



MINISTRY OF STATE, MINISTRY OF
EMPLOYMENT, SOCIAL AFFAIRS AND
VOCATIONAL TRAINING



ICQN/TVSD EXPERTS SEMINAR ON YOUTH EMPLOYMENT

FROM 31 MARCH TO 1st APRIL 2014
IVOTEL PLATEAU ~ ABIDJAN/IVORY COAST

SUMMARY REPORT

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The inter-country seminar of the Inter-Country Quality Node for Technical and Vocational Skills Development (ICQN/TVSD) on youth employment in Africa took place on 31 March and 1 April 2014 at the Ivotel Hotel in Abidjan.

The meeting was organised by the Côte d' Ivoire Ministry of State and Ministry of Employment, Social Affairs and Vocational Training (MEMEASFP) and ADEA, with support from technical and financial partners (AFD, GIZ, AfDB, CIDA, NORRAG/SDC). It was the second meeting to prepare for a high-level event on youth employment planned for July 2014. Country experts had been identified to undertake preparatory work collecting indicators and analysis on the employment situation of young people and the measures taken by the authorities in their country.

24 of the 27 countries invited were represented: **South Africa, Angola, Benin, Burkina Faso, Burundi, Congo, Côte d'Ivoire, Cameroon, Cape Verde, Egypt, Ethiopia, Ghana, Guinea, Kenya, Liberia, Mali, Mauritius, Morocco, Niger, Tanzania, Togo, Tunisia, Zambia, and Zimbabwe.**

Seminar objectives:

- To report on progress being made with the country reports and, if necessary, to provide individual support for experts who had not completed their work;
- To present the main aspects of the country reports in order to identify the key points raised and possibly those which needed to be developed and/or examined further;
- To undertake an initial analysis of any strategic and operational points that the countries had in common in order to start identifying potential areas for the development of joint inter-country youth training and employment policies and practices;
- To discuss with the experts about any thematic priorities arising from the country reports in order to start identifying possible key conclusions for the future overall report and proposals for action to be submitted at the Ministerial Conference in July.

This report aims to outline the main findings emerging from the presentations of reports and discussions and to identify areas for improvement in the country reports. It summarises the proposals for action to be submitted to the Ministerial Conference in July. After briefly explaining how the work has been organised, it will cover the following points.

- The main points emerging from the country presentations;
- The main points emerging from the discussions;
- Guidelines and recommendations for the Ministerial Conference;
- The completion of the country reports; and
- The outlook for the Inter-Country Quality Node for Technical and Vocational Skills Development (ICQN/TVSD) and future activities.

I- ORGANISATION OF THE WORK

The seminar was held over two days, with an opening ceremony, plenary sessions and group work, and a closing ceremony.

The opening ceremony

The opening ceremony was chaired by Mr Moussa DOSSO, Minister of State, Minister of Employment, Social Affairs and Vocational Training. There were three speeches: one by the ICQN Coordinator Mr Amara KAMATÉ, one by Mr Richard WALTHER, representing the Acting Executive_Secretary of ADEA, and one in which the Minister made some opening remarks.

Mr Amara KAMATÉ spoke of the series of meetings that had been held with the member countries of the ICQN/TVSD in Abidjan since 2010, and then welcomed the significant efforts being made by the African members on TVSD issues, particularly regarding effective ways of helping young people into the world of work.

Richard WALTHER then explained the reasons for ADEA's support for the ICQN/TVSD. He thanked the Côte d'Ivoire Government for the active role played by the Ministry's departments in the development of the ICQN in general and especially in the management of issues relating to training and access to decent and sustainable employment for young people.

In his opening speech, Minister Moussa DOSSO stressed that Côte d'Ivoire attaches great importance to collaboration and partnership between African countries to promote the sharing of experience, resources and efforts in order to meet current challenges in the fields of technical and vocational training and youth employment. He said that urgent measures are needed to tackle youth unemployment and encouraged the experts to propose practical and effective solutions to address this problem.

During the plenary session, the 24 countries made presentations covering five aspects:

- Basic data on the employment situation of young people ;
- Basic data about the world of work ;
- Measures planned or underway in the field of TVSD ;
- Measures planned or underway aimed at promoting job creation ;
- Significant youth training and employment schemes.

These presentations were followed by questions to clarify certain points and discuss youth employment issues as well as matters such as the definition of "the informal sector" of the economy, new problems such as NEETs ("Not in Education, Employment or Training"), discouraged young people, etc.

Following the plenary sessions, three groups (two French and one English) were formed to further develop the work, in particular regarding the link between countries' economic situations and their training systems, and to discuss the selection of effective measures aimed at developing technical and vocational skills, youth employment and job creation.

The closing ceremony took place on April 1 2014 at 17:30. It was chaired by Mr Moussa DOSSO, Minister of State, Minister of Employment, Social Affairs and Vocational Training. In his address, he congratulated the experts for the quality of the work accomplished. He concluded by stating that training to create jobs and promote youth employment in an economy dominated by very small and micro businesses – which operate mainly in the informal sector and have limited scope to create work and absorb the influx of new entrants into the market – is undoubtedly the way to secure Africa's future development.

The Minister of State also committed himself to ensuring that the ICQN/TVSD, which he chairs, becomes a forum in which countries can come together to strengthen African cooperation on youth training, employment and job creation.

II. THE MAIN POINTS EMERGING FROM THE COUNTRY PRESENTATIONS

Remarks made after the presentations referred to the importance of the issue of youth employment, the existence, in most countries, of a two-tier economy with a large informal sector and significant potential for youth employment and job creation, the existence of youth

employment initiatives in all countries, and the varying extent to which training and employment policies have been implemented and evaluated in terms of impact.

On the employment situation of young people

- Youth unemployment rates are very high, ranging from 13 to 28%. In general, they are twice the national average of ICQN/TVSD member countries. Unemployment rates among NEETs and young people with little motivation are also very high.
- Access to countries' formal TVET systems is generally limited.
- In countries where data on traditional and/or reformed apprenticeships exist, the numbers of young people involved is relatively high, more so than those of young people enrolled at formal technical and vocational training establishments.
- Data on youth employment rates at the end of technical and vocational training are not available for all countries.
- There is a need for reliable information on the labour market.

On the structure of the world of work

- In most countries, the informal sector is large in comparison to the formal sector: it accounts for 80 to 98 % of people in work. Formal employment levels are low (2 to 7%) and the formal private sector is little developed (1 to 5%).
- The decline of existing industries in face of competition from emerging countries (China, India, etc.).
- The predominance of the primary sector in all countries, although there are a few exceptions (Tunisia, Morocco, South Africa).
- Employment is unevenly distributed between urban and rural areas, with more modern jobs in the secondary and tertiary sectors in urban areas and more agricultural employment in rural areas.

On the difficulty young people have in accessing the world of work

The main reasons for young people's limited access to the world of work are:

- The mismatch between the skills acquired in training and skills required by the labour market, and, to varying extents in different countries, unemployment among higher education graduates, which is an increasingly widespread phenomenon.
- Ignorance of the labour market: the absence/lack of information about the labour market, the absence/small number of systems for monitoring employment and vocational training in the countries, and the absence/ lack of tools for managing the TVSD/TVET system.
- The absence/lack of any systems for supporting young jobseekers and helping them into work.
- The absence/lack of any operational action plans for the implementation of national employment policies.
- The inefficiency of public job creation policies
- The absence/lack of measures to promote investment in promising employment sectors (unattractive business environment, lack of seed funding for entrepreneurs, etc.)
- The inability of the domestic market to absorb emerging industrial production and thus promote job creation
- The weakness of entrepreneurial culture and lack of entrepreneurial training.

Various measures to tackle these problems in varying ways are planned or underway in the countries:

On current or planned measures on the field of TVSD

Countries' measures in the area of TVSD focus on different aspects, namely:

- ✚ *Reforms to update existing training schemes and systems*
 - Diversification of technical and vocational training courses on offer
 - Development of apprenticeship (traditional or reformed)
 - Adaptation of training systems to the needs of different regions
 - Development of skills-based training/learning
- ✚ *Schemes for training young people for jobs and occupations required by strategic and growth sectors*
 - Entrepreneurship development
 - Creation of business incubators
 - Development of curricula for entrepreneurs and not just for job seekers
- ✚ *Measures to improve the skills of master craftsmen in the informal sector*
 - Setting up mobile training units
 - Setting up and fitting out training and apprenticeship centres
 - Implementation of training learning masters
 - Development of training for master craftsmen
- ✚ *Partnerships to promote the involvement of economic and professional stakeholders*
 - Development of public private partnership (signature of partnership agreements)
 - Creation of privately-managed public training centres

On current or planned job creation measures

- ✚ *Measures to improve the professional skills of economic stakeholders*
 - Entrepreneurship training and acquisition of technical and vocational skills
 - Setting up an agency to support young women entrepreneurs
 - Setting up business incubators
- ✚ *Incentives to encourage companies to hire young people*
 - Legislative reform to facilitate business creation and promote youth employment
 - Setting up of labour-intensive works programmes
 - Establishment of a national employment pact
 - Development of agri-business
- ✚ *Private sector development policies*
- ✚ *Regional economic development policies*
- ✚ *Development of national youth plans and creation of national youth councils*

On noteworthy youth training and employment schemes

Several training and employment schemes were presented. They can be divided into the following categories:

- the implementation of various projects and programmes to improve the employability of young people and promote waged employment or self-employment, to be supported financially and technically by the countries and/or partners ;
- the setting up of schemes to provide direct assistance to businesses for training in emerging and growth sectors ;
- the setting up of centres of innovation and expertise such as business incubators for young people and/or management and coaching agencies for businesses created by young people or employing young people ; and
- the management (or oversight) of training centres by companies, professional associations and trade unions.

III. THE MAIN POINTS EMERGING FROM THE PLENARY DISCUSSIONS

Regarding the youth employment issue in general

The seminar acknowledged that African economies are currently faced with two issues: firstly, the large size of the informal sector, and secondly, the need to develop systems and measures for improving the employability of young people and jobs in the modern sector that promote technological innovation and competitiveness on a global scale. The consequence of these two requirements is the need for the TVSD system to provide two types of training: one to respond to the circumstances and needs of the informal sector, and the other to make the formal sector more efficient at national level and more competitive on global markets.

For the informal sector, it will be necessary to develop skills training for self-employment and micro- enterprises, promote multi-skilling, and implement systems for taking remedial action. This will necessitate the setting up of innovative partnerships with local authorities to support young people finishing their education, those that are out of school or who have dropped out, etc.

With regard to the formal sector, it will be necessary to provide training to meet skills needs in the countries' growth industries and sectors and in advanced technologies to bring about the transformation of African economies. Training should therefore aim to develop skills to foster innovation and transformation. This requires the development of partnerships between schools and businesses, the flexible use of finance and the adoption of an intersectoral approach. Training thus developed will help to stimulate the national economy. It should anticipate the needs of the labour market and the economy, and be outward looking to promote the mobility of workers.

Other issues discussed are:

- The need to design and develop operational plans for a national employment policy to serve as a frame of reference for a range of employment support measures and manage the wide range of projects and programmes in developing countries ;
- The cost of vocational training and youth employment projects such as those presented and the cost of getting young people into work are extremely high. It is necessary to devise and develop cheaper schemes ;
- Most of the programme and project funding mentioned in the reports goes to the formal sector. There is no state funding to promote job creation in the informal system. Moreover, much of the funding in the informal sector comes from the technical and financial partners and the private sector.

Regarding the concepts and methodology used for the country studies

It was necessary to define and harmonise people's understanding of the following concepts:

- the term "informal sector"; and

- the notion of “young people”.

The definition of young people sometimes varies between countries and international organisations. After discussion, it was recommended that in future the countries should provide statistics that are comparable across countries. They were asked to use the African Union classification, which defines young people as being in the 15-35 age bracket, although they should also give data for the 15-24 age group (EU definition) for international comparison purposes.

Regarding the analysis of the reports

Work to complete the reports should include:

- The need to give thought to evaluations of the programmes/projects presented. Analysis of the impact of these youth employment programmes and projects should take into account the meso-level (social actors and social organisations in civil society who manage training) and the macro level (which refers to public policy, and possibly the international market, i.e., globalisation).
- Consideration of the “duration” of the initiatives described in the reports.
- The need to invest more in the collection and analysis of data on youth and employment to improve understanding of the youth employment issue.
- The need select a number of highly-promising initiatives in the countries and identify the target population and actions to be taken.
- The need to identify funding sources for the initiatives presented.
- The need to take greater account of the employment challenges young people face in rural areas.

IV. GUIDELINES AND RECOMMENDATIONS FOR THE SUMMARY REPORT TO BE SUBMITTED TO THE MINISTERIAL CONFERENCE

The French-speaking groups

Prior to making their proposals for guidelines and recommendations for the Ministerial Conference, the French-speaking groups again stressed that:

- African countries have economic growth with little job creation and low levels of human development ;
- the informal sector represents about 90% of employment, in contrast to the formal education system which accounts for less than 10% ;
- the socio-economic importance of rural areas should not be underestimated ;
- the TVSD system has limited coverage and training is of poor quality ;
- the TVSD system is held in low esteem.

The proposed measures fall into two main areas :

- Establishment of a system of joint (inclusive) governance to improve youth training, employment and job creation ; and
- Ensure that schemes have a long life and are monitored and evaluated.

Problem 1: how can the requirements of the informal and formal sectors be taken into account in vocational training?

- Analyse the needs of the economy ;
- Improve the organisation of informal sector ;
- Identify the needs of informal sector workers ;
- Strengthen the capabilities of people in work and those who create jobs (heads of informal production units, provision of support for this sector) ;

- Promote sectoral colleges ;
- Establish a permanent system for monitoring the informal sector ;
- Adopt a proactive educational approach taking into account the training needs of the informal sector ;
- Entrust the design and development of a national qualifications framework to the ministry of vocational training.

Issue 2: which changes can be recommended to improve youth training, employment and job creation?

VOCATIONAL TRAINING

- Promote and strengthen systems for monitoring employment and training in different countries to take greater account of the needs of the economy ;
- Promote apprenticeship as a method of training that reflects the needs of the economy ;
- Establish a system for providing guidance, information and advice on training schemes ;
- Adapt training systems to local and international circumstances and economic opportunities ;
- Devise curricula tailored to the needs of the economy and in partnership with socio-professional organisations ;
- Boost the partnership between state and non-state actors (PPP) ;
- Improve access to and quality of basic education and TVSD systems ;
- Improve the quality of training for trainers.

JOB CREATION

- Develop entrepreneurship ;
- Establish or strengthen support schemes for young people and provide the schemes with sufficient resources ;
- Develop a permanent system for evaluating these schemes ;
- Improve labour market information systems ;
- Strengthen the youth employment action of public employment services ;
- Promote incentives to help young people into work ;
- Promote self-employment among young people (information-education-loans) ;
- Improve youth employment support programmes.

EMPLOYMENT

- Promote and/or strengthen public investment ;
- Develop incentives for private investment (fiscal incentives, security of land tenure, etc.).

The English-speaking group

Measures to improve coordination between the economy and the training system

An innovative public-private partnership to establish a labour market information system, and to take planned and concerted measures

Measures to improve the vocational training system

- Expand and strengthen the traditional and reformed apprenticeship system ;
- Develop frameworks and instruments to recognise learning outcomes in several sorts of environment, and above all to facilitate employability and lifelong learning ;
- Strengthen and financially support (by states) basic education to provide the foundations for TVSD.

Measures to help young people into the world of work

- Introduce entrepreneurship training early on in the educational system ;
- Establish schemes to help young people enter the labour market, remain there and evolve (for example, the Harambee Project in South Africa and the scheme set up in Mauritius) ;
- Create an integrated environment or climate of partnership between the state, the private sector and young entrepreneurs to promote self-employment (for example, the Egyptian case where young entrepreneurs work in partnership with companies to obtain supply contracts as part of the business incubation system) ;
- Conduct a review of policies and systems for integrating young people into the world of work.

Measures to create jobs for young people

- Identify and implement strategies that will have a significant impact on economies and a large section of the population (for example, Mega projects) ;
- Implement strategies and measures to safeguard existing jobs ;
- Improve the environment for “doing business”.

V. COMPLETION OF THE COUNTRY REPORTS

Two points to remember:

- Work to complete the reports should take into account the points listed above, as appropriate. The coordinators responsible for drafting the overall report stressed the need for a two-page summary of the country report and that the report should be completed before the end of April 2014 ;
- The overall report of the country studies will be sent to the country experts for validation prior to the Youth Employment Event in July 2014.

VI. THE OUTLOOK FOR THE INTER-COUNTRY QUALITY NODE FOR TECHNICAL AND VOCATIONAL SKILLS DEVELOPMENT (ICQN/TVSD) AND FUTURE ACTIVITIES

Richard WALTHER described the outlook for the ICQN, with the secondment of an Ivory Coast official to work half-time for it and the prospect of holding at least one ICQN event per year. He also stressed the need to continue lobby for funding to support the future work of the ICQN/TVSD.