



Technical and vocational education and training and the labour market

The challenge

Labour markets are highly dynamic. Young people expect to be given opportunities. Older employees and jobseekers need to keep their qualifications up to date. In many regions high unemployment is accompanied by a scarcity of skilled workers. However, technical and vocational education and training (TVET) and labour market services should not only be designed to meet the needs of the private sector, they also should promote social development. Listed below are just some of the challenges we face in development cooperation:

- International competition is increasingly taking its toll on the poor. It is essential that they have the qualifications that are needed on the labour market, because a qualified workforce is a major factor in choosing business locations.
- More and more young people are crowding the labour market. At the same time, people are living and working longer.
- Even in countries with continuous economic growth, the formal sector is not always able to absorb enough manpower. It is vital that people receive the training they need to work in the informal sector.
- Modern technologies are important in order to ensure that developing economies remain economically competitive. At the same time, traditional economic sectors and structures offer employment for many people. For this reason, a differentiated approach to training is necessary.
- The government and the private sector often lack information they need to channel the various currents in the education and training system. TVET and labour market policies, information systems, advisory services and placement services are needed here.

- Providing productive work alone is not enough. Humane working conditions and protection from exploitation are equally important.

Our approach

Our actions are aimed at safeguarding and boosting productive employment. By enabling people to take charge of their employability by their own initiative and to successfully position themselves in labour markets, we help to create a fair balance of opportunities between the poor and the rich, the North and the South, and between men and women. Our work ties in with the existing structures in our cooperation countries. The principles governing the social and ecological market economy guide our actions. In our opinion, there should be 'as much market independence as possible, and only as much government intervention as necessary.' We abide by the principle of providing services as close as possible to the responsible level. We firmly believe in initial vocational training as a public good. Where lifelong learning is concerned, we emphasise the responsibility of employers, associations, municipalities and the learners themselves.

Our services

We bridge the gap between the need for reform and the provision of expertise on change processes. We make know-how available, structure and support reform processes as well as organise initial and further training for actors in TVET and the labour market.

We facilitate an international exchange of experience wherever TVET and labour market frameworks are suitable for use in partner countries. As part of this, we seek alliances and provide specialist knowledge for sustainable solutions. In multi-donor settings, we emphasise complementary measures.



Our holistic, tailor-made approach connects a multitude of state and private sector actors at all levels. With it, the partnerships not only identify new resources for TVET and efficient labour markets, they also lead to training and human resources placements that are in the best interests of the private sector and society.

We assemble a suitable package of services for each cooperation country to enable our partners to:

- define the roles of government, the private sector and civil society in technical and vocational education and training, and put the latter on a sustainable financial footing;
- integrate learners and learning processes in everyday working life and ensure lifelong on-the-job training;
- train instructors, consultants and managerial staff working in the fields of TVET and the labour market;
- introduce recognised standards into the employment and education system in the form of national or regional qualification frameworks;
- establish TVET and labour market research as independent academic disciplines that share their insights with practitioners;
- make the transition from training to productive work more efficient.

The benefits

Labour market relevant training and efficient services on labour markets help develop and maintain the employability of individuals while providing them with the skills they need to participate in society as a whole. They enable companies to take sound personnel decisions and develop a sustainable human resources management system. TVET and labour market policies are vital elements of employment policy. A coherent employment policy enhances the attractiveness of a state as a business location while creating the right conditions for innovation, competitiveness and economic growth at regional and national levels.

An example from the field

In Egypt, the private sector and the government now jointly decide on training content, establish training certificates and monitor their quality. However, high youth unemployment calls for a special approach. At the local level, training is linked to career counselling and job placement services, as well as a monitoring system that involves the government, private sector and civil society. The monitoring of impacts leads to the development of a customised youth employment strategy.

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