



FACTSHEET

VOCATIONAL EDUCATION AND TRAINING

January 2015



Vocational education and training has long been a cornerstone of Swiss development cooperation. A good education increases the chances of finding paid employment and earning a higher income. As such, vocational education and training has a direct bearing on poverty. In addition, highly skilled workforce raises the competitiveness of companies, which are a driving force for development.

Challenges

- › Some 200 million young people around the world have not completed primary school.
- › In Africa 10 million young people enter the job market every year.
- › Youth unemployment is over 50% in many countries in the Western Balkans.
- › Despite having a university education, a lack of practical experience makes it harder for people in North Africa, for example, to enter employment.
- › Lack of work or prospects for a growing number of people represents a danger to social stability and creates a breeding ground for violence and conflict.
- › A shortage of skilled workers impedes economic growth and can be exacerbated through economic migration (brain drain).
- › Economic growth in some developing and emerging countries lags behind population growth.

Thematic priorities

Successful vocational education and training relies on **close cooperation between a number of partners**, e.g. the government ministries responsible, local authorities, future employers and NGOs. Developing these partnerships is a priority for the SDC, with the Swiss dual vocational education system serving as a model. But this system cannot be replicated one to one. Instead, what is needed is an adaptation of the core elements of the Swiss model to the context in the partner countries and include them into the SDC's programmes. These include the following:

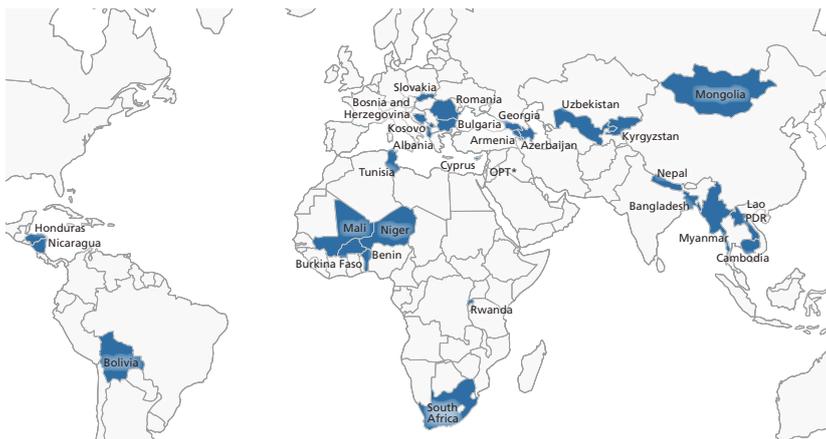
- › vocational training with a strong emphasis on practical skills, ideally on-the-job training within a firm
- › courses designed to meet the needs of the local labour market
- › employers/private companies participate as active partners in the planning and implementation of training programmes.

Good vocational training facilitates access to employment and income, and decreases the risk of poverty. In order to contribute effectively to **combating poverty**, vocational training services must be accessible to the poor. Obstacles include insufficient basic education, lack of financial resources and excessively long distances to training centres. To meet these challenges, the SDC bases its programmes on a broad understanding of vocational skills development. Important issues are the **close linking of basic and vocational education**, as well as the teaching of social skills. This includes non-formal educational tracks, while each programme is specifically adapted to the needs of local communities and job markets. The SDC is especially involved in rural areas, as both agricultural training and specific skills for the processing and marketing of agricultural products contribute greatly to combating rural depopulation and improving food security.

Certification is important for the participants as a reference for future employers. It is also important to achieve a high degree of permeability between the different education and training pathways and to recognise abilities acquired through work experience.

SDC Projects in Vocational Education and Training (VET)

Partner countries



FDFA, STS, CMC-Geoservices
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*Occupied Palestinian Territory

Practical training increases productivity and contributes to economic growth. In this respect vocational education and training projects benefit the whole economy, especially when they are developed in **close cooperation with the relevant industry associations**.

Women remain at a disadvantage when it comes to gaining access to employment and income. Vocational education and training programmes tailored **specifically to the needs of women** increase their chances on the labour market. The SDC takes steps to ensure women are not excluded from training as a result of a defined gender-specific division of labour, for example by taking additional tasks of women (child rearing, household chores etc.) into account in the planning.

Example projects



ProJoven, Honduras: Vocational education and training as a means of preventing violence

Since 2013 the SDC has been running a vocational education and training project for young people living in Honduran city districts affected by high levels of violence. The objective is to train 12,000 additional young people by 2017, so that at least 50% of them are able to find employment within 12 months, enabling them to break out of the vicious circle of violence and poverty.



Albania: Building a vocational education and training system

The SDC is helping to reform the vocational education and training system, placing a greater focus on practical skills in teaching curricula and aligning them to the needs of the private sector. It has introduced innovative learning methods in 35 vocational schools, created new curricula for about 20 professions, developed teaching materials, trained teachers and helped 4,000 graduates enter the job market.



Bangladesh: Support for a leather industry training centre

With the support of the SDC, the umbrella organisation of leather industry associations designed an apprenticeship training course for machine operators which has helped more than 4,600 graduates – more than 90% of the apprentices – find permanent employment. This model might also serve as an example for other sectors of the economy.



Burkina Faso: Agriculture and handicrafts

Between 2006 and 2012, over 25,000 craftspeople were able to increase their income by almost 40% thanks to training courses and the thereby acquired knowledge; over 1,000 young people – a third of them women – learned a trade, mainly in the fields of mechanics, carpentry, welding, tailoring, hairdressing and weaving. By 2016 the project will have provided 50,000 people – half of them women – with training in various crafts and agricultural trades.

Partners

In the SDC's partner countries VET projects are implemented in close collaboration with a broad alliance of partners from government ministries, local authorities, vocational schools, local NGOs and representatives from the private sector.

- > In many countries, projects are planned and implemented in collaboration with other bilateral donors. Particularly close cooperation exists with Germany and Austria, which also have dual vocational education and training systems.
- > At the multilateral level: the International Labour Organization (ILO), UNESCO and various development banks.
- > NGOs: Swisscontact and Helvetas (main implementing partners), the Swiss Forum for Professional Education and International Cooperation (FoBBIZ).

Expenditure on vocational education and training – 2014

The SDC is implementing around 30 VET projects with a total budget of CHF 40 million. The level of funding has almost doubled in the last four years.

Imprint

Federal Department of Foreign Affairs FDFA
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Photos: SDC