, including dual training modes or renewed apprenticeships (Cote d'Ivoire is officially recognizing these as a training path, with clear skillsets to be acquired, and qualifications and certificates).</p> <p>Such approaches involve creating a legal and regulatory framework, elaborating standard skillsets and competency-based training programmes, training enterprise supervisors and mentors, establishing dialogue channels with the private sector, and the joint organization of assessments and certification.</p> <p>Particular recommendations include to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Ensure that training taxes are effectively used to constitute national funds to finance ongoing training and apprenticeships</li> <li>- Creating a mechanism to manage and monitor the quality of enterprise-based training</li> </ul>
<p><b><i>Key performance indicators for VET centre M&amp;E</i></b></p>	<p>To improve the performance of VTCs :</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Effectiveness : need to measure not only the level of workplace integration, but also the success of entrepreneurs, and the relative shares of each. Senegal and Tunisia are among other countries investing more in mechanisms that promote self-employment opportunities</li> <li>- Competitiveness : private sector observatories should both conduct ongoing market research to inform current needs in terms of skills, but also strategic analysis of trends, to identify likely future needs and allow VTCs to prepare for these. This approach has been initiated in Morocco, with the Observatoire des métiers, financed in part by the taxe professionnelle.</li> </ul>

<b>DAY 3 - Monitoring the professional integration of leavers, capable of supporting improvements in TVET quality and the regulation of training provision?</b>	
<b><i>VET Centres' support to professional integration</i></b>	<p>On the basis of country experiences in ensuring that TVET is not self-serving, but responds to national needs and contributes to fluid training-to-work transitions, it is resoundingly felt that :</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- VTCs must provide career guidance services to learners, preferably through dedicated units with full-time staff</li> <li>- PPPs should be promoted for every link of the TVET process, albeit at the expense of the central management of the sector. Dialogue is good. Concrete collaboration is better. Formalized institutional frameworks carry the greatest chance of ensuring that professional integration begins with the identification of labor market needs, rather than at the moment of a learners' certification.</li> </ul>
<b><i>Professional integration monitoring mechanisms</i></b>	<p>Tools to measure the performance of TVET, in terms of learner employment or self-employment and employer satisfaction are very diverse. Country experiences cover the full range, from 0 to 100, from basic data collection through physical surveys, to fine-tuned analysis. In all cases, it stands out that :</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- NTIC offers a real and as yet unseized opportunity to improve these systems, in terms of their cost, reliability, frequency and usability</li> <li>- Where data exists, greater efforts need to be deployed to ensure that it is available, and accessible – Group 3 also addresses this fundamental communication issue</li> </ul>
<b><i>Dynamics resulting from monitoring integration</i></b>	<p>The two key areas that naturally derive from the effective monitoring of integration :</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Decision-making. Even where information systems on performance and integration are reliable, and they must certainly undergo continued investment, effective decisions must also be based on dialogue channels between different stakeholders, such as the Tables de concertation (Benin, Niger), but also partnerships and delegations. The two sources must be coherent, and complementary.</li> <li>- Communication. Communication is very usually not only vertical in nature, but bottom-up : from learners, to centers, to authorities. Yet more horizontal communication is needed, including to the broader public, learners, parents ('clients') through media and schools, to ensure a proper understanding and ownership of TVET.</li> </ul>

On the basis of the above summary, several cross-cutting themes stand out as meriting particular attention:

1. The application of competency-based approaches, to ensure that what appeals on paper, works in training courses. NQFs are not an end-goal, but a means to connect training and qualifications with skills and jobs, to be inset into a broad process, with oversight bodies and action plans.
2. The autonomy of VTCs, in carefully crafted frameworks that are conducive to greater quality
3. The positioning of TVET in relation to the informal sector. « *Il faut déscolariser la FP* » is a soundbite we have heard often
4. The achievement of real positive outcomes, for African learners and economies, involves thinking, or rethinking TVET in a holistic approach, **starting** with a clear and shared understanding of needs in terms of skills
5. The credibility of TVET diplomas and certificates, to ensure that they reflect the value of learners to employers, and provide learners with real opportunities and professional mobility
6. Addressing the needs of an effective system, including in terms of : material (funding, equipment, premises), human (trainers, supervisors), and regulatory (laws, frameworks, tools).
7. National commitments in terms of funding, and the reinvestment of VP taxes into TVET
8. The value of public-private partnerships at every step, from needs identification to skills certification
9. Generating a culture of quality, for enhanced external performance and efficiency

While I would suggest that we can recognize that TVET systems will always face challenging contexts in terms of national economies and employment prospects, a tangible perspective has emerged from this workshop that TVET systems that are relevant and quality can not only improve the prospects of learners, but contribute to the development of the economies and markets that they serve.

ASANTE SANA

B. Rooke, Nairobi, 20 June 2019