

# FACTSHEET

## VOCATIONAL SKILLS DEVELOPMENT

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Schweizerische Eidgenossenschaft  
Confédération suisse  
Confederazione Svizzera  
Confederaziun svizra

Swiss Agency for Development  
and Cooperation SDC



Vocational skills development (VSD) is a cornerstone of Swiss development cooperation. Training bridges the world of education with the world of work: graduates increase their chances of finding decent employment and earning a better income. A skilled workforce raises the competitiveness of companies. As such, VSD has a direct bearing on poverty alleviation and on social and economic development.

### Challenges

- › **High un- and underemployment:** 71 million young people are unemployed and more than 150 million young workers live in poverty, in part owing to a lack of adequate skill sets. Lack of work prospects for a growing number of people represents a danger to social stability.
- › **Inadequate coverage:** Of all secondary pupils in the world, only 11% are enrolled in vocational education and training. Low social acceptance and attractiveness, affordability and other barriers hinder access to VSD, especially for the poor and vulnerable.
- › **Low relevance:** Major gaps in labour-market relevance and quality of training offers persist. A shortage of skilled workers reduces productivity of firms and impedes economic development of a country in the long term.

### Lines of intervention

The SDC responds to the needs and the priorities of its partner countries. The Swiss dual vocational education system serves as an inspiration. However, its elements have to be adapted and be embedded in local structures. The SDC proposes skills development solutions that fit the local context, along the following lines.

#### Skills for youth

The SDC strengthens VET systems and institutions. It reinforces the permeability of education systems, paying attention to linking basic and vocational education. The engagement of the private sector in the system's governance, funding and training delivery is essential to improve the quality and social acceptance of vocational training.

#### Skills for the vulnerable

The SDC proposes training that is accessible to the poor and disadvantaged, women and men. Special focus is on inclusion and equity. The linkage of VSD with basic education is particularly emphasised when addressing these specific target groups.

#### Skills for jobs

By integrating entrepreneurship, career counselling and matching as complementary measures of skills development programmes, the SDC facilitates integration of job seekers and graduates in the world of work. In so doing, it capitalises on synergies with private sector development initiatives and access to finance.

#### Skills for the economy

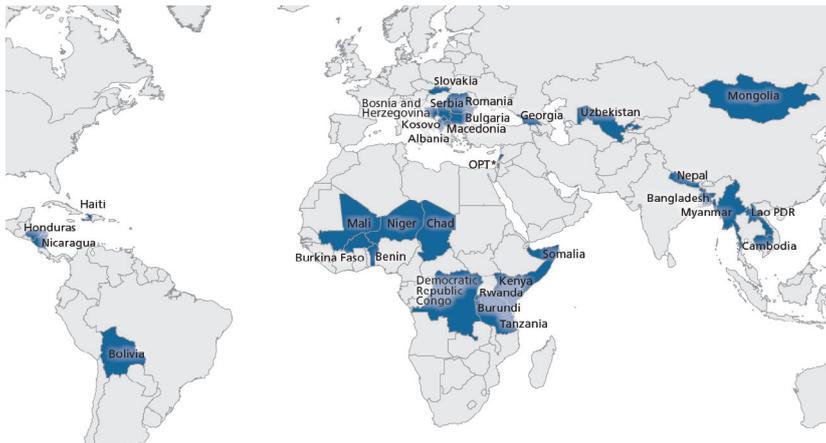
VSD needs to meet the demands of the local labour market. High-quality skills are beneficial to the whole economy, especially when training is developed and implemented together with the private sector.

#### Skills for sustainable development

Skills development is used as an instrument for the advancement of other SDC priority themes and global issues, for example by building professional competences for reconstruction. Skills training for migrant workers can bring benefits for all: the countries of destination, the countries of origin and the migrants themselves.

## SDC's projects in Vocational Skills Development (VSD)

### Partner countries



FDFA, STS, CMC-Geoservices  
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\*Occupied Palestinian Territory

## Partners

Successful vocational education and training relies on close collaboration with a broad alliance of partners from government ministries, local authorities, vocational schools, NGOs and – of utmost importance – the private sector. Developing these partnerships is a priority for the SDC.

In many countries the SDC works with other bilateral donors. Particularly close cooperation exists with Germany, Austria and Liechtenstein – all countries with dual VET traditions. Since 2015 these countries have joined forces in the Donor Committee for dual Vocational Education and Training (DC dVET).

The International Labour Organization (ILO), UNESCO and various development banks are key partners at the multilateral level. To make use of Swiss expertise, close coordination is maintained with other concerned government offices, as well as a partnership with the Swiss Forum for Skills Development and International Cooperation (FoBBIZ). The NGOs Swisscontact and Helvetas are among the main implementing partners.

## Example projects



### Albania: Reforming the vocational education and training system

The SDC is supporting the reform of the Albanian 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, developed teaching materials and trained teachers. 62% of the first 4,000 graduates have successfully entered the job market.



### Great Lakes: Promoting market-oriented skills training for the disadvantaged

In 2012 the SDC started working with the Rwandan authorities to improve access to and quality of vocational training for rural young women and men. Since then, more than 2,500 people have been trained in trades needed by the local economy, such as carpentry, masonry or tailoring. Benefiting from these experiences, the programme is being rolled out to conflict-affected Burundi and the Democratic Republic of the Congo.



### Myanmar: Vocational training for the tourism industry

In cooperation with Swiss hotel management expertise and local practitioners, the SDC is building competences of Myanmar in the hospitality sector. Over 6,000 young graduates will contribute to the development of the tourism industry of the country. These efforts go hand in hand with the development of skills standards and support for a credible system of skills testing and certification at national level.



### Nepal: Skills for safer migration

This SDC programme addresses the needs of Nepali men and women whose way of providing for their families is to migrate to the Gulf states on seasonal labour contracts. To ensure that migration is a win-win situation, the project facilitates access to relevant information, pre-departure skills training, and legal and psychosocial support. By 2018, 170,000 people will have benefited from the training.

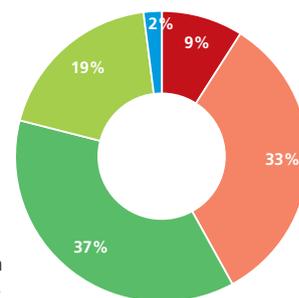
## Increasing expenditures

The SDC is implementing more than 45 VSD projects with disbursements of CHF 72 million in 2016. The level of funding has almost doubled in the last four years.

The dispatch on Switzerland's International Cooperation 2017–2020 provides for a 50% increase in commitments for basic education and vocational skills development compared to the 2013–2016 dispatch.

### Expenditures by region (2016)

- Latin America
- Africa and Occupied Palestinian Territory
- South- and East Asia
- CIS and Western Balkan
- New EU Member States



## Imprint

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