

Donor Committee for dual Vocational Education and Training: Founding Event and Specialist Conference on 14 April 2016, Lucerne (Switzerland)

Workshop 4: Dual Vocational Education and Training in Fragile Contexts

Starting point

- Throughout the world there are more than 1.5 billion people living in fragile countries and countries marked by conflict and violence. Around 28 million children in conflict regions are forbidden to go to school. These are 42% of the children who do not go to school worldwide. Wars, escape and displacement often stop children attending school for several years so that 'lost generations' arise which usually never go to school again. These children and youths therefore lose personal, professional and social prospects for their lives.
- Crisis-sensitive education systems enable non-discriminating access for all population groups and cultural, linguistic and ethnic conformity of the teaching contents with as high as possible quality of education. Functioning education and vocational education and training establishments are essential for alleviating psychosocial consequences of conflicts for children and youths in particular and also for creating new prospects.
- With vocational education and training, which comprises initial and also continuing VET, people do not only develop specialist competences which are necessary for qualified employment. They also improve their general personal and social skills and abilities, and therefore develop their personality and play an active role in shaping their own living and working environment as well as society. Informally acquired qualifications should also not be ignored here, they should be recognised. The informal economy often offers many people in developing countries their only possible access to productive employment so they can secure their livelihood.
- Measures in the area of vocational education and training can make a decisive contribution to social and economic stabilisation in fragile contexts and open up individual and economic prospects and also help establish democratic structures.

The working group examined the question of which prospects can be created by dual vocational education and training in contexts characterised by fragility and informal employment relationships.

Project examples

Niger: Rural Skills Development support program in Niger (FOPROR), Nicole Gantenbein, SDC coordination office in Niger

- Niger: the state exists but does not function well.
- 30% of the population live in extreme poverty. 2.5 million people out of a total of around 18 million live without food security. More than 50% of the population are under 15 years old. N. Gantenbein sees the young population as a source of potential and not as a fragility factor for Niger.
- Various conflicts in the southeast of the country, e.g. caused by Boko Haram and by problems in immediate neighbouring countries.
- There is a lot of economic potential in agriculture. From the neighbouring country Nigeria there is interest in and increased demand for agricultural products. There is also enough water available in Niger. At the moment the state offers only artisanal apprenticeships, however.
- There is currently a decentralisation of vocational education and training taking place.
- There are at least six education ministers in Niger at the moment.

- The quality of state schools has fallen in recent years. Huge investments in vocational education and training are required.
- Currently around 12,000 apprenticeship posts are offered. Less than 30% of apprentices are literate.
- In Niger, Switzerland is the lead donor in vocational education and training. As part of the project, 10,000 young people have been trained during the last three years. The main challenges are the lasting local integration of the offers established by the project and improving the image of vocational education and training.

Palestine: Vocational education and training and employment promotion, Andreas König, GIZ programme director

- Young people have a better chance of finding work if they have completed an apprenticeship than if they have a higher education degree.
- The costs of doing business are very high. Israel controls all exports and imports. This leads to low demand and considerable economic disadvantages.
- The training programmes are currently not practice-oriented. Opportunities are seen in particular in tourism (internal) and agriculture.
- A. König underlines his presentation with the following six assertions:
 1. An approach on three levels is essential in fragile contexts.
 2. The resilience of youths and their families is promoted by vocational education and training.
 3. Vocational education and training gives prospects when it is demand-oriented.
 4. Decentralisation is important. This means it is necessary to work with formal and informal decentralised structures.
 5. Guiding and accompanying youths is essential. Providing such guidance creates transparency and reveals new pathways. The image of vocational education and training will also be improved in this way.
 6. The primary objective is to reduce resistance to vocational education and training.
- The question of what is possible locally needs to be asked in fragile contexts in particular with regard to the following issues:
 - How can I as an individual survive economically in such a context?
 - How can society survive economically?
 - How can a vocational education and training establishment hold its own?
 - How can a contribution be made so that the vocational education and training establishment becomes a state institution?

Excerpts from the discussion & take home messages

- Assertion 3 regarding the prospects created by vocational education and training is particularly important with regard to the issue of migrants. The objective of vocational education and training projects also has to be to reduce migration, in particular internal migration from rural to urban areas.
- Projects in fragile contexts are often overburdened. They need to cover and solve everything. Here vocational education and training projects in fragile contexts can only achieve something in connection with other project interventions.
- The motivation of partners has to remain over several years and beyond the project period. One possibility of promoting this is to improve the qualifications of existing artisans and not necessarily train new ones. Here it is necessary to mobilise and optimise what is already available. This worked well in Benin, for example. The structures in Benin are completely different than in Niger, however, so this does not work in Niger.
- In a fragile state there are also always successful institutions. It is necessary to build on these. Institutions often work relatively well at the local level even in a fragile context. These need to be supported. Work therefore needs to be done locally in a fragile state in particular. The national

state often only functions to a small extent. However, it is not always easy to decide when work has to be done at which level. The separation of humanitarian aid and development cooperation is outdated and unnecessary. The patterns of thought in this regard need to be changed.

- It must be assumed that there will be an increasing number of fragile and non-functioning states in the future (such as Syria, Kurdistan, Iraq, etc.). This increases the relevance of the theme and the need to have exchanges between the stakeholders.