

Benin dual apprenticeship: Strategic actors and roles



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Benin dual apprenticeship or certificate of professional qualification (CQP program) is an innovation which has been introduced in the TVET sector in order to improve the informal apprenticeship. In informal or traditional apprenticeship, the major actors are master craftsmen and trade unions at the local level, apprentices, their parents and local community. The government did not play significant role due to its limited control on the informal sector. In the implementation of the CQP, many other actors from public and private institutions are involved. The study identified CQP actors, analyze their roles and provides some recommendations for improving the governance of this program.

Introduction

Education is an important element in the socialization process for any member of a community. According to Desjardins (2015), education plays transformative and reproductive functions. In developing countries, the informal learning has developed with the informal economy. This informal apprenticeship consists of work-based training in informal firms or enterprises. In most of the sub Saharan African countries, reforms have been introduced in the TVET system. Benin government, with the technical and financial support of the donors, has implemented dual apprenticeship in the crafts sector. Dual apprenticeship combines informal apprenticeship in master craftsmen workshops and vocational education in TVET schools. In the pilot step of the implementation of this program, Swisscontact, an international nongovernmental organization, has supported Benin government to conduct the reform. In this process, many actors from public and private institutions are involved to play specific roles. What are the actors or institutions involved in the CQP reform? Which of actors or institutions can be considered as stakeholders for the CQP program? What are their roles? And how do CQP stakeholders interact in their collaboration? Results of the research provide responses to these questions.

Methodology for the research

This research is conducted based on the descriptive qualitative method by reviewing the existing literature on CQP reform, interviewing officials of the public and private institutions through semi-structured interviews and by using direct observation to collect data during visits in workshops and other meetings with TVET actors. The selection of participants to this research was based on three sampling methods. First, purposive sampling was used to select actors of TVET institutions, donors, members of professional associations¹. Secondly, snowball sampling was applied to reach academia and other TVET consultants. Third, accidental sampling was used to choose master craftsmen. The total number of actors we interviewed 42 in which 14 are officials of the public institutions, 4 donors, 5 from the academia and research and 19 master craftsmen. We used the actor-oriented perspective and nested layer approach to analyze the collaboration between CQP actors.

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Results of the case study

Dual apprenticeship (CQP program) is introduced in formal Benin TVET system in 2005 through the decree N0. 117/2005, consolidated by the decree No. 641/2010. In Benin, the government sets TVET as a second priority in its education sector, after the primary education (MESTFP, 2001; MPDEPP-CAG, 2010). The CQP program has been implemented based on this vision.

Globally, the results of the research revealed that CQP actors involved do not play all a role in the system. Many other actors influence the CQP program. In the public sector, the study identified three ministries involved in the governance of the CQP program. In the Ministry of Secondary Education and Technical Vocational in the TVET sector Education and Training, the Department of TVET is in charge of the public policies on TVET. It also is in charge of the entrance CQP test. Secondly, the Department of Evaluation and Test is responsible for providing the final CQP exam. Third, the Department of Pedagogical Inspection and Quality assurance is in charge of the inspection and follow-up of the training provided by vocational training centres. Fourth, the National Institute of Engineering of the Training and Capacity Building of Trainers, created in 2015, is in charge of designing curricula for the TVET sector. In the Ministry of Labor, there is an important public institution, the Fund for the Development of Continuing Vocational Training and Apprenticeship (FODEFCA) that is responsible for the financial resources' management and the training follow-up. FODEFCA pays 90 to 95 percent of the cost of the CQP training for each apprentice. The Head Department of the Capacity Building and Employment designs apprenticeship acts which regulate the employment system. In the private sector, there are four main actors. Trade unions at local, district and national levels which work in collaboration with master craftsmen/women and vocational training centres to provide CQP training. In addition, apprentices or CQP students are the target group of the CQP reform. Their parents and relatives support them to finance the additional dual training (10 to 5 percent of the training cost); they also a fee to master craftsmen. Foreign donors (Swisscontact, Swiss Department for Development and Cooperation, World Bank, French Development Fund and so on.) have played important role by providing financial and technical support to the government in the reform.

The study revealed that there is an overlapping of the roles of the stakeholders. There is a positive collaboration between public institutions and donors for the mobilization of the financial and technical support. However, the cooperation between the staff of the vocational training centres and the master craftsmen is low.



Policy Recommendations/Policy Implications

As recommendations, the following points can be taken into account:

- 1) Reform CQP stakeholders' roles in this dual system.
- 2) Facilitate the public-private partnership in the implementation of CQP program.
- 3) Allocate enough financial resources in the government budget to support the inspection and the follow-up of the implementation of the dual apprenticeship program.
- 4) Develop a monitoring and evaluation framework to measure the efficiency of Benin TVET programs.
- 5) Define new standards for the recruitment of the apprentices in dual apprenticeship program.
- 6) Encourage the commitment of the business sector in the governance of the TVET system (mainly dual apprenticeship program).
- 7) Encourage and motivate stakeholders (especially the business sector) to participate in the curriculum value chain of the TVET programs.
- 8) Encourage young people with required literacy level to participate to the CQP program.

This Policy Brief is based on

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