

# Documentation of BarCamp: Informality and Dual VET

Engaging informal companies in dual VET

1 July 2025



# Agenda

12:00 CET

Keynote input

ILO

Velafrica

12:45 CET

Couch Sessions

ILO

Velafrica Burkina Faso

FORCE Benin

13:30 pm – 14:00 pm

Closing

Key take aways

Wrap-up & Next steps

BarCamp

Informality and dual VET

Engaging informal companies in dual VET



## Discussion Sessions - Couches

### 1. ILO

Host: Christine Hofmann  
Support: Carolin Averbeck



### 2. Velafrica

Host: Michel Ducommun; Dialenli  
Roland TANKOANO ; Pauline  
YAMÉOGO  
Support: Lisa Pesendorfer



### 3. Force Benin

Host: Kimba Dodo  
Support: Linda Wanklin



### 4. Open Session

Host: Christine von Harrach  
Support: Christine



BarCamp Sessions



# Discussion in Session 1:

## ILO

### ✚ Putting ILO guidance into practice

Moderation: ILO, Christine Hofmann

### ✚ Topics for discussion:

- Implementing informal apprenticeship guidelines in diverse settings
- How to encourage MSMEs to take part in dual VET (in line with reduced administrative burden)
- How to address quality aspect in informal dual VET?
- Strengthening connections between informal sector and formal VET
- How to improve the data system on apprenticeships?
- Field experiences and actionable recommendations from participants

# Key take aways Session 1: [ILO](#)

## ✦ Key points highlighted by Christine Hoffmann in her opening:

### ✦ Data Challenge

- Lack of reliable data on informal apprenticeships.
- Often addressed through ad hoc surveys — but there is a need to **advocate for national data collection systems**.
- Wherever national partners are involved, **advocate for systemic data integration**.

### ✦ Sustainability

- Many strong initiatives fade once donor funding ends.
- Solutions:
  - **Involve local partners from the beginning.**
  - **Avoid over-subsidizing** to ensure long-term viability.

### ✦ Decent Work (ILO Focus)

#### ✦ Key principles:

- No child labor
- No forced labor
- Equality and rights at work
- Social protection — including for master craftspeople

#### ✦ Support the **formation of associations** where none exist.

### ✦ Other key themes mentioned

**Quality of training**

**Transition to formalization**

**Social dialogue** — bringing all relevant actors together

# Key take aways Session 1: [ILO](#)

## ❏ Discussion Highlights

## ❏ Sustainability & Market Orientation

### ❏ Are projects **truly market-driven**?

- Risk of market saturation if not.
- Requires regular labor market assessments.
- Strengthen local capacity to understand labor market dynamics.
- Align with national job creation strategies.
- Ensure private sector involvement.
- Training companies often self-regulate — they hire apprentices only when there is actual market demand.
- Diversify supported trades — avoid focusing on a single occupation.

### ❏ **Government co-funding** example:

- In Tanzania, Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) is fully government-funded.
- However, many governments are hesitant to invest in the informal economy. Advocacy is key.

### ❏ Support **micro and small enterprises** with:

- Business support services
- Access to finance (example from Myanmar)
- Focus on business growth, not just training

# Cont. Key take aways Session 1: [ILO](#)

## ❏ Reputation & recognition

### ❏ Challenges:

- Low demand from youth due to lack of recognition or prestige

### ❏ Solutions:

- Career guidance and counselling can help
- Improve recognition:
  - Certification for apprentices
  - Recognition labels for training enterprises
- Run awareness campaigns: community events, radio shows, etc.

### ❏ Entry points:

- Local associations give enterprises a voice
- Peer-to-peer networks among youth and master craftspeople

### ❏ Subsidize training:

- Example: Access to shared technology centers
- Support tailored to local needs

## ❏ Social Protection

### ❏ Master craftspeople often lack resources to support apprentices

### ❏ Some associations have set up mutuelles (community funds) to cover basic needs

# Discussion in Session 2: [Velafrica](#)

❏ **Dual VET in the bicycle sector**  
Moderation: Velafrica, Michel Ducommun

❏ **Topics for discussion:**

- Implementing dual VET in diverse settings
- The role of community based organizations in strengthening dual VET in the informal bicycle trainings
- Financial and –non-financial incentives for informal companies to participate in dual VET
- Organizations of informal apprenticeships (in-company trainers; class-room trainings; certificates etc.)
- Decent work principles in informal dual VET trainings
- Strengthening connections between informal sector and formal VET
- Field experiences and actionable recommendations from participants



# Key takeaways Session 2: [Velafrica](#)

- ❏ **Strengthening professional identity and workshop organization empowers local trainers.** Pauline, a workshop owner and trainer for young people in the program who want to become bike mechanics, shared her experience. She is a pioneer female trainer who has been certified and states that through becoming a trainer, she was able to better organize her workshop, improve equipment levels, increase revenue, and engage apprentices with joy and pride. This personal and business transformation also allowed her to motivate and support young people in her community, becoming an active ambassador for vocational
- ❏ **Importance of getting to know the context, the community and building trustful relationships and connections.** Velafrica shared their experience of starting with a strong mapping and survey process for getting to know local needs, starting to build trust with workshop owners and all relevant actors to start to develop a system together.
- ❏ The program Velafrica focuses on formalizing training, not yet businesses but probably that can be a next steps. **Formalizing training first, before formalizing businesses, is an effective strategy.** Rather than forcing full business formalization immediately, the approach focused on formally recognizing the two-year training programs, creating pathways for official certification and capacity-building for workshops. This strategy ensures that young people can access recognized qualifications while gradually encouraging businesses to formalize later on. While there is fear of taxation and legal obligations, clear information sessions and involving parents and local actors help to overcome resistance and motivate participation in professional training and in the future probably in formalizing businesses.

# Discussion in Session 3: [Swisscontact Force project](#)

## ❏ Dual VET in informal companies in Benin Moderation: Force Benin, Kimba Dodo

### ❏ Topics for discussion:

- Implementing dual VET in diverse settings
- Financial and non-financial incentives for informal companies to participate in dual VET
- The role and limitations of the National Consultation Framework (CNCP) in connecting training centres with businesses (both formal and informal in Benin)
- the role of intermediary organisations in dual vocational training in the informal sector
- Decent work principles in informal dual VET trainings
- Strengthening connections between informal sector and formal VET
- Field experiences and actionable recommendations from participants

# Key takeaways in Session 3: [Swisscontact Force Benin](#)

- ✓ Efforts to regulate or formalize aspects of collaboration with the informal sector must be carefully balanced to preserve its key advantages—such as flexibility, community trust, and access to vulnerable populations.
- ✓ While contracts between VTCs and informal companies are common, formal agreements between master craftspersons and learners are rare. Targeted information and awareness campaigns are essential to encourage written contracts.
- ✓ Providing modern tools and equipment is a strong motivator for informal companies to engage with VTCs. Infrastructure support—like sheds and toilets near informal businesses—can also be a good strategy to support apprentices and informal companies.
- ✓ Master craftspersons often fear that certified apprentices will become competitors. Continuous education and certification of master craftspersons, facilitated by trusted intermediaries, can help mitigate this concern.
- ✓ While formalization is not systematically promoted, some informal businesses choose to formalize to access new opportunities, such as eligibility for public tenders.
- ✓ Informal companies can be identified either: Proactively by VTCs using criteria like training experience and infrastructure, or reactively when companies approach VTCs seeking access to modern equipment or support in fulfilling orders.

# Discussion in Session 4: [Open session](#)

✚ **Open Session**  
Moderation: Christine von Harrach

✚ **Topics for discussion:**

- Master craftpersons:
  - Organization of In-CT trainings to accommodate Master craftperson
  - Non-financial incentives & encourage to take part in local associations
  - Inclusive financial incentives (target also vulnerables) and how to organize to avoid market distortion
  - Celebration of achievement & recognition of MCs be celebrated in the community
- Training programmes
  - Limitation of bureaucratic burdens for MSMEs
  - Adaptation of existing training programmes to informal settings
  - Cost benefit considerations of dual VET for MSMEs
- Intermediary organizations
  - How to assess credibility and trust with these organizations
  - Mediation of intermediary organizations between state agencies and informal economy
- Collaboration between TVET institutions and MSMEs to coordinate dual VET
  - How can training content be translated into language of MSMEs
  - Trust building ?

# Key takeaways in Session 4: [open session](#)

## ❏ Key Takeaways: Making Informal TVET Work through Non-Financial Incentives

### ❏ 1. Structured Engagement and Preparation

❏ **Regular School-Company Interaction:** Teachers visit MSMEs (Micro, Small, and Medium Enterprises) weekly to establish and maintain contact.

❏ **On-Site Training Support:** Teachers provide guidance to apprentices directly within companies, facilitating dual learning environments.

❏ **Bridging Gaps:** Most MSMEs have no prior contact with formal education institutions — proactive outreach is essential.

### ❏ 2. Learning Pass for Apprentices

❏ Introduce a **‘learning pass’ system** to track and validate skills acquired by apprentices during in-company training.

### ❏ 3. Win-Win for Companies

❏ **Unpaid Support:** Company owners receive practical help from apprentices at no cost.

❏ **External Trainers On-Demand:** Companies can access skilled trainers temporarily through a rental-like system, easing the training burden.

# Key takeaways in Session 4: [open session](#)

## ❏ 4. Curriculum Development

- ❏ Teachers collaborate with companies to **analyze real work processes**, using them to co-develop relevant training content and curricula.

## ❏ 5. Leveraging Partnerships

- ❏ **Link MSMEs with larger enterprises** (e.g., GIZ Botswana models) to promote collaboration, mentorship, and knowledge transfer.

## ❏ 6. Simplifying Processes

- ❏ Keep engagement simple: provide **checklists and clear roadmaps** to minimize administrative burdens on informal companies.

## ❏ 7. Recognition through Microcredentials

- ❏ Offer **microcredentials** to validate apprentices' skills and incentivize participation from both learners and companies.

## ❏ 8. Working Conditions Matter

- ❏ Ensure **decent working conditions** in participating companies to uphold the reputation of dual VET.
- ❏ **Visibility for Good Practices:** Publicly recognize MSMEs that demonstrate successful implementation of dual VET.

## ❏ 9. Role of Intermediary Organizations

- ❏ Support intermediaries in **building trust among stakeholders**, facilitating communication, and managing partnerships between schools and informal businesses.