

# BarCamp: Empowering the Informal Workforce: Skills for Decent Jobs through (dual) VET

## Documentation of breakout sessions

1<sup>st</sup> April 2025



# Program

14:00 CET

## Panel discussion

SEWA  
HMCG SSC  
UTEP  
ICPC

15:00 CET

## Couch Sessions

Interaction with speakers

15:35 pm – 16:00 pm

## Closing

Key take aways  
Wrap-up & Next steps

BarCamp

Informality and dual VET

Skills for Decent Jobs through (dual) VET



## Discussion Sessions - Couches

### 1. HMCg SSC

Host: Mona Gupta

Support: Christine von Harrach



### 2. ICPCs Rwanda

Host: Serge Girimbabazi

Support: Ingrid Portenkirchner



### 3. UTEP Argentina

Host: Carolina Palacio

Support: Lisa Pesendorfer



### 4. SEWA

Host: Reema Nanavaty

Support: Charlotte Poth, Julia Schmidt



BarCamp Sessions



# Discussion in Session 1:

[HMCG SSC \(Home Management and Care Givers Sector Skill Council\)](#)

- ❏ To discuss with HMCG SSC key success factors and challenges of (dual) VET in the informal economy.
- ❏ To discuss possible and systematic approaches to successfully train in the informal economy
- ❏ How to bring some suitable approaches into the respective project context of dual VET?
- ❏ Refer also guiding questions for the panel that haven't been discussed

# Key take aways Session 1:

[HMCG SSC \(Home Management and Care Givers Sector Skill Council\)](#)

- ❏ Encouraging Women's Workforce Participation: Creating pathways for women to move beyond traditional environments into broader economic roles.
- ❏ Sector Evolution as a Driver: The care sector is rapidly evolving through smart technologies, making caregiving roles more dynamic, innovative, and attractive.
- ❏ Internal Drivers of Change: Introduction of occupational maps and the rise of the gig economy are shaping new opportunities for informal workers.
- ❏ External Drivers of Progress: Strong advocacy efforts with governments and international organizations are catalyzing systemic change.
- ❏ Transitioning into Formal Employment: Gradual integration of informal workers into formal systems is gaining momentum.
- ❏ Government's Role in Supporting Informal Workers: Upskilling initiatives led by state departments help strengthen informal sectors; while industries are gradually engaging, it remains a work in progress.

# Key take aways Session 1 cont:

## HMCG SSC (Home Management and Care Givers Sector Skill Council)

- ❏ Corporate Engagement: Large companies increasingly recognize skills developed in domestic work, offering apprenticeships and pathways into formal sectors such as facility management and smart tech jobs—initially seen in sectors like fashion.
- ❏ Impact of COVID-19: The pandemic highlighted the critical role of domestic workers (e.g., child and elder caregivers), sparking a societal shift towards greater respect and recognition for their contributions.
- ❏ Agricultural Sector Guidance: Informality in agricultural value chains remains high (up to 60%), but cooperatives are stepping in as key actors where industrial associations are absent.
- ❏ Home Care Sector Progress: Previously lacking representation, the home care sector now includes 30 industry members in a sectoral council, advancing recognition of prior learning and promoting formalization.
- ❏ Policy Vision: Policymakers must begin addressing the care sector with the same seriousness and structure as other key economic sectors.
- ❏ Project Input: Contributions and examples from Benin and Sierra Leone emphasize shared challenges and innovative approaches across countries.

## Discussion in Session 2: [Integrated Craft Production Centres ICPCs](#)

- ❑ To discuss with ICPC key success factors and challenges of (dual) VET in the informal economy.
- ❑ To discuss possible and systematic approaches to successfully train in the informal economy
- ❑ How to bring some suitable approaches into the respective project context of dual VET?
- ❑ Refer also guiding questions for the panel that haven't been discussed

# Key takeaways Session 2: [Integrated Craft Production Centres ICPCs](#)

- ❏ Have a look at the situation at the workplace: School (formal) environment does often not match with reality in private sector, esp. handcraft (certificates, background education)
- ❏ Transfer between formal and informal education is often left to the individuals and is very complicated - that is why in Prowood project trainers go to ICPCs (workplace)
- ❏ Mindset needs to be changed: for informal workers to see “formal education is not something that you do add-on and additionally but it really helps to make your business better
- ❏ Example for appreciation of skills in Prowood project: ICPC was closed for one day because there was a training (investment in skills)



# Key takeaways Session 2: [Integrated Craft Production Centres ICPCs](#)

- ❏ When working in the informal sector it is important for projects to have a joint understanding – terms, local languages and align the concepts in the sense of a base line
- ❏ Recognition of prior learning is important to improve conditions
- ❏ Example from Togo: there is a dual training with the informal sector – based on a law – similar in Rwanda?
- ❏ Colleagues from Kenya interested in how to motivate the informal sector to participate. One major aspect: Work on the mindset (and not so much on the technical trainings); e.g. in Rwanda Round tables every 3 months, talk to the same people and show progress and discuss on next steps, to show them “This is your story, not our story”
- ❏ Pending discussion (because there was not enough time) from Zambia: In male dominated sectors: Do we need specific and additional instruments to include female workers (e.g. experience with female carpenters in Rwanda?)

## Discussion in Session 3: [Union of Workers of the Popular Economy UTEP](#)

- ❑ To discuss with UTEP key success factors and challenges of (dual) VET in the informal economy.
- ❑ To discuss possible and systematic approaches to successfully train in the informal economy
- ❑ How to bring some suitable approaches into the respective project context of dual VET?
- ❑ Refer also guiding questions for the panel that haven not been discussed

# Key takeaways Session 3: [Union of Workers of the Popular Economy UTEP](#)

- ✚ Hay que diferenciar entre economía informal y economía popular. Economía informal son los actores económicos que no tienen registro oficial en las entidades del estado, pero si tienen una estructura y un sistema propio de funcionamiento y un cierto nivel de organización. La economía popular no tiene ni este nivel de organización informal y son grupos aun más precarizados.
- ✚ UTEP es un sindicato que pertenece a la tradición de movimiento social que existe en Argentina históricamente. Tiene agrupado el 20% de las personas que trabajan en la economía popular e informal y atiende a varios sectores de actividad económica. Entre ellos cartoneros y recicladores por ejemplo. La industria depende de ellos para la gestión de reciclaje, sin embargo no son reconocidos por el estado como rama de actividad. UTEP, da capacitación a todos los grupos. Especialmente identifican líderes y los capacitan en cooperativismo, oratoria y parecidos, para que puedan representar sus intereses tanto como capacitación en sus ramas de actividad. Han logrado intervenir 1500 de 6000 barrios populares.
- ✚ En Argentina se afronta una situación difícil y de retroceso, por un gobierno enfocado en reducir costos en todo el aparato público y ha sacado a los interlocutores de la economía informal y popular de las mesas de discusión. Todo el sistema de educación y formación esta desfinanciado, aun peor las medidas de capacitación para el sector de economía informal y el sector de economía popular. El gobierno habla de empleo pleno y no reconoce la importancia de la economía informal y popular.
- ✚ Se requieren políticas de estado que reconocen la economía informal y popular como brazo natural de la economía. Formular políticas para apoyar la generación de oportunidades, capacitación y seguridad social por ejemplo. La cooperación internacional podría apoyar a organizaciones como UTEP para fortalecer la organización de los trabajadores informales y populares; Capacitar a los líderes de estas organizaciones en vocería; buscar caminos de interlocución con el gobierno; apoyar organizaciones como UTEP en la creación de una oferta de capacitación de acuerdo a sus necesidades. En algún momento hasta formación profesional dual.

# Key takeaways Session 3: [Union of Workers of the Popular Economy UTEP](#)

- ❏ A distinction must be made between the informal economy and the popular economy. Informal economy are the economic actors that do not have official registration with state entities, but they do have their own structure and system of operation and a certain level of organization. The popular economy does not even have this level of informal organization and are even more precarious groups.
- ❏ UTEP is a union that belongs to the tradition of the social movement that historically exists in Argentina. It groups together 20% of the people working in the popular and informal economy and serves various sectors of economic activity. Among them packaging y carton collectors and recyclers, for example. The industry depends on them for recycling management, however they are not recognized by the state as a branch of activity. UTEP provides training to all groups. They especially identify leaders and train them in cooperativism, public speaking and similar skills, so that they can represent their interests as well as training in their branches of activity. They have managed to intervene 1500 out of 6000 popular neighborhoods.
- ❏ Argentina is facing a difficult situation moving backwards in many regards, due to a government focused on reducing costs throughout the public apparatus. It has removed the interlocutors of the informal and popular economy from the discussion tables. The entire education and training system is underfunded, and training measures for the informal and popular economy sectors are even worse. The government talks about full employment and does not recognize the importance of the informal and popular economy.
- ❏ State policies that recognize the informal and popular economy as a natural arm of the economy are required. Formulating policies to support the generation of opportunities, training and social security for informal and popular economy workers. International cooperation could support organizations such as UTEP to strengthen the organization of informal and popular workers; train the leaders of these organizations in spokespersonship; seek ways of dialogue with the government; support organizations such as UTEP in the creation of a training offer according to their needs. At some point even dual vocational training.

## Discussion in Session 4: [Self Employed Womens' association SEWA](#)

- ❏ To discuss with SEWA key success factors and challenges of (dual) VET in the informal economy.
- ❏ To discuss possible and systematic approaches to successfully train in the informal economy
- ❏ How to bring some suitable approaches into the respective project context of dual VET?
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## Key takeaways Session 4: [Self Employed Womens' association SEWA](#)

- ❏ Issue of adult literacy and adult numeracy – 70% are not literate; 30% are younger women, who are better educated and digitally literate
- ❏ Challenges: large numbers + inner drive to learn to read and write
- ❏ SEWA offers peer-to-peer learning on life skills (e.g. banking, administrative procedures) as an empowering process to then be motivated to learn to read and write
- ❏ They provide craft-specific workbooks for numeracy skills
- ❏ There is a pathway to become a trainer, starting as a helper and then moving up
- ❏ They work with local trainers to ensure continuity; this also fosters confidence among the community
- ❏ Challenge: cell phones are prevalent, but mostly used by men. SEWA provides financial products so that women can access digital tools (e.g. online transactions)
- ❏ Training may be provided in neighboring villages (4 – 5 hours a day) – someone accompanies them for security reasons; no other support provided