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*Youth and skills: Putting education to work*

## **Review of policies to strengthen skills-employment linkages for marginalised young people**

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**Background paper for the EFA Global Monitoring Report,  
2012**

**Strengthening skills-employment linkages for marginalised  
young people:**

*An analysis of the provision, governance and financing of policies,  
strategies and programmes to promote the employability and skills  
development of youths*

**Written by Jakob Engel**

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## Acronyms

ADB	Asian Development Bank
AfDB	African Development Bank
AgVET	Agricultural Vocational Education and Training
BEHTRUWC	Basic Education for Hard-to-Reach Urban Working Children
BEST	Building and Extending Technical Skills Training
BMET	Bureau of Manpower Employment and Training
BSCIC	Bangladesh Small and Cottage Industries Corporation
BTEB	Bangladesh Training and Education Board
CEC	Community Education Centre
CSTC	Community Skill Training Centre
DANIDA	Danish International Development Agency
DTE	Department of Technical Education
DYD	Department for Youth Development
EC	European Community
ECBP	Engineering Capacity Building Programme
ERfKE	Education Reform for the Knowledge Economy
ESDP	Education Sector Development Plan
ETF	European Training Foundation
ETQF	Ethiopian TVET Qualifications Framework
E-TVET Council	Employment-TVET Council
FTC	Farmer Training Centres
GoB	Government of Bangladesh
GoSL	Government of Sierra Leone
GoE	Government of Ethiopia
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
GTZ/GIZ	Agency for Technical/International Cooperation (German)
HDI	Human Development Index
ISC	Industry Skills Council
ILO	International Labour Organisation
MEST	Ministry of Education, Science and Technology
MoE	Ministry of Education
MPO	Monthly Payment Order
MSME	Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises
NCTVA	National Commission for Technical, Vocational and other Awards

NFE	Non-Formal Education
NGO	Non-Governmental Organisation
NSDC	National Skills Development Council
NSAPR	National Strategy for Accelerated Poverty Reduction
NVTQF	National Technical and Vocational Qualifications Framework
NAYCOM	National Youth Commission
NYP	National Youth Policy
NYS	National Youth Strategy
OPP	Outline Perspective Plan
PASDEP	Plan for Accelerated and Sustained Development to End Poverty
PBYRC	Princess Basma Youth Resource Centre
PRSP	Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper
RPL	Recognition of Prior Learning
SDC	Swiss Development Cooperation
SLETFUND	Sierra Leone Enterprise and Training Fund
SME	Small and Medium Enterprise
STEP	Skills and Training Enhancement Project
TEF	Training and Employment Fund
TVET	Technical and Vocational Education and Training
UIE	Urban Informal Economy
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
USAID	United States Agency for International Development
VTC	Vocational Training Centre
YCI	Youth Career Initiative
YES	Youth Employment Strategy
YTC	Youth Training Centre
Y:WJ	Youth: Work Jordan

# **Strengthening skills-employment linkages for marginalised young people<sup>1</sup>**

## **1. Introduction**

There is evidence a growing mismatch between labour market demands and the skills youths are taught in school and training programmes in countries throughout the developing world (see, for example, ILO 2011a, AFDB/OECD 2012). This is further exacerbated by a “youth bulge,” i.e. the fact that youths make up an ever larger share of the population of many developing countries. This is likely to contribute to further increasing youth unemployment and underemployment rates, economic inefficiency and waste, and the risk of increased social and political tensions and uprisings. As governments are increasingly becoming aware, the extent to which the inadequate employability of youths, particularly from marginalised groups, is effectively addressed, or conversely neglected, will have a decisive impact on the socio-economic prospects of generations to come.

Van Adams (2007) lists four overriding factors that influence school-to-work transitions: education, apprenticeships and work experience, labour market programmes (including training outside the formal education system), and labour market policies that facilitate job creation for youth. This report examines what type of policies and programmes are advocated in key strategy documents for forty-six developing countries in the Middle East, North Africa, South Asia, and Sub-Saharan Africa, and will survey the scope of skills training provision.

Four countries – Bangladesh, Jordan, Sierra Leone and Ethiopia – have been selected for an in-depth assessment of their plans. Training systems in these countries are undergoing extensive reforms – both in terms of policies related to youth skills development, as well as relevant programmes – and governments, donors and civil society organisations appear to be placing an increased focus on addressing the skills-labour market mismatch for disadvantaged young people. They are also providing a greater emphasis on skills training in rural areas. Central to these case studies is an examination of the provision of skills training (including how learning is certified), the financing of skills development programmes, and the governance of these programmes.

At the outset two definitional issues should be clarified. Firstly, “youths,” following the UN’s definition, refers to young people aged 15 to 24. That said, several countries have different definitions for “youth,” and where possible, this has been clarified (in Sierra Leone, for example, this term encompasses young people aged 15 to 35). Furthermore, there remains a certain lack of definitional clarity about what the Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) system encompasses. This study differentiates between the “formal TVET system,” which includes secondary and tertiary vocational education and training, and programmes “outside” or “beyond” the formal TVET system. These programmes are also frequently known as informal or non-formal TVET.

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<sup>1</sup> This report has benefited immensely from extensive and invaluable research support provided by Alasdair McWilliam and Hanane Hafraoui, as well as helpful comments received by Pauline Rose and the Global Monitoring Report Team. Diego Rei provided very helpful comments on the Sierra Leone section; Siegfried Gross, Bernd Sandhaas and Robert Palmer provided valuable inputs that contributed to writing the sections on Sierra Leone, Ethiopia and Jordan, respectively.

## 2. Review of policy and programmes – a mapping study

### 2.1. Methodology and limitations

This chapter provides an overview of policies, strategies and programmes to promote youth employability and skills development in 46 developing countries in the Middle East and North Africa, sub-Saharan Africa, and South and West Asia experiencing a youth bulge.<sup>2</sup> A particular focus of this exercise has been examining to what extent policies address skills development needs of marginalised youths, and particularly those living in rural areas.

For each of the 46 countries, recent and publicly available policy documents were examined (including Poverty Reduction Strategy Papers (PRSPs), youth development strategies, skills development strategies, employment strategies, education plans, and TVET strategies, among others), in order to provide an overview for each country of the following:

- The main government objectives in the area of youth skills development;
- How government programmes are addressing these challenges;
- The types of skills these programmes support;
- To what extent programmes assess different needs for skills development in rural and urban areas;
- Whether vulnerable groups are intended beneficiaries of skills development programmes and if so, how their needs are met;
- The provision, financing and governance of skills development programmes.

To provide the best overview, it was found most effective to depict the results of the mapping exercise in a four-column table, as follows:

- The context of youth skills development and youth employment, while also summarising the content of the other three columns. A particular focus was placed on how country strategies and programmes were addressing linkages between training and skills development, on the one hand, and labour market demands on the other hand. A particular focus was also placed on how these strategies and policies, as well as skills training systems and programmes differentiated between urban and rural skills development, and whether these addressed vulnerable groups.
- The aims, objectives and targets of key government strategies (using available policy documents);
- The structure, content, relevance, financing and governance of formal youth skills training, particularly at secondary and tertiary level (using both policy documents and secondary sources);
- Information on individual formal and non-formal skills development programmes (using both policy documents and secondary sources).

Given the broad scope and the relatively brief timeframe provided for the preparation of the report, mapping and analysis was limited to primary documents that were accessible online. Data collection and analysis was conducted between March and July 2011. Extensive use of secondary sources had to be made to gather as much information as possible, but availability of information varied greatly from

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<sup>2</sup> In narrowing down a list of countries for closer examination, low-income and middle-income countries with a youth population of over 20% were prioritised.

country to country, and was at times contradictory. Meanwhile, detailed information on the structure, targeting, provision, and financing of programmes was difficult to locate. At times, claims made in policy documents (relating, for example, to the targeting or resourcing of programmes and strategies) had to be taken at face value. As such, the aggregate analysis and findings are subject to a certain level of uncertainty.

## **2.2. Main findings**

While the respective situations in countries and across regions differed significantly, a few central findings have emerged from this review:

- In almost all countries youth unemployment and particularly underemployment is recognised as a significant concern and obstacle to poverty reduction, growth and competitiveness. However, the degree to which this is acknowledged by the government varies considerably. In some cases one has the impression that governments see this as one concern among many, while others view it as a high-level development priority and risk to social cohesion and stability. This is particularly the case in in post-conflict countries.
- Increasingly, many countries are recognising a mismatch between the education and skills training offered (particularly in secondary-level technical and vocational education systems), and the demands of the labour force. Many countries are developing policies to address and integrate skills training, broader youth-related concerns, and TVET strategies. However, these are frequently vague in specific commitments and often not implemented.
- The institutional framework of youth skills development and training frequently appears broad and uncoordinated. Strategies and policies in this area are often addressed in various sections of national development plans, and are under the responsibility of numerous ministries and agencies. This greatly complicates the development and coordinated implementation of national strategies.
- Vulnerable groups, including the poor, are rarely explicitly addressed in programmes and very few countries have specific strategies or objectives to meet their needs. While vague commitments about greater equity (especially relating to gender) exist, this is usually not backed up with specific strategies, measurable goals or resource allocation commitments. Only very few countries are explicitly addressing the constraints to accessing training and skills development that rural youths face.
- In many countries, expanding the scale and improving the relevance and quality of formal technical and vocational education and training (TVET) systems is seen as the main policy solution to youth unemployment and to mismatches between labour market needs and training. As a result, policies on skills training outside the formal training sector (e.g. apprenticeships or informal on-the-job training schemes) frequently remain unaddressed.
- There is a wide array of large- and smaller-scale skills development programmes, provided both through governments and donors. Many of these are outside the formal training and skills development system. Frequently, these explicitly target vulnerable groups, such as women, out-of-school children and street children. However, few target rural youths. Programmes address a wide variety of training needs, but it is unclear to what extent they are aligned with labour market demands or national development priorities. Further, there are few evaluations or tracer studies to examine the effectiveness of these, and their sustainability is questionable.

Above all, it has become clear over the course of this review that youth training and skills development programmes throughout the developing world are proving inadequate in providing young men and

women with the skills they require to find work. The frequently staggering rates of youth unemployment and the lack of adequate skills training are likely to have enormous costs in terms of lost productivity and social capital, increased fragility, stagnant poverty rates and growing inequality. Many countries risk squandering the potential windfalls of a “youth bulge” (in terms of large working-age population).

*Recognising the problem, but few solutions*

All countries examined address the importance of skills development for youths in some form in strategy documents. Among the 46 countries examined, approximately 25 countries were found to have some form of specific policy document focused on youth issues, skills development, employment and/or the TVET system, or were developing a comparable strategy. However, in many cases these strategies were vague, listing a broad series of priority areas.<sup>3</sup> Particularly youth policies, generally coming from the Ministry of Youth, had very few specific strategies or targets to address training- and labour market-related needs of youths and tended to be focused primarily on raising general awareness for a greater recognition of youth issues across government (and in more powerful ministries).

Strategies and policies in this area are moreover frequently addressed in various sections of national development plans, and are under the responsibility of numerous ministries, including Ministries of Education, Labour/Employment, Technical/Vocational Training, and Youth and Sports. Sometimes training and skills development is under the purview of independent or semi-autonomous agencies, as is the case, for example in Jordan and Ghana, among others. Frequently other ministries (for example agriculture or health) have responsibility over individual vocational training institutes related to their respective mandate. Youth skills training and employment linkages feature in the PRSPs, National Development Plans and their equivalents, as well as Education Sector plans, under a variety of headings (most frequently education and employment, but in some cases these issues feature under headings/pillars associated with growth and competitiveness).

In total, 27 countries were found to have some form of target or objective that could in fact be measured (or at least quantified) in the documents examined. This includes India’s commitment to increase training opportunities to 10 million over the course of its 11<sup>th</sup> Five-Year Plan or Ethiopia’s goal of tripling TVET enrolment over the course of its third Education Sector Development Plan (2005/06-10/11). Pakistan, in its Vision 2030 plan, aims to substantially increase secondary technical and vocational enrolment from 4.2% in 2010 to 15% in 2015, reaching 40% by 2030 (Government of Pakistan 2007). However, few countries, such as Malawi or Senegal and Pakistan, explicitly link targets to increased expenditure on skills training<sup>4</sup>. Further, the level of prioritisation varies significantly: in post-conflict countries like Nepal and Sierra Leone youth unemployment is seen as a substantial source of fragility, and addressing it as a great source of urgency, while in other countries it is seen as a lower-order priority.

*Neglect of vulnerability and rural needs*

Policies and strategies related specifically to improving skills training access to marginalised and vulnerable groups are neglected in most countries. While many strategies emphasise the importance of equity (and particularly gender equality) as an objective within broader discussions of access to skills

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<sup>3</sup> It is worth noting that many of these strategies were written with support from donors (or were part of donor programmes), and were not backed with resources for the implementation of these strategies.

<sup>4</sup> Malawi and Senegal have targets to increase the share of technical and vocational expenditure in the education budget (Government of Senegal 2007; Government of Malawi 2008). In Pakistan, local governments are to allocate a minimum of 4% of education budgets for literacy and non-formal basic education (Government of Pakistan 2009).

development, training and employability, it appears that only Bangladesh has set explicit targets on female participation in TVET (increase access by 60% by 2020).

Only around a quarter of strategies explicitly reference the need to provide better access to training for out-of-school youths and particularly those who dropped out during or after primary school, while few countries explicitly focus on poverty as a constraint to participating in skills development (for example, Cameroon, Nepal, Malawi and Tanzania). Nepal's non-formal education policy outlines objectives to provide alternative basic and vocational education to school dropouts (Government of Nepal 2007), while Malawi's National Education Sector Plan aims to provide 90% of out-of-school youth with access to education and training by 2017. The plan aims to triple the number of facilitators offering second-chance education from 700 to 2,380 (Government of Malawi 2008).

The training needs of rural youths are acknowledged – even superficially – in only half the strategies and only a few governments state that there should be a special emphasis on training in rural and remote areas. In part this is addressed through commitments to increase the supply of training in all regions of the country (for example Kenya: building one youth empowerment centre in each constituency).

### *TVET reform as the panacea?*

In almost every country studied, policy documents (and secondary sources) point to the inadequacy of the secondary and tertiary formal TVET system in meeting the needs of the economy and labour market. In some countries, even those with high unemployment rates, employers complain about difficulties finding suitably qualified young men and women. In many other countries, there is little *domestic* demand for even well trained and highly-skilled graduates. Expanding the scope (and in some cases, improving the relevance and quality) of TVET is seen as a central policy solution to address the mismatch between supply and demand by many governments.

The reform and expansion of the formal TVET systems is also the focus of a large number of skills development programmes financed or co-financed by donors. In several countries, including Ghana and Namibia, the establishment of a semi-autonomous training regulatory body is central to reform efforts. Further, in at least nine countries the establishment of a standardised national qualification system has been or will be implemented. Expanding the role of the private sector in vocational education and training is seen a priority in the majority of countries, though how this will be achieved is frequently not spelled out in great detail.

Despite the substantial focus on the formal TVET system, this tends to be biased towards the better off due to the fees charged (particularly in countries with large private sector training provision). In some countries, such as Algeria, initiatives have been suggested to provide free vocational training to school drop-outs, while Pakistan envisages reserving places at technical and vocational institutions for disadvantaged youth. On the whole, however, providing greater access to the poor and to vulnerable groups seems a low priority in strategies to improve and reform TVET (though India and Malawi, among others, have affirmative action programmes to increase the share of women in training).

Few countries have developed strategies to improve informal and non-formal training and skills development offerings, which provide the vast majority of training opportunities in most low-income countries. Community Skills Training Centres in Ethiopia, Community Learning Centres in Iran, and Community Skills Development Centres in Namibia appear to have all been scaled up substantially in recent years to provide non-formal training in rural areas. Ghana's Shared Growth and Development Agenda (2010–2013) and National Technical and Vocational Education and Training Policy Framework

are examples of policies which extend technical and vocational education and training to the informal sector, outlining objectives to promote productivity, employment creation and improved working conditions (Government of Ghana 2004; 2010). The latter policy includes an ambitious plan to provide competency-based training and assessment for the traditional apprenticeship system, utilising trade associations to deliver training.

*A multitude of programmes, but little coordination*

Discreet programmes to increase the scope of skills training were identified in all 46 countries, and in some countries there are numerous large-scale programmes, including many targeted towards vulnerable groups. In recent years this has also been a substantial area of donor involvement, with large-scale training and TVET reform programmes funded by the World Bank (in Rwanda and Ghana, among others), the African Development Bank (Cameroon) and the EC (Egypt, Algeria and Bangladesh). At least 35 of the 46 countries surveyed have (or recently had) programmes that addressed the needs of rural youths. Programmes cover a variety of areas, including vocational training in specific skill areas, on-the-job-training, public works programmes, entrepreneurship promotion and large-scale infrastructure and TVET institutional reform programmes.

According to a cursory survey, 18 of the 45 countries plan to increase support for public works projects for youths or on-the-job training schemes in their strategies, while many were found to offer some form of credit or micro-finance programme (or larger national fund) to provide start-up capital to youths or to fund training scholarships. Some countries had programmes explicitly focused on agricultural skills (such as the National Youth Employment Scheme in Sierra Leone or the Integrated Youth Development Project in Malawi).

It is unclear how effectively these programmes are achieving their objectives, as tracer studies are generally not accessible, if they are conducted at all. A further problem is the lack (or disparate methods) of training certification in many training programmes, which complicates the recognition of the skills by potential employers. As a result, programmes that also link youths (and especially rural youths) to employers in addition to providing training, could be an important measure to address youth unemployment (see Box 1).

### **Box 1: What training programmes have been considered successful in supporting marginalised youths?**

Despite the great number of programmes to support at-risk youths enter and stay in the labour market, on the whole the track record of these programmes is mixed, at best. Moreover, many of these programmes have not been independently evaluated, making it difficult to assess impact and draw lessons. Some skill development programmes that have been highlighted as having been successful, particularly in addressing the needs of marginalised and at-risk youths include the following:

- “Joven” programmes in several Latin American countries combine training with work experience for youths aged 16 to 29 years. Drawing from experiences from the US Job Corps programmes, they also provide additional support services, including instruction in life skills, transportation, health care, books and materials, and clothes, and in some cases child care to reach young women. In Chile, recent analyses found that the program increased the probability of employment by 21% relative to the control group, with strongly significant results for youths aged 21 and younger and for women. In Peru, the impact on labor placement was 7.5%. However, given the scope of support services, these benefits come at a significant cost that may be unaffordable for many low-income country governments (van Adams 2007, 30).
- Started in Senegal and replicated in 15 other countries in the region, the AFETIP programme funds training for inexperienced young people if contractors receiving construction contracts agree to use labour-intensive practices and hire youths. In Senegal alone, AGETIP was able to create approximately 450,000 temporary jobs between 1988 and 2003 and substantially improve the road, drainage, piping and social service infrastructure. It also created numerous small businesses by ensuring that public works projects were packaged as smaller contracts. (Peeters et al 2009, 86).
- Particularly relevant for the post-conflict context, GTZ’s vocational training and job creation programme in Aceh, Indonesia assisted female ex-combatants (a group that is frequently neglected in re-entry programmes) set up businesses by providing vocational training in a high-demand sector, textiles production. GTZ was able to “secure participant, community and political buy-in to make gains on active engagement, social reintegration and sustainable economic outcomes” and moreover monitored and evaluated the project for two years, continuing to provide high quality training as and when needs became apparent McKibben (2011, 30).

### **2.3. Selection of countries for further investigation**

Based on this overview, and in consultation with the Global Monitoring Report team, four countries have been selected for an in-depth assessment of their skills development strategies and programmes: Bangladesh, Jordan, Sierra Leone and Ethiopia.<sup>5</sup> These countries are intended to include those where the national government, private sector and civil society organisations, as well as development partners, are seen to have paid most attention to addressing the skills-labour market mismatch for disadvantaged young people. Other criteria, such as the diversity of challenges faced by countries, the diversity of approaches to addressing skills development, data availability, and regional variation, were also taken into account.

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<sup>5</sup> All four country reviews were desk studies completed between May and August 2011, and based on a review of primary and secondary documents, and in some cases discussions with country-based experts.

That said, this study has not looked at labour market, income or education outcomes – rather, it has focused on inputs and processes: strategy documents, government and non-government skills training programmes, governance structures, and modes of financing. It explicitly cannot make assessments of what works and what doesn't in addressing the skills mismatch and youth unemployment– most reforms are still in their early stages in these four countries, and there is a dearth of independent assessments of impact. Furthermore, reliable data on expenditure, particularly for training beyond the formal sector is hard to come by. Thus, the four countries do not represent examples of best practice, or model countries. Rather, they are countries from different regions (South Asia, Middle East, West Africa, East Africa) where skills development is increasingly being prioritised, albeit within highly different contexts: urbanisation and rapid population growth (Bangladesh), a youth bulge with mounting unemployment–especially among women and youths (Jordan), post-conflict fragility (Sierra Leone), and an agriculture-based economy with low levels of education and literacy (Ethiopia). All four are moreover explicitly targeting the training needs of marginalised groups.

**Figure 1: Employment indicators**

Country	Youth employment to population ratio, 2008 (%)	Youth population as share of total, 2008 (%)	Growth in youth population as share of total, 1998-2008 (%)	Urban population as share of total population, 2009 (%)	Growth in urban population as share of total population, 1999-2009 (%)	Employment to population ratio (%)	Unemployment (%)	Youth unemployment (%)
Bangladesh	56	20.6	-1.2	27.6	4.4	67.9	4	9
Ethiopia	74	20.3	1.7	17.3	2.6	80.6	17	25
Jordan	20	20.9	-1.2	78.5	0.2	37.9	13	N/A
Sierra Leone	42	19.5	-0.8	38.1	2.8	64.8	3	5

Source: World Bank and ILO

## 3. Bangladesh

### 3.1. Context: A rapidly growing workforce underprepared for a changing economy

In recent years the Bangladeshi government, supported by the private sector, donors, and NGOs, has increasingly addressed the growing mismatch between employer demands and the content, quality and accessibility of youth skills training. Three closely interlinked factors have helped drive this process.

Firstly, both Bangladesh's population and the size of its labour force have been increasing rapidly, with particularly women and youths entering in growing numbers. This has been accompanied by a persistently high rate of poverty. 40% of Bangladeshis (58 million) live below the poverty line and many more live just above it (Dohmen 2009). Between 1999/2000 and 2005/06, the size of the labour force grew from 40.7 million to 49.5 million, and the number of youth workers (defined as age 15 to 29) is expected to reach almost 30 million by 2015 (GoB/UNDP 2009). Jobs have not been growing at a commensurate rate; while the unemployment rate remains relatively low, over one quarter of the labour force is underemployed according to the most recent Labour Force Survey. This figure masks a strong gender bias: the rate of underemployment is 11% among males and 68% among females (Dunn and Mondal 2011); the rate of inactivity is 42.6% of women and only 16.0% for men. There is thus an increasingly recognised need to create employment at a much faster rate than in the past.

Population growth has been accompanied by structural changes in the Bangladeshi economy, with employment shifting from agriculture to industry, and increasingly services. According to the most recent available labour force survey (2005/06), the agricultural sector continues to dominate, providing jobs for 22.8 million compared to 6.9 million in industry and 17.7 million in services. However, job growth rates for the latter two have increased more rapidly, while agricultural employment has stagnated (Dohmen 2009, 17).

This has led to changing labour market demands, and the technical and vocational education and training (TVET) system is poorly aligned to address these. Trades or occupations where programmes are offered are outdated, and the levels of competency acquired frequently don't meet industry requirements. Finally, there are insufficient practical experience opportunities for students (ADB n/d). Furthermore the majority of TVET teachers lack pedagogical training, practical skills and industrial experience, while training institutions tend to have poorly equipped workshops, and insufficient teaching and training materials. Ongoing government policy reform efforts to improve access to skills training both through the formal TVET system and through non-formal training programmes, have aimed to remedy these deficiencies and address the changes in labour market demands, particularly for the most vulnerable.

### 3.2. Addressing the skills mismatch in strategy and policy documents

The 2009 election of the Awami League Party led by Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina, seems to have brought a new emphasis on skills development as a leading government priority. This stronger focus on skills development and training was central to the party's manifesto, and has increasingly become a cross-cutting policy priority and is emphasised in numerous government strategy and policy documents, including the 2009 *National Strategy for Accelerated Poverty Reduction II* (NSAPR II, GoB 2009b), the *Outline Perspective Plan 2010-2021* (OPP, GoB 2010), the *Millennium Development Goal Needs Assessment & Costing 2009-2015* (GoB/UNDP 2009), the most recent *National Education Policy* (MoE 2010) and most notably, the country's first *Skills Development Policy* (MoE/EC/ILO 2009).

### Overriding goals

Strategies assume a substantial mismatch between the existing skill base of youths, and employer demands. The NSAPR II posits that “there exists acute shortages of skilled manpower required to propel the country [to] harvest the benefits of science and technology” (GoB 2009b 94). This mismatch, and the lack of skilled manpower particularly in new technologies, is seen as a long-term liability adversely impacting the country’s competitiveness. Increasing employability is given “utmost priority” (*ibid.*, xxi). Similarly, one of the central goals of the Outline Perspective Plan for the implementation of *Vision 2021* is “ensuring that Bangladesh is known as a country of educated people with skills in information technology” (GoB 2010, 5). This is seen as a central to achieving the strategy’s overarching aim, namely that Bangladesh achieves middle-income and high-HDI status by 2021. Integral to the achievement of these aims is an ambitious expansion of training and skills development. The skills mismatch is also central in informing the country’s first *Skills Development Policy*, which creates a policy and programmatic framework for the “the skilling” of the country’s labour force (see Box 2).

### Increasing access and employability

The country’s most recent education policy calls for a massive expansion of the vocational education track of secondary school from 3% to 20-25% of total secondary enrolment, particularly through increased enrolment of women, and through the provision of courses in “non-traditional skills” and improved access for lower-income youths. Similarly, the NSAPR II calls for an increase in “training on skill development by 10% per year”.<sup>6</sup> The private sector, as a provider of vocational training, is viewed as central to this objective: the education policy “envisages a system with greater private sector participation in provision and determination of skill needs” (MoE 2009<sup>7</sup>). Cognisant of the substantial problems of un- and under-employment, the Bangladeshi government defines employability (rather than the delivery of training) as a central aim. One of the plan’s key targets is to “ensure that 80 percent of [vocational and technical] graduates find jobs within six months of graduation” (GoB 2009b, 178).

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<sup>6</sup> It is unclear precisely what this increase signifies, and whether commensurate increases in budgetary resources are envisioned.

<sup>7</sup> Cited in World Bank 2009, 4.

**Box 2: Bangladesh's *Skills Development Policy* – Addressing the skills mismatch through a coordinated framework**

Developed by the National Skills Development Council (NSDC) and industry partners, with support from the EC and ILO, the *Skills Development Policy* aims to “think beyond state-controlled TVET systems to emphasise the varied types of formal and non-formal training involved in skills development” (MoE/EC/ILO 2009, 4). It represents a first attempt by the GoB to develop a crosscutting policy agenda for skills development. The three overarching goals are to i) enhance employability to adapt to changing technologies and labour market demands; ii) improve productivity and profitability of enterprises and iii) strengthen national competitiveness and reduce poverty. Strategies are particularly targeted towards groups with special needs, such as youths, low-skilled and low-income people, minorities, older workers, migrants, the disabled and the poor.

Pro-poor strategies include:

- Increasing linkages to micro-finance and formal skills training for those in rural communities;
- Targets to increase enrolment of those living in *monga*-affected areas;
- The introduction of a system for the Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL);
- Nationally recognised qualifications from the National Training and Vocational Qualifications Framework (NTVQF) for apprentices.

Finally, the policy outlines the changed governance structure for skills development in Bangladesh, and particularly the roles of the NSDC, the new Industry Skills Councils (ISCs) and the strengthened Bureau of Manpower, Employment & Training (BMET). This will be explained in greater detail in Section 3.4.

*Skills development for overseas work*

Training young Bangladeshis to work overseas is central to the youth skills development policy framework. The annual flow of migrant workers has increased from 6,087 in 1976 to 1,407,705 in 2008, with an annual rate of growth of 18.5% (GoB 2009, 24). In policy documents, the promotion of overseas employment to absorb the growing labour force of the country is prioritized. The OPP emphasises the provision of training in vocations and skills that have a high future demand in global markets (GoB 2010, 42). The 2009 *Millennium Development Goal Needs Assessment & Costing 2009-2015* posits numerous long-term strategies for expanding overseas employment,<sup>8</sup> and sets the target of training 500,000 individuals as semi-skilled and skilled labour in order to work abroad (GoB/UNDP 2009, 77).

*Addressing marginalisation*

Addressing skills development programmes for the geographically, economically, socially and physically marginalized is central to policy documents. In the NSAPR II, the GoB argues that the “objectives of TVET are to expand it for the poor, particularly for adolescents, young adults, adults, males and females” (GoB 2010b, 26). It further promotes the inclusion of disadvantaged and extreme poor groups in the “mainstream of society by ensuring their participation in socioeconomic activities ... and skill training for income generating activities” (GoB 2009b, 70). Similarly, the discussion of NFE in the *Outline Perspective Plan 2010-2021* focuses extensively on creating opportunities for skills development for “all left out illiterate, semiliterate and newly literate young persons and adults ... linked to the new National Technical and Vocational Qualifications Framework (NTVQF).” (GoB 2010, 26). It also aims to widen

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<sup>8</sup> These include the following: skills development training, transfer of workers from Monga areas (which tend to have fewer opportunities for work), welfare programmes, controlling the works of recruiting agencies, bringing about transparency in the migration process, increasing the flow of remittances and ensuring their proper use, and special initiatives for sending women workers abroad. The OPP further calls for redefining the functions and roles of foreign missions to make assessments of labour demands and protect the rights of migrant workers (GoB 2010, 42).

the choice of school subjects for the skill development of rural children. The GoB has furthermore set ambitious targets, including increasing female participation in technical and vocational education by 60% by 2020 (GoB 2009b).

In addition, government strategies call for greater flexibility in the system, particularly for underprivileged people. The Government's *Non-Formal Education (NFE) Policy* (MoE 2006) already emphasised the need for improved second-chance NFE opportunities for adolescents who dropped out or never enrolled in school. The government has signalled that it will lift the requirement of completing grade 8 before enrolling in formal TVE, which excludes many underprivileged people (Dunn and Mondal 2011). Further, the improved transferability of qualifications and the recognition of prior learning should greatly facilitate access to vocational training for marginalised groups.

### **3.3. The scope and nature of skills development and training provision**

#### **3.3.1. The formal TVET system**

##### Overview

Formal TVET in Bangladesh incorporates any course that has been accredited by the Bangladesh Training and Education Board (BTEB). These courses have their curricula and examinations set by the BTEB. According to recent estimates there are over 3,600 vocational education and training institutions providing training. Almost 500,000 students are enrolled in these programmes. Only about 10% of these are government-run.<sup>9</sup>

Public sector technical schools and colleges are certified through to BTEB, and generally offer 2-year vocational training courses, as well as some shorter courses, which are increasing in demand. Among public providers, the main ministries offering skills training are (according to Comyn 2009) the Department of Technical Education (DTE) within the Ministry of Education (64 technical schools and 42 polytechnics), the Ministry of Expatriate Welfare and Overseas Employment (41 technical training colleges), the Department of Textiles (40 Textile Vocational Colleges and 6 District Textile Institutes), the Department of Agriculture (12 Technical Institutes), the Ministry of Women's and Children's Affairs (64 Women's Training Colleges), and the Department for Youth Development (55 Youth Training Centres), among others.

Particularly the latter two Ministries seem to target their skills training programmes towards marginalised youths. Combating youth unemployment is one of the central objectives of the Department for Youth Development (DYD), and it has extensive training capacity encompassing both the formal training system, and through skills training outside the formal system. In addition to its delivery network of 55 Youth Training Centres (YTC), it has plans in place to establish a further nine of these so there would be one YTC in each of the 64 districts.

##### Private provision within the formal system

As mentioned earlier, the vast majority of vocational education providers that make up the formal TVET system are privately run, and the scope and content of provision differs greatly. Many BTEB-recognised institutions receive public funding through Monthly Pay Orders (see Section 3.5. for more details).

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<sup>9</sup> Interestingly, of the 165,000 students in public institutions, approximately 85% are male while in private institutions up to 60% of students are female (Dohmen 2009).

Training centres are frequently run by private sector organisations that have decided to offer skills training in their respective sector. There is also an emerging trend for specific enterprises to enter into partnerships with public training institutes to deliver training.

Two training providers, UCEP and MAWTS, provide innovative models of donor and private sector skills development (Dohmen 2009). UCEP, established and financed through donor support (including DFID, DANIDA, SDC and others), operates 43 integrated General and Vocation Education Schools, with further expansion planned. In total, UCEP schools have a capacity of 55,000 and some 150,000 underprivileged children have been enrolled since inception: These children generally receive education and training for some hours a day only, allowing them to also continue working to support their families. According to tracer study, transition to employment is high (95%) as compared to public TVET-institutions. MAWTS was established and financed for the first 25 years by Caritas Bangladesh, but is now operating as a private provider earning its revenue through fees as well as a vendor of products manufactured by the students of its programmes.

#### *Efforts to expand the scope of formal provision and increase equity*

The formal TVET system is in the midst of a comprehensive expansion. A central project in the *Skills Development Strategy* are plans by the Department for Technical Education to develop 64 new technical schools in the short term and plans to eventually roll out an additional 400 government-run schools so that one exists in each upazilla of the country. The availability of funding for these new schools is not clear this stage (Comyn 2009).

The ‘Skills Development Project’ (supported in part by the Asian Development Bank and Swiss Development Corporation) is strengthening 85 existing training centres, in order to teach an additional 68,000 youths and train 5,000 teachers. Moreover, component 1 and 2 of the World Bank-supported Skills and Training Enhancement Project (STEP) will provide funding to 25-30 public and private institutions offering diploma level training, and 40-50 institutions offering short courses (World Bank 2010). Accredited schools are selected on the basis of a number of criteria, including the availability of ongoing apprenticeship programs, existing links to industry and a willingness to strengthen these, and a willingness to take measures to improve women’s enrolment. Tied to improving the quality of these institutions and the relevance of training are efforts to increase access to people from disadvantaged socioeconomic backgrounds including religious and ethnic minorities and women through a stipend programme. It is assumed that the project will be implemented in areas that house indigenous peoples and other vulnerable communities, and a framework for the development of an Indigenous Peoples Plan has been developed (World Bank 2010). Both projects are being implemented by the Ministry of Education.

### **3.3.2. Skills development programmes beyond the formal system**

There are numerous programmes providing skills training outside the formal vocational education system, including training programmes, job creation programmes; micro-credit schemes geared towards promoting youth self-employment, and apprenticeships, among others. Bangladesh’s very large community of NGOs are central to the provision of many of these programmes, but there is an emerging system of cooperation between relevant ministries, NGOs and the private sector.

#### *Skills training for marginalised youths*

Bangladesh's large-scale non-formal education programmes (including the Government's "NFE Programmes," and the "Post-Literacy for Human Development Programme") all have substantial skill development dimensions. Similarly, the second phase of the UNICEF-supported "Basic Education for Hard-to-Reach Urban Working Children" (BEHTRUWC) has recently included a skills training component for 12-14 year-old children who had been involved with child labour. Children are provided with livelihood skills training in different trades and are helped to arrange self-employment and job placements with follow-up assistance. As part of the BEHTRUWC, UNICEF has recently also implemented five vocational training centres throughout Bangladesh where 1,000 students are being trained in various trades. All of these students were previously involved in the worst forms of child labour (ILO 2011). As part of an EC-ILO apprenticeship pilot, these training centres are currently being scaled up.

Similarly, the EC-ILO "Urban Informal Economy" (UIE) project has removed around 2400 working children from enduring the worst forms of child labour and brought these children to complete a Life Skills Training program followed by vocational training in one of 8 trades. Through the ILO Apprenticeship Pilots (Component 5 of the EC-ILO TVET Reform project), a pre-apprenticeship model has been developed to enhance the skill training for the UIE project. Currently the UIE project is piloting two trades - motorcycle service mechanics and tailoring/dressmaking in conjunction with the UIE vocational training centres (ILO, 2011b).

The DYD operates a further 169 training centres offering a range of specialized programs in the areas of livestock, poultry and pisciculture training centres (55), dress-making (68), block and batik printing (9), secretarial science (5) and steno-typing (32) (Comyn 2009). The DYD is operating some training and capacity building programs on different trades through public private partnerships with different government and non-government organizations. Partner organizations are Bangladesh Garment Manufacturers and Exporters' Association, Western Marine Service Ltd, Day-Bangladesh, Bangladesh National Women Lawyers' Association, Thengamara Mohila Sabuj Sangho, Save the Children-USA, and others (Hossain 2010). Programmes are not targeted towards marginalised groups, but participation for low-income youths is enabled through a credit programme that provides grants for self-employment, income generation, and skill development training. These credits are particularly targeted towards low-income youths (*ibid.*).

While not explicitly directed towards youths, the 4<sup>th</sup> phase of the Ministry of Women's and Children's Affairs "Vulnerable Group Development Project" (2007-11) is providing 80,000 ultra poor women – many of whom are young – with monthly cash transfers and skills training for income-generating activities, delivered through the participating NGOs. Beneficiaries are trained in skills to carry out petty trades, tailoring, food catering and processing, livestock production, home gardening, and tree nurseries, among others (Ahmed et al. 2009).

#### Rural-focused skills development

The *Skills Development Policy* calls for the improvements "in the quality of skills development in rural communities" (MoE/EC/ILO 2009, 37). BRAC, one of the most prominent NFE providers in Bangladesh, also provides extensive skills development programmes, particularly for the poor. The "Post-Primary and Continuing Education" programme is focused on providing access to reading materials, basic computer training and skills training for rural populations with limited access to these services. In February 2007, there were 1,246 of these libraries - *Gonokendro Pathbagars* – throughout the country, and these have over 400,000 members. With Government support, *Gonokendro* members have also been offered training for livestock rearing, fish culture, electrical repair work and vegetable cultivation. Other

programmes implemented by BRAC include, micro-finance, job-creation, education, social development, health and others. Through enterprise and employment development training, BRAC has provided income-enhancing skills to hundreds of thousands of individuals (Us-Sabur 2006).

Furthermore, the Department of Social Services in the Ministry of Social Welfare has introduced the Rural Social Service programme, a training programme for the rural unemployed, illiterate or half-educated youth for skill development and self-employment. This programme is imparting training on various crafts, such as jute works, mat-making, pottery, garment-making, wood and cane furniture, electric wiring, rickshaw and cycle repair, among others (Hossain 2010). Moreover, two donor programmes - the USAID-funded “Bangladesh Youth Employment Pilot” and the EC/ILO initiative “Training for Rural Economic Empowerment” – are aiming to increase access for rural youths to non-agricultural skills training (EDC 2009, Baldemor n/d).

#### Apprenticeships and on-the job training

Despite the significant focus on the formal vocational training system, the vast majority of youths receive training and develop skills through informal apprenticeship arrangements. An ADB survey found that 78% of skilled workers in manufacturing establishments received their skills informally on the job (Comyn 2009, 24).<sup>10</sup>

Efforts are underway to certify and harmonise this training with existing qualifications, particularly through the development of the NTVQF and the recognition of prior learning (see 3.3.3.). However, currently there are very few formal private sector apprenticeship programmes. Under Component 5 of the EC/ILO “TVET Reform” project there has been considerable study on how apprenticeship systems currently work in Bangladesh. Based on these findings and international experience, seven pilots to test new models are currently underway (ILO 2011). A growing number of organizations, such as the Bangladesh Garment Manufacturers & Exporters Association, the Chittagong Skills Development Centre and the Dhaka Chamber of Commerce & Industry have established training centres delivering non-affiliated programs to both new entrants and existing employees (*ibid.*, 25).

#### Public works and job creation schemes

A central aspect of the government’s efforts to address youth unemployment has been the creation of the “National Service” job scheme, which is intended to create job opportunities for over 700,000 unemployed youths. Participants are given a daily allowance during the three-month training period.<sup>11</sup> Upon completion, participants will initially be appointed for a two-year term and attached to various government departments, primary schools and other public sector workplaces. Regulations stipulate that while selecting the unemployed candidates, special emphasis would be given to those who have remained unemployed for a long time, as well as and children of Freedom Fighters or children from economically distressed families. The scheme is being piloted in Kurigam and Bargunda, two deprived regions of the country. This is complemented by an “Employment Guarantee Scheme” (modelled on similar schemes in India) that provide for 100 days of employment for one person per family.

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<sup>10</sup> Along similar lines, World Bank (2006) research found that only 25 percent of manufacturing establishments in Bangladesh provide their employees with in-service formal training. This is significantly lower as compared to individual East Asian countries, such as Malaysia (training levels are twice as high) and China (three times higher).

<sup>11</sup> Training will likely consist of nation and character building activities, disaster management and social welfare works, basic knowledge, health and family planning, education and physical education, forestry and environment, agriculture, public security, law and order and services of the union and upazila parishads (see GoB 2009b and [www.bdnews24.com/details.php?id=155192&cid=2](http://www.bdnews24.com/details.php?id=155192&cid=2))

There are furthermore plans, under the NSAPR II programme “Employment Generation for the Hard Core Poor”, to develop comprehensive employment guidelines with the following core components: (i) creating employment opportunities in a rural economy, (ii) creating employment opportunities for wage labour in industries, (iii) providing credit and training for self-employment, (iv) promoting subcontracting arrangements between large firms and SMEs, and (v) providing special training arrangements for facilitating export of labour. Finally, a number of labour market and social protection policies devised by the Bangladeshi Government incentivise skills development. Cash transfers to families of the poor that have helped keep at-risk youths enrolled in school have proven effective. These have also allowed youths and their families to obtain access to health care and other social services (van Adams 2007, 29).

#### Micro-credit schemes

Recent policy documents have stressed facilitating the role of micro-credit to enable skills development as a central programmatic priority. The role of the Bangladesh Small and Cottage Industries Corporation (BSCIC) in providing collateral-free loans to low-income women and unemployed youth to create self-employment features in the NSAPR II, while the National Youth Policy calls for “micro credit [to be] distributed at low rate of interest under simple terms and conditions” (DYD 2007). This is in part being addressed through the DYD programme, “Micro Credit for Self Employment of Youth”, which also links training and microcredit facilities, and prioritises women and low-income holders. The program has provisions to reward youths for exceptional performance in self-employment, income generation, and skill development training (Us-Sabur 2006). Finally, micro-finance institutions, such as the Grameen Bank, BRAC and others, have also taken a prominent role in this regard and provide discounted loans for youths to fund skills development programmes.

### **3.3.3. Accreditation of training**

The BTEB is central to the accreditation of TVET programmes, and one of the key distinctions amongst TVET courses is whether they are affiliated or not with the BTEB (see National Institute of Labour Studies 2010). That said, the rigid lines between formality and informality are increasingly being blurred, and reviewing and revising the accreditation and certification framework has been a central component of the reforms. The ongoing development of the NTVQF, which is being supported through the EC/ILO TVET Reform Project, aims to create a framework for “a more ubiquitous and universal method of skills recognition and certification in Bangladesh” (ILO-JOBS 2009). The NTVQF aims to enable the transferability of qualifications and skill levels throughout the country and abroad.

This new framework would take particular account of low-skilled individuals, with the first two levels in the NTVQF scale catering to under-privileged and poorly educated sections of the community. To maximize efficiency, it is intended that industry-based business units would be responsible for qualifications by sector rather than by level, which is nominally the case at the moment. A central dimension, particularly for those learning their skills through apprenticeships or other informal programmes, is the recognition of prior learning, which would likely be a most critical step in upgrading informal apprenticeships. This would allow under-privileged and poorly educated workers with viable skills better access to further skills training, potentially benefiting roughly 50% of the population over the age of fourteen who cannot read or write, by recognising individual skill level certifications or a statement of attainment set by the NTVQF (ILO-JOBS 2009).

### 3.4. Governance of training and skills development

#### Moving towards greater coordination

Despite increased efforts to bring greater coordination and coherence to the governance framework of skills development in Bangladesh, this remains spread across as many as 22 ministries and agencies. Specifically, the Ministry of Education's Department for Technical Education (DTE) is responsible for secondary and higher and technical education while the Ministry of Primary and Mass Education is responsible for non-formal education and skills training of disadvantaged and marginalised children. The Bureau of Manpower Employment and Training (BMET) under the Ministry of Expatriate Welfare and Overseas Employment provides training programmes geared towards overseas employment (which has considerable overlap to other training courses), while the BMET within the Ministry of Labour and Manpower provides employment training in numerous other areas.

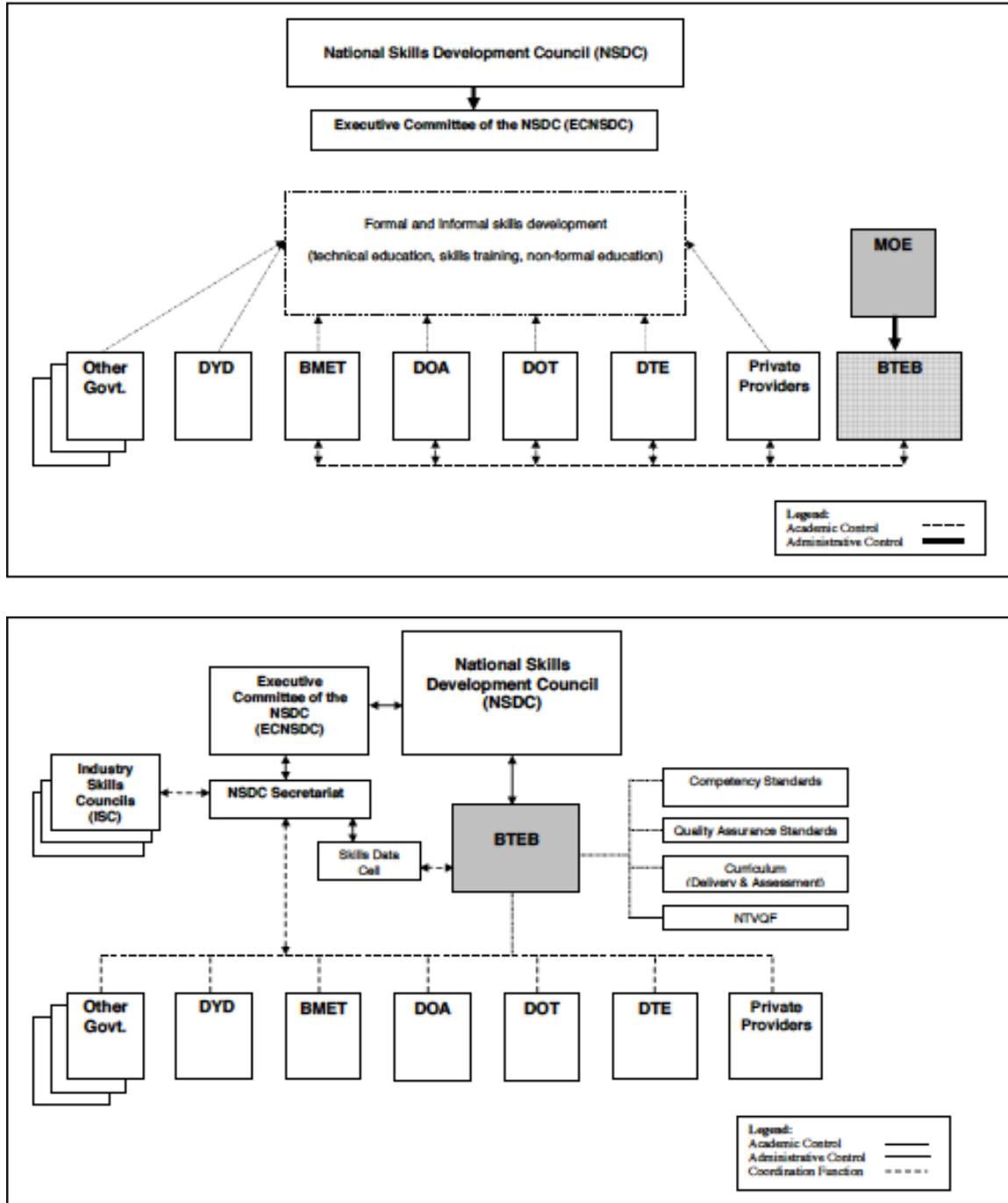
The creation of the National Skills Development Council in 2008 has been intended to have a central role in improving the coordination of the governance framework and bringing together all involved ministries under the chairmanship of the Prime Minister (see Figure 2). The Ministry of Education and the Ministry of Labour co-chair the Executive Committee. The NSDC includes government, employers, workers and civil society, and industry partners and is responsible for the approval and implementation of all governance, regulatory and legislative provisions. Under this framework, the BTEB will be given a strengthened role within the Bangladesh skills development system and assume broader national responsibilities for a more rigorous quality assurance system for skills development (MoE/EC/ILO 2010). Further, closer linkages to employer groups are being developed through the establishment of sector-specific industry skills councils.

#### Extensive donor programmes to support institutional reform

Donors are supporting efforts towards substantial institutional reforms and greater private sector participation. This particularly includes the aforementioned "TVET reform programme", which aims to strengthen governance, management and operational capacity, improve coordination, and promote decentralization in the TVET system and its institutions. This programme is also supporting efforts to revise the legal framework in order to provide greater formal protection to apprentices. It is also providing direct start-up and operational support to Industry Skills Councils, and to the National Skills Development Council.

Similarly, numerous programmes are supporting key government initiatives central to TVET reform, including the development of a National Qualifications Framework and the recognition of prior learning. The Skills Development Project is developing 70 further modular courses and 100 competency-based training courses to offer greater flexibility and relevance to modern labour market needs.

Figure 2: Current and proposed structure for the governance of skills development



Source: Coryn 2010

### 3.5. Financing of training and skills development

#### *A central role for the Government*

The Bangladeshi government, through its education budget, has a central role in financing both the private and the public formal TVET system. In addition to funding public institutions, state funding is also used to provide subsidies through so-called Monthly Payment Orders (MPO) to private providers that are BTEB-certified. This generally covers these institutions' teacher salaries. Private institutions

supplement this through student fees and donations, while institutions that do not receive an MPO are fully dependent on student fees.

This, to some extent, creates two tiers of private institutions, with those receiving MPOs more constrained in their managerial independence as they are expected to comply with BTEB regulations. However, the level of regulation of BTEB-certified is quite low, for now with funding currently not contingent on the delivery of any specific outcomes (Coryn 2009, 24). As the NTVQF becomes more established, it is possible that a more effective BTEB could play a larger role in harmonising the content and quality of education. However, the system has been underfunded in the past: Bangladesh spends less than 1.5% of its entire education budget on all technical education and training in the country (World Bank 2010).

### NGOs, donors and employers

Particularly in the case of programmes outside the formal system, donors and NGOs play a very large role. It is estimated that at least 500 NGOs currently deliver short courses to over 95,000 learners every year (Comyn 2009, 24). A large number of schools, such as the aforementioned UCEP schools, rely on donor funding. Similarly, recent and ongoing donor programmes are substantial: the World Bank STEP programme entails a \$79 million credit; while the Skills Development Programme is in large part funded through a \$66.7 million loan. The “TVET Reform” project is funded through a \$12 million EC grant. Other donors active in this sector include UNICEF, USAID, DANIDA, SDC, and others. NGOs, and particularly microfinance institutions, also have a central role in funding skills development programmes. The aforementioned BRAC programme is funded through BRAC matching grants for funds raised by the community. A Grameen Shikkha-provided vocational training programme was funded by international companies, as part of their corporate social responsibility programmes. Its model, in turn, is to gradually raise the amount and level of tuition fees to a level that is finally sufficient to cover at least recurrent expenditures (Dohmen 2009)

Finally, internships, apprenticeships and other on-the-job forms of training are paid by employers, if students receive any remuneration.<sup>12</sup> An innovative learning-on-the-job model is the ongoing BCC-BASIS internship program, which shares the cost of apprentices between the partnering company and the government. In this internship program, interns are paid a stipend, a cost that is shared between the government and the partnering company. This cost-sharing model has the potential to be used for apprenticeships across multiple sectors (ILO-JOBS 2009a).

## **3.6. Addressing the skills mismatch among marginalised groups?**

The last few years have seen a policy shift by the Bangladeshi Government towards addressing youth under- and unemployment, as well as the inadequate training system that is mismatched with labour market demands. This has been accompanied by an overhaul of the TVET system’s institutional framework to provide for a more inclusive structure and to take account of the breadth of training provision. This has been complemented by major government- and donor-funded projects to increase the scope and breadth of skills training provision. While the targets set in various policies – and most notably the NSAPR II and Skills Development Policy – are ambitious, these documents do provide a strategic framework. On a technical level, efforts seem to have been effectively complemented by in-depth

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<sup>12</sup> The ADB has estimated that less than 5% of employees receive formal employer-sponsored training either in the workplace or offsite (ADB 2007).

analytical work to reform the vocational education and training system, particularly through the ongoing EC/ILO project. The substantial World Bank and ADB support programmes are bringing substantial resources to these efforts, though it will be important to ensure these provide sufficient continuity with ongoing efforts.

Marginalised groups have been a central focus of efforts to increase access to training programmes – both outside the formal system (most notably through the recognition of prior learning and efforts to strengthen the apprenticeship system) and within the formal system (through stipend programmes as well as policy changes, such as removing the requirement that all TVET entrants must have completed grade 8). Furthermore, innovative pilot programmes are being launched to better integrate apprenticeships, and to ensure better skills training for rural youths.

That said, the envisioned expansion could easily come at the expense of further impacting the frequently quite low existing quality of public and private skills training provision. Planned curriculum reforms, and the strengthening of accreditation and qualification frameworks, may help counter-balance concerns in this area, but if certain targets (such as expanding the vocational education track of secondary school from 3% to 20-25% of total secondary enrolment) are to be met, this will require substantial resource commitments over a sustained period of time far beyond the sums currently being spent on training. Given the size of Bangladesh's rapidly growing population, and particularly the number of poor people in the country, even the ongoing expansion is likely to only be a first step to addressing the challenges youths, particularly from marginalised groups, face in entering the labour market.

## 4. Jordan

### 4.1. Context: Jobless Growth and a Youth Bulge

With one of the highest fertility rates in the world (population growth rates of 3.7% nationally, and 4.2% in rural areas), the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan – like many countries in the Middle Eastern region – currently faces a youth bulge.<sup>13</sup> The average age is 20.3 years, and almost 60% of the population is under 30. Despite high GDP growth rates, the country’s unemployment rate in recent years has remained stagnant, with youths hit hardest. The unemployment rate for youths (15-24 years) has fluctuated between 25% and 30% over the past decade, and is more than double the national unemployment rate (see Figure 3 below). First-time job-seekers make up 53.4% of the unemployed, and the country has an extremely low labour participation rate. There is moreover a substantial gender imbalance, with women’s inactivity rates above 85% - compared to approximately 35% for men.<sup>14</sup>

**Figure 3: Labour market participation and unemployment rates for selected years**

Year	Employment to population (15+) ratio (%)	Overall participation rate (%)	Male participation rate (%)	Female participation rate (%)	Total unemployment rate (%)	Young people unemployment rate (15-24 years) (%)	Male unemployment rate (%)	Female unemployment rate (%)
1991	34.4	41.5	69.3	11.5	17.1	12.1	14.5	34.1
1995	35.3	38.2	68.7	12.2	15.3	26.0	13.0	29.1
2000	34.0	39.3	66.1	12.3	13.7	26.7	12.3	21.0
2005	32.7	38.3	64.4	11.7	14.8	31.3	12.8	25.9
2008	34.5	39.5	64.0	14.2	12.7	27.4	10.1	24.4
2009	35.0	40.1	64.8	14.9	12.9	27.0	10.3	24.1

Source: UNDP 2011

A recent World Bank (2008) study has argued that Jordan’s high unemployment rate is both caused and further perpetuated by i) a geographic mismatch, in that most unemployed live in rural areas with most new jobs created in Amman and other cities, and ii) a skills mismatch arising from inadequate and poor quality provision of public training and limited (and expensive) private training. Over 33% of employers find inadequate employee skills a constraint to business development. This is further exacerbated by a reluctance of many Jordanian applicants to accept poor conditions and low salaries.

Particularly the low quality of training is seen as a critical problem, with the structure of the economy increasingly focused on skilled and semi-skilled jobs (75% of GDP is in services; only 3% in agriculture), a heavy and growing dependence on tourism as well as foreign aid, and few natural resources. In this sense, the country retains many characteristics of a “rentier state,” Kanaan and Hanania (2009) argue. Furthermore, migration patterns are unfavourable to addressing both the skills mismatch and growing youth unemployment, being marked by the emigration of highly educated people abroad, as well as substantial immigration of people looking for low-skill jobs (ETF 2011). In this context, a policy goal of the government has been to reduce dependence on foreign labour.

<sup>13</sup> Between 1960 and 2005 the number of inhabitants increased five-fold.

<sup>14</sup> This seems to be due to a number of reasons, including gender discrimination, low salaries, poor transportation, as well as restrictive maternity leave laws. Moreover, pursuing higher education does not seem to increase women’s employability (UNDP 2011, SIAST and CIDA 2009).

## 4.2. Addressing the skills mismatch in strategy and policy documents

Recent strategy and policy documents have recognised the need to place a greater emphasis on employment promotion. The King's *Royal Charter* (1990) stated that “policies and measures must be adopted to achieve this objective, particularly through national plans [of] encouraging labour-intensive economic activities, better working conditions, an improved educational system geared towards the needs of society and a greater social value attached to work of any kind.” It further called on the state to “draw up policies and national programmes aimed at harnessing the resources of the country’s youth, qualifying them for responsibility, productive work, innovation and creativity, protecting them from delinquency and directing their creative energies towards constructive development”.<sup>15</sup>

### Expanding and reforming the TVET system

However, throughout the 1990s, unemployment rates – particularly among youth – remained high and it was only through the *National Agenda 2006-2015* that clearer policy goals were articulated. It called for a radical reform of existing systems of employment support and vocational training in order to “facilitate the employment of the Jordanian workforce and contribute to the development of Jordan’s human capital based on lifelong learning principles” (ETF 2011, 4). In this context, TVET (both through formal vocational training and skills development programmes beyond the formal system) is seen as integral to broader employment priorities. Specifically, the *National Agenda* has called for an overhaul of the institutional framework through the creation of the Higher Council for Human Resource Development, an E-TVET Council to develop TVET sector with employer-driven focus – the first E standing for “employment” –, as well as a Licensing and Accreditation Council. The *National Agenda* furthermore called for targeted employment programmes to promote workplace-based training, the substitution of expatriate labour, and the reduction of unemployment among the disabled and women.

The related Government E-TVET Reform Implementation Plan (cited in ETF 2011, 7) lists strategic initiatives to “empower Jordanian citizens with the skills to succeed and enter the labour market” and implement the key policy measures of the E-TVET reform. This includes the revision of laws and legislation governing the work of the educational bodies and councils in order to rationalise the TVET sector, as well as the design and implementation of a new structure for the coordination of the TVET sector. This should increase private sector and social partner involvement in the governance of TVET, reform programmes and curricula to better align with market needs, and increase decentralisation.

### A greater focus on education and youth engagement

Government strategies on education have close linkages to skills development and further refer to many of the programmes described in Section 4.3. One of the central goals of the National Education Strategy (as outlined in the Ministry of Education’s 2008 report *Inclusive Education: The Way of the Future*) is to “prepar[e] citizens who are well-equipped with skills and knowledge required for the knowledge-based economy (knowledge, communication and intercommunication, teamwork, scientific thinking, personal technology, future career and scientific research skills) in order to contribute to their community” (MoE 2008a, 11-12). In the area of training and skills development, the strategy aims to develop “a qualitative and sustainable vocational education system that meets the labour market and community needs” and promotes “the participation of the private sector in vocational education management and developing programs and curricula” (*ibid.* 15, 12).

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<sup>15</sup> *Jordanian National Charter* [Jordan], 1 June 1991, available at: <http://www.unhcr.org/refworld/docid/3ae6b53b4.html> [accessed 26 June 2011]

The implementation of the *National Agenda* was accompanied by the development of a *National Youth Strategy* (NYS) 2005-09 prepared jointly by the Higher Council for Youth, UNDP and UNICEF, aiming to regulate youth issues in Jordan and provide a framework for developing a youth policy that meets the needs of young people and promotes their development (see Gorak-Sosnowska 2009).<sup>16</sup> The preparation stage of the NYS, particularly in its incorporation of broad consultation processes, is seen as having been highly inclusive and the policy itself, “might serve as an example of best practice in the region, being progressive, pro-active and inclusive” (*ibid.*, 38). Central to the NYS is the development of unified policy positions on education and training, as well as its linkages to the labour market. That said, the implementation of the policy by the Higher Council of Youth is seen as inadequate compared to the objectives outlined in the NYS, and lacking involvement of relevant actors.

### 4.3. The scope and nature of skills development and training provision

#### 4.3.1. The formal TVET system

##### Overview

The formal training system in Jordan consists of a three-tier structure at secondary and tertiary level. Under the Ministry of Education, about 30,000 students are enrolled in a formal technical and vocational stream in over 190 secondary schools (World Bank 2009). Over 10,000 of these students receive training through the Vocational Training Corporation (VTC), a semi-governmental organization almost fully financed by the Government that offers training to students and apprentices independent of the secondary school system. It aims to provide practical training as well as theoretical, soft skills and basic business skills, though the latter tends to be provided through the private sector or NGOs (SIAST and CIDA 2009). At the tertiary level, training is provided through the Al Balqa University and its 45 community colleges. Finally, training is also provided at about 800 private institutions, businesses, chambers, federations and associations, enrolling a further 20,000 to 25,000 trainees per year.

Over the past decades, formal vocational training in Jordan has been performing poorly and is seen as a “last resort for people lacking in ability, seriousness or opportunity (SIAST and CIDA 2009, 4). According a 2001 tracer study of VTCs, only 36% went on to fulltime employment and despite the precarious employment situation for youths, enrolment in vocational training had been declining (World Bank 2009). Linkages to employers are seen to be inadequate and there are furthermore no bridging courses or any transferable credits to secondary school for students aiming to re-enter the higher education system.

##### E-TVET Reforms

The poor performance of the vocational training system has been one of the main drivers of reform efforts over the past years. The government’s “E-TVET reforms”, initiated in 2006, aim to significantly expand the vocational education system, with the aim of promoting labour-intensive and export-oriented industries and eradicating structural unemployment. This has placed a heavy emphasis on greater social partner participation (including employers and labour unions) on boards and councils. The private sector is also taking a greater role at sector and operational level via the boards of VTCs and participates in curriculum development, workshop organisation, exams and internships (ETF 2011, 10). Different

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<sup>16</sup> Previously, the youth sector had been comprehensively investigated by UNICEF, with one of the reports – *Jordanian Youth: their lives and views* (2002) – serving as a basis for designing the NYS.

TVET providers have set up public-private partnership agreements and are developing centres of excellence in sectors such as hospitality, pharmaceuticals, printing, water and health and safety (*ibid.* 9).

E-TVET reforms and the expansion of TVET are also supported on a technical and financial level by the multi-donor *Education Reform for the Knowledge Economy II* (ERfKE II) programme, which has a sub-component on vocational education and a strong focus on strengthening labour market linkages and the employability of young Jordanians. While aiming more broadly to modernise the Jordanian school system, the vocational education sub-component is providing resources and technical assistance to restructure and realign the vocational education stream in secondary school with ongoing policy reforms and certification and accreditation initiatives currently being undertaken in the TVET sector. The primary activities include a reformulation of the policy and programme framework, the development of curricular and learning resources, a realignment of teacher competency profiles, a rationalisation in the procurement of tools and equipment, and facilitating employment prospects of graduates more aligned with labour market needs. This process has also been supported extensively by the World Bank-financed *Employer-Driven Skills Development Project* and the CIDA-led *Building and Extending Technical Skills Training* (BEST) project.

#### 4.3.2. Skills development programmes beyond the formal system

##### *Second-chance training programmes*

Jordan has extensive skills development training outside of formal vocational education programmes. Particularly NGOs and civil society organisations play a large role in this regard and have focused much of their work on employment training in an effort to offset the declining opportunities many young Jordanians, especially in semi-urban and rural areas, face.

*Youth: Work Jordan* (Y:WJ), a five-year initiative started in 2009 (led by the International Youth Foundation and funded by USAID with support from the Jordanian Ministry of Social Development) targets young men and women (aged 15–24) who are not in school, are unemployed and lack opportunity. NGOs receive funding through Y:WJ to carry out employability-gear training, provide internships and work experience, and provide skills training. The organisation *Questscope* provides second-chance and non-formal education programmes in over 60 communities in Jordan, and has been one of the most visible providers aiming to integrate vulnerable and marginalised young people into a skills training and education (see Angel-Urdinola et al. 2010). The programme targets 13 to 18-year-old males and 13 to 20-year old females. It provides participants with an equivalency education, job training, and life skills. It is supported by the US Departments of State and Labor, MercyCorps, the EU, UNHCR and others.

Save the Children is a significant provider of youth skills programmes.<sup>17</sup> The Najah programme, supported by USAID, trains Jordanian youths aged 18-24 years in life and work skills, and aims to link youth to available employment, entrepreneurship and further education opportunities with a focus on high demand sectors. Of the 500 participants in the six-month training programme, 70% are said to have entered the labour market.<sup>18</sup> The Ta'leem Emergency Education Program, launched by Save the Children in 2007, provides non-formal education to young Iraqi refugees, providing practical foreign language, physical education and IT training. The Jordanian Hashemite Fund for Human Development funds numerous projects, such as the “Princess Basma Youth Resource Centre” (PBYRC), which includes basic

<sup>17</sup> See <http://www.savechildren.org.jo/SubDefault.aspx?PageID=153||Node=209&LangID=2>

<sup>18</sup> Save the Children doesn't specify over what time period, participants found work and there is no information on a control group that didn't benefit from the training programme.

life skills programme (communication skills, dealing with diversity, problem solving, stress management, healthy lifestyles, facilitation skills), IT training, among others, for young people aged 10-24 from all backgrounds and regions in Jordan. The East Amman PBYRC developed an Intel Computer Clubhouse, which provides underprivileged youth with access to technology and the ability to learn IT skills.<sup>19</sup>

Numerous programmes have aimed to address rural needs more effectively. Several satellite training and employment projects have been launched for women in rural areas who are unable to travel to cities. Most of these programmes are supported by the E-TVET Fund or by donor projects. The “Jordan River Foundation,” established by Queen Rania, has numerous projects under its “Community Empowerment Program” aiming to provide skills training and employment opportunities in rural areas – for example by providing training and support networks for income-generating handicrafts projects, as well as supporting the development of eco-tourism in more remote regions. The “Royal Society for the Conservation of Nature” has initiated vocational training and employment for affected communities living in and around newly proclaimed natural reserves (SIAST and CIDA 2009).

#### *Promoting business skills, entrepreneurship and self-employment*

NGOs in Jordan have been leading in the provision of youth entrepreneurship training and vocational programmes to help graduates find work. Most notably, the organisation “Injaz” funds partnerships between the private sector and educators throughout Jordan to help empower young people, introduce them to entrepreneurship and provide them with new employment options beyond the public sector. The organisation was started in Jordan in 1999 and is meanwhile active in twelve Arab countries, reaching more than 300,000 students (Kanaan and Hanania 2009). Courses consist of eight to ten meetings or workshops held over a few months and include topics like tourism skills, principles of economics, business management, leadership and enterprise creation. Courses are directed to enhance learners’ leadership, business, financial, entrepreneurial, communication and soft skills (Masri 2010). Injaz is heavily reliant on its over 1,200 volunteers from 100 private sector organisations. “Markaz Tatweer al-A’mal” (“Business Development Center”) also is active in this area and has developed a Pioneers project for recent graduates, equipping them with new skills (such as in human resource management, consumer relations and public relations) in order to help these respond to market needs. Jordan moreover has a growing and very dynamic micro-finance sector. The Ministry of Social Development and the Ministry of Agriculture also provide small loans for training (UNDP 2011).

#### *Linking training to jobs*

The Ministry of Labour-funded “National Training and Employment Project” combines training with an apprenticeship programme and wage subsidies, providing extensive support to thousands of trainees. In order to reduce the rate of unemployment in Jordan, especially among youths, it aims to train and employ job-seekers, and increase their competencies according to labour market requirements and needs.<sup>20</sup> It targets poorer areas of the country as well as youths and women, and is implemented with assistance from the Jordanian Armed Forces, training institutions and the private sector. It provides job-seekers aged 18 to 36 with specialised vocational training at a training centre or at the workplace for three to six months. Following graduation from the programme, trainees are funded for one year of employment. Trainees receive a monthly stipend at or above the minimum wage during the training phase, as well as a monthly salary corresponding to their profession within the company. Targeted sectors include industrial sewing, hotels and restaurants, assembling machines and equipment, metal- and wood-working,

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<sup>19</sup> See <http://www.zenid.org.jo/youth.htm>

<sup>20</sup> See <http://www.mol.gov.jo/tabid/222/default.aspx>

construction and sales. Started in 2007, the Ministry of Labour claimed that in 2009 alone it had provided skills training to more than 3,000 trainees. Other programmes run by the Ministry of Labour include the 2009-started “Support Programme for the Unemployed and Agriculture Workers” which aims to increase job opportunities for low-skilled workers through the provision of social security matching schemes (ISSA 2010).<sup>21</sup>

A substantial number of programmes have also provided direct support to facilitate labour market entry. The World Bank pilot programme “Jordan Now Work Opportunities for Women,” carried out in collaboration with the Ministry of Planning and International Cooperation and the Jordan National Commission for Women, aims to increase female labour force participation among recent community college graduates.<sup>22</sup> It offers job vouchers to selected students, thereby providing a short-term subsidy for firms to take a chance on hiring new graduates, as well as a 50 hour employability skills training course on interpersonal and professional skills (effective communication and presentation skills, CV writing and interviewing skills, team-building and team skills, excellence in service and business writing). Among participants, some received only the vouchers, some only the training, and some received both.

The “Youth Career Initiative” (YCI, also supported by the Jordan River Foundation) provides a small number of youths with support entering the labour force. It enables international hotels to provide a half-year training programme and apprenticeship for both high school graduates and dropouts from disadvantaged backgrounds. YCI programmes are mainly conducted by hotel management teams and combine both theoretical and practical instruction, including training in personal finance, interpersonal skills, personal health and wellbeing. The Government-funded “Vocational and Workplace Success Training and Job-Placement Programme,” implemented by the Education for Employment Foundation, also combines on-the-job and in-class training, developed in direct conjunction with businesses committed to hiring the graduates (see Angel-Urdinola 2010). Training includes various vocational, technical, and professional fields, such as accounting, air conditioning repair, land surveying, construction management, sales, and teaching, and critical soft skills such as leadership, interpersonal communications, and successful business behaviour. According to a tracer study, it has had 85% success in placing trainees in jobs.

Central in facilitating these training-labour market linkages is an in-depth knowledge of labour market demands. The CIDA-funded Al Manar project has led to the development of an electronic employment service system, including a web-based Professional Career Counselling system. It conducts in-depth analysis of market conditions, identifying highly demanded jobs and analyzing employment trends with a particular concentration on women.

#### *A new focus on public works programmes*

Particularly over the coming years, increased training provision will be offered through public work “mega-projects” that will provide low-skill employment. The Jordanian government plans to invest \$20 billion in large-scale infrastructure, energy, and railway projects over the next two decades. These are expected to create thousands of employment opportunities and significantly increase demand for skilled blue-collar workers. Through the ongoing CIDA-funded Building and Extending Technical Skills Training project, in-depth training needs assessments are being undertaken to determine the appropriate

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<sup>21</sup> In addition to lower wage expectations, employers are frequently more willing to hire expatriate labourers because they don't have to pay social security contributions for these. Measures such as these are intended to address this.

<sup>22</sup> See [http://www-wds.worldbank.org/external/default/main?pagePK=64193027&piPK=64187937&theSitePK=523679&menuPK=64187510&seArchMenuPK=64187511&entityID=000333037\\_20110204001932&cid=3001\\_6](http://www-wds.worldbank.org/external/default/main?pagePK=64193027&piPK=64187937&theSitePK=523679&menuPK=64187510&seArchMenuPK=64187511&entityID=000333037_20110204001932&cid=3001_6)

training responses. The Ministry of Labour is also carrying out a project that provides interested investors with the necessary resources required for them to establish factories in more marginalised areas, on the condition that they employ people from the local community. It also provides employees with stipends during their training period. This project is being implemented in seven regions of Jordan, and one is already established in Al Shawbak.

#### 4.3.3. Accreditation of training

The “Centre for Accreditation and Quality Assurance” has, under the TVET reform process, become an independent authority under the direct responsibility of the E-TVET Council. However, the exact scope of its work isn’t completely clear. While many programmes outside the formal system provide equivalency certificates, there is not – as of yet – a nationally standardised (and internationally recognised) qualifications framework. However, the European Training Foundation (ETF) has recently been contracted to develop such a framework.

Some NGO-run programmes provide equivalency certificates. After successfully completing the 1-2 year “Questscope” programmes, enrollees are granted a document that enables them join the VTC and graduate at skilled worker level. In addition to providing an equivalency education, the programme provides job training and life skills that aim to help youths integrate into society. “Injaz” provides school dropouts with an accredited educational proficiency certificate (10th grade level), and later on a vocational certification (if he/she chooses to continue the program) that has a “credentialing” value, which means that the bearer has reached a particular level of competence, allowing continued access to higher levels of instruction.

#### 4.4. Governance of training and skills development

The governance framework of TVET and broader skills development efforts has long been seen as disjointed and uncoordinated (World Bank 2008). To address this, the *National Agenda*-initiated E-TVET reform process, with the creation of an E-TVET Council at its centre, has aimed to give labour market linkages an integral role in the training agenda (King and Palmer 2010). Under the patronage of the Ministry of Labour, the E-TVET Council is intended to act as a bridging institution between the secondary school vocational education stream (which is governed by the Ministry of Education), the Vocational Training Corporation (under the Ministry of Labour) and the Al Balqa University system (under the Ministry of Higher Education and Scientific Research). One layer above this is an umbrella council (the Human Resources Development Higher Council), chaired by the Prime Minister. This was created to coordinate policy frameworks on employment, training and education with the overarching aim of addressing the nation’s employment needs.

The ERfKE projects, as well as the World Bank’s Employer-Driven Skills Development project are central to this institutional overhaul, by focusing extensively on increasing employer participation in the governance structure.<sup>23</sup> This is also reflected in the composition of the E-TVET Council, where private

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<sup>23</sup> The components of this project are: “(i) effective participation of the employers in the planned E-TVET Council through broad capacity building; (ii) increasing the interaction of employers in skill development through their active role in occupational profiling, definition of related competences, program design and delivery, and certification; (iii) transforming the Training and Education Fund (TEF) into an efficient mechanism for effective use of the financial resources, with active role of employers; and (iv) creating the conditions for increasing the relevance and quality of the TVET, especially at the level of the VTC (World Bank 2009).

sector and employee representatives act as governors on the E-TVET Council and make up 7 of 15 members. Similarly, the CIDA-funded “Building and Extending Skills Training Systems” project aims to assist the Government of Jordan in its efforts to reform the TVET system to be more responsive to the changing socio-economic environment. That said, recent analysis has found that in spite of efforts to more effectively integrate these, there is “still a lack of structural capacity and commitment ... [due to] the centralised and supply-driven nature of the TVET system” (ETF 2011, 7).

The many Jordanian NGOs providing skills training outside the formal system most likely also fall under the jurisdiction of the E-TVET Council, but NGOs generally are overseen by a number of agencies and ministries, with the Higher Council of Youth, as well as four other ministries responsible for registering NGOs. While the Higher Council for Youth is responsible for the implementation of the National Youth Policy in Jordan, in which youth employment and skills development figures prominently, it is seen as lacking implementation capacity (Gorak-Sosnowska 2009). As such, within employment policy there does seem to be a gap in how the large number of programmes cohere both strategically, and how they are governed. There does not appear to be a central coordinating ministry for many of the above programmes outside the formal system that are not provided by the Ministry of Labour.

#### 4.5. Financing of training and skills development

The Jordanian government invests heavily in education, spending over 5% of GDP. However, the TVET system has, within this framework, frequently been underfunded, receiving only 3-4% of the education budget. VTCs tend to be financed in part through fees. Many programmes are in part funded through the Training and Employment Fund (TEF, now called E-TVET Fund), which was for a long time financed through a 1% levy on the net profit of companies. This fund would in turn finance the needs of TVET institutions for equipment, materials, salaries, development training and retraining programmes, scholarships for eligible students, vocation awareness campaigns and training needs surveys. In practice, however, staff at the TEF ended up spending a substantial amount of time collecting the levy and as a result the TEF remained rather ineffective. The 1% tax has recently been abolished and replaced by a fee to be paid by employers hiring foreign workers. Improving the efficiency and effectiveness of the TEF has been a central focus of both the “Employer Driven Skills Project” and the aforementioned BEST project, which aims to improve the operation of the TEF.

The Jordanian training system also relies heavily on donors, with the US, the World Bank and the EC providing the most funding. In recent years, total aid has exceeded \$600 million per year, with approximately 10% of this directed towards vocational training (Gorak-Sosnowska 2009). Particularly USAID funds many of the NGO-provided training initiatives described in Section 4.3, though this is frequently in partnership with government Ministries. This relatively secure (though not necessarily sustainable) funding base has also resulted in many of the aforementioned skills development programmes being of higher quality and more effectively targeted towards in-demand skills than VTC training. Furthermore, there a number of large funds run by the royal family as well as the government to which NGOs can apply to for funding. The “National Fund for Development and Employment” provides funding for vocational and technical capacity building, business skills development, as well as business loans for entrepreneurs. The “King Abdullah II Fund for Development,” also funds a number of the above initiatives, and foundations set up by members of the Royal Family, such as the “Jordan River Foundation,” provide substantial funding for training (SIAST and CIDA 2009).

There are also international organisations that provide funding opportunities, which they in turn channel to applying organisations. The Community Youth Development Initiative (*Naseej*), funded by the Ford

Foundation, provides grants for youth groups and local NGOs providing skills training. The Jordan Hashemite Fund for Human Development, which runs a network of over 50 community development centers that provide vocational training and IT courses, is financed through private charitable donations and government grants.

#### 4.6. A concerted reform effort, hampered by slow implementation

Inadequate efforts to address youth unemployment have been a central factor of many of the “Arab Spring” uprisings throughout the Middle East in early 2011. While frustration among the large number of un- and underemployed youths remains high, the Jordanian government has made a sustained effort to address the risks of a youth bulge in a manner that other countries in the region, ranging from Egypt, to Yemen and Syria, have arguably not. The breadth of the response, ranging from the expansion of vocational education, to institutional reform, to public works programmes, and some labour market reforms have been extensive and are likely to provide improvements in addressing the precarious labour market situation of many youths. This has been complemented by a highly active and well-funded network of international and national (including Royal Family-sponsored) NGOs that have focused on marginalised groups and have also provided training to the large number of Iraqi and Palestinian refugees.

Nonetheless, there are still substantial gaps, most notably in addressing the incredibly low school-to-work transition rates of young women, and the lack of training opportunities in more remote areas. While SMEs are a growing source of employment, particularly for youths, more focus should be placed on understanding labour market needs – particularly in growth sectors. Furthermore, while the level of ambition of policies and strategies (including both the *National Agenda* and the NYS) has been substantial, implementation has run behind schedule. Only the coming years will show whether this will translate into an improved skills training and employment situation for young Jordanians. The substantial sums provided by donors are heavily focused on supporting institutional reform efforts and in increasing supply. However, there are concerns, according to a recent ETF analysis (2011, 16) about “stagnation in the reform process” that has required a more focused tailoring of education and training policy and implementation to more effectively meet the needs of the economy” (*ibid.*, 11). The challenge over the coming years, Kanaan and Hanania (2009, 142) argue, is “whether the economy can fully break away from its rentier characteristics and diversify and deepen its modern service and industrial base, thus creating a labour market that harnesses the talents of an increasingly educated workforce.”

## 5. Sierra Leone

### 5.1. Context: High youth unemployment within a post-conflict context

Having recently emerged from a protracted civil war that was in part fuelled by the large number of illiterate young people without work and educational perspectives, Sierra Leone is in the eyes of many again seen to be facing a crisis of youth unemployment. Within the context of fragility, government strategies and numerous programmes have been focusing on increasing access to and the quality of skills development programmes. Following the civil war, the country has not been able to develop an economic niche, with several potential but few thriving sectors. Promising sectors (such as agribusiness, mining and tourism) remain under-developed and constrained by institutional limitations.

While labour force participation rates have increased significantly since the end of the civil war (especially among those in the bottom socio-economic quintiles), youth unemployment and particularly underemployment remains a very significant economic, social and political problem as the country gradually recovers. However according to other estimates, among those aged 15-35 (the official definition of youth in Sierra Leone), 60-70% of men and women are under- or unemployed.<sup>24</sup> There are few growing industries, with agricultural activities representing the main source of employment for 70% of young people and adults, and more than half of all Sierra Leoneans are self-employed, primarily due to a lack of other opportunities. Within the post-conflict setting, there is a risk for youths to be drawn into political violence, particularly around the 2012 elections (UNPC 2011). Beyond the social and psychological impact that growing up and transitioning to adulthood during the war is likely to have had on youths, the problem of youth unemployment and illiteracy in Sierra Leone is thus also an urgent political, economic and a national security problem (UNESCO 2008).

There are several causes for the low rates of youth employment, but the most notable is the low level of skills among youths and adults, as well as low levels of literacy,<sup>25</sup> Most are unable to run a viable business, and following the civil war, levels of education and literacy remain low (over 50% of youths are illiterate). This is further exacerbated by falling wages for youths due to high population growth rates, very few private sector job opportunities, and significant inter-generational tensions that have fuelled a general perception of youths as lazy and unskilled (Peeters et al 2009). Moreover, the formal TVET system has been under-performing in recent years and remains poorly geared towards the needs of youths, resulting in high unemployment rates among TVET graduates. TVET is stereotyped as being designed for school dropouts. This helps account for the poor salaries, low levels of qualified teachers and poor quality of infrastructure, students and equipment (Nyalley 2010). Fees for TVET are prohibitively expensive for many, and there are moreover very poor linkages to the labour market, with a heavy focus on supply but insufficient attention to labour market demands, resulting in many struggling to transition from school and training to work. Skills taught in TVET institutions (and training programmes beyond the formal sector) tend to be poorly coordinated and not geared towards labour market needs, frequently focusing on soap making, tailoring and tie-dyeing, which tend to not be areas of growing demand (Hanlon 2005).<sup>26</sup> Multi-national enterprises surveyed in ILO (2010) stated that the main constraints to hiring Sierra

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<sup>24</sup> Among the underemployed, urban youth are more likely to be engaged in fishing, casual labour, petty trade, entertainment industry and diamond mining. Youths in rural areas, where the unemployment rate is lower (though increasing) are more likely to be engaged in farming and commercial activities (Nyalley 2010).

<sup>25</sup> Peeters et al (2009, 7) points to a number of reasons why young people tend to have less promising employment opportunities than adults. These include the fact that public sector jobs tend to be reserved for those over 35, job satisfaction is lowest among 25- to 35-year olds, and the fact that most employers rely heavily on connections for hiring new employees (which works against less well-connected young people).

<sup>26</sup> According to a World Bank Employers' Survey, about one-third of farmers and one-sixth of business employers perceive the skill level of employees as problematic, with skills shortages seen as particularly severe for employers of larger businesses and farms (Peeters 2009, 76).

Leonean youths included the lack of skilled labour.

## 5.2. Addressing the skills mismatch in strategy and policy documents

Concerns related to high youth unemployment and low levels of skills among young people have increasingly become a central concern of the Sierra Leonean Government, and improving access and quality of youth skills development opportunities has become a crosscutting policy priority. Already the first PRSP, covering the years 2005-2007, identified the need to create job opportunities for the large and growing number of young people as one of the country's main development challenges (GoSL 2005). Similarly, the country's 2003 *National Youth Policy* (NYP) identified job creation and skills training as central priorities (cited in Peeters et al. 2009). The NYP called for the creation of a National Youth Advisory Council, headed by a national coordinator reporting directly to the Minister of Youth and Sports.<sup>27</sup>

### *A growing sense of urgency*

In 2006 the government developed a *National Action Plan for Youth* (cited in Peeters et al 2009, 97), with the aim of providing immediate jobs for young people and to develop a medium- and long-term strategy aiming to:

- increase employment and self-employment of young people in key sectors,
- enhance the skill level, confidence, and employability of youths, in order to enhance their capacity to contribute socially and economically; and
- integrate youth employment concerns within the overall national development framework.

However, these policies have been inadequately financed and have lacked implementation capacity. As such they have been inadequate to address causes and consequences of marginalisation in the labour market and exclusion from training (UNESCO 2008). Efforts were renewed following the 2007 parliamentary and presidential elections, and are reflected in the most recent PRSP (2008-2012) as well as the 2007-2012 Education Sector Plan. The PRSP argues for the development of single strategic framework on youth employment programmes through a National Employment Policy (GoSL 2008, 71) and calls for a more active government role in devising labour market policies. It also calls for the development of the SLETFUND ("Sierra Leone Enterprise and Training Fund") to promote decent employability, greater equity in access to financial resources, as well as to support MSMSs and SMEs. The PRSP lists a number of specific programmes (see Box 3). Much like the SLETFUND, the majority of these programmes are not being implemented, as listed in the PRSP, but some of their aims and objectives (most notably the Waste Management and Disposal project) are being reflected in programmes described in Section 5.3.

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<sup>27</sup> The NYP included the following over-riding objectives: (i) To set up a mechanism in the Ministry of Youth and Sport where in state policy on youths would be designed, articulated, and implemented through well-defined projects; (ii) to create a fast track process for the self-realisation of youths and their overall development as a strategy for coping with the economic, social and psychological damages of war; (iii) to create reliable and efficient networks through which youths all over the country can easily and rapidly access valuable information that are beneficial to them or by which agencies serving them can reach them.; (iv) to enhance the empowerment of young women by incorporating gender sensitivity into all aspects of the youth policy and programmes; (v) to mobilize youths of all ages to replace the culture of violence with a culture of peace, dialogue and responsible citizenry through intensive campaigns; value education programmes and life skills training; (vi) to reinvent the dignity of labour as an integral aspect of youth culture and consciousness (MoYS 2003).

### Box 3: Skills development and youth employment programmes in Sierra Leone's PRSP

The PRSP (GoSL 2008, 73-4) calls for a number of “youth-friendly initiatives,” including the following:

**Support to Youths in Agriculture** - Involves activities such as IVS rice cultivation, groundnut and vegetable production, cassava cultivation, processing and preservation and activities in livestock restocking. A “Youth Agricultural Farm Scheme” that will provide support for production centres for young people to receive training for a specific period.

**Support Viable Youth Enterprise** – Individuals and youth groups with business interest and marketable talents will be targeted and empowered through appropriate vocational -training, apprenticeship; and ICT skills to reduce poverty and enhance their socio-economic status. There will be linkages to activities in the agricultural sector through inputs to young farmers, or adding value to their production for self-sustaining local markets.

**Handy Corps Schemes** - Targets unemployed youths, and supports them to organise themselves into micro-enterprises, after short-term training in the repair and maintenance of basic services (telephone, electricity and water), and provision of other services in the community where they live.

**Waste management and disposal project** - Solid waste collection, disposal and recycling would be outsourced to youth enterprises in collaboration with the Freetown City Council for a fee. Target area of coverage will be Bo, Kenema, Koidu and Makeni City Councils.

Other initiatives include labour-intensive public works projects, and modernized employment service centres that provide assistance in job searching, guidance in career planning, or support in transitioning from school or college to the world of work. These centres are also intended to provide skills training.

The *Sierra Leone Education Sector Plan: A Road Map to a Better Future 2007-2012* focuses extensively on improving access to and quality of skills training in TVET institutions (including through internationally recognised accreditations for TVET offerings), and outside the formal TVET sector (MoEST 2007). The Education Plan more than doubles the budget for skills training, though notes that much of this will have to come from further donor funds.<sup>28</sup> Objectives include “meeting skills training needs and the provision of a literate and skilled middle level manpower,” which the Plan aims to address through increased dialogue with businesses and industries on skills they would want school graduates to possess, employer sensitisation of accredited certificates, and curriculum harmonisation. Recent reviews of the sector (see, for example MEST 2011), note that a greater focus needs to be placed on equitable access to literacy and skills training (particularly for school drop-outs). However, as the reviews note, both TVET and non-formal education remain woefully underfunded (appr. 1% of the education budget). Moreover, there has been little institutional momentum to support the sub-sector – particularly due to the competing demands from tertiary and basic education – so that an existing draft TVET policy has still not been approved by the cabinet.<sup>29</sup>

#### Focusing on demand-supply linkages

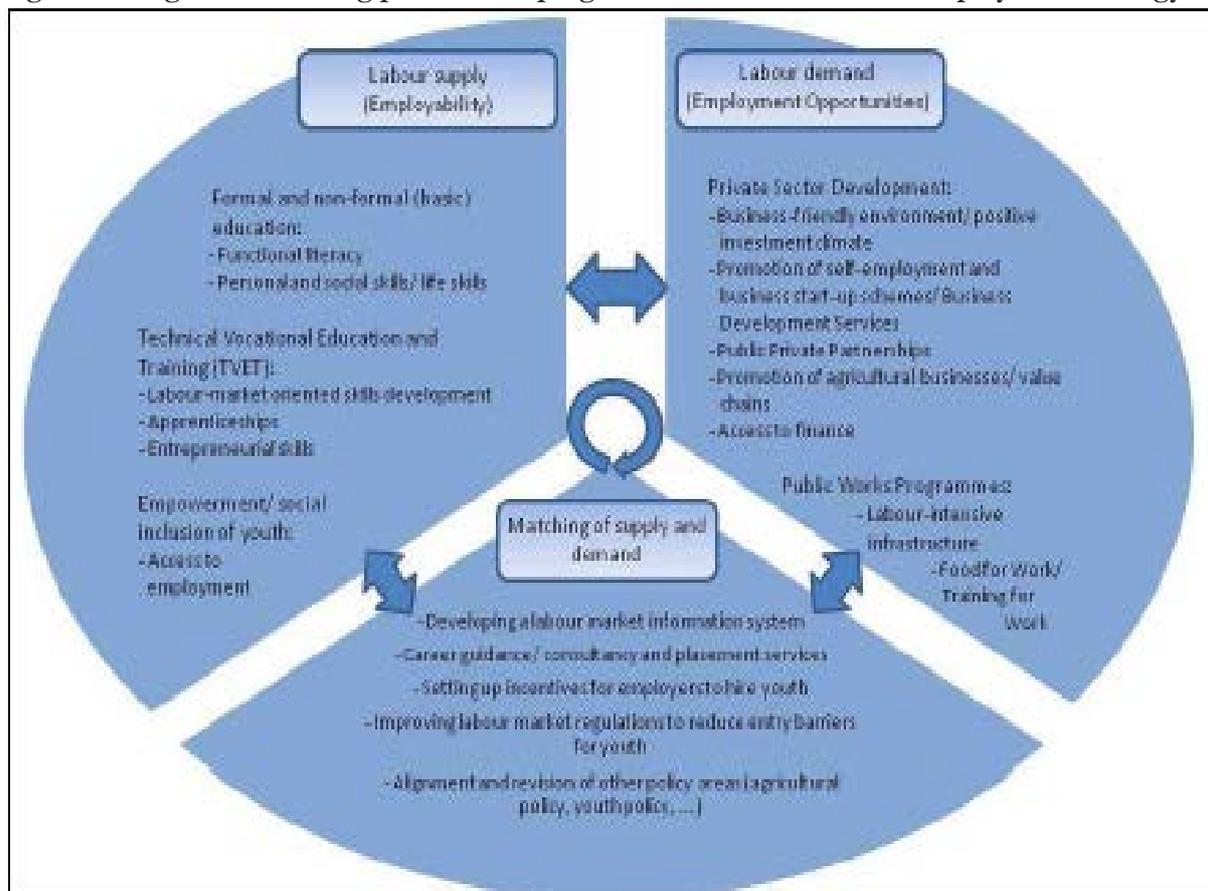
The recently published *Youth Employment Strategy 2009-11* (YES), represents the most concerted effort to date, to strategically address youth unemployment, setting a target of facilitating gainful employment for 300,000 youths over two years. The YES shifts the strategic focus from a supply-oriented emphasis on training, towards also stimulating demand among potential employers. It is closely linked to broader development objectives, particularly around fostering private sector growth, infrastructure, and local

<sup>28</sup> The financing gap for literacy, NFE and skills training was estimated at \$4 million in 2007 and was expected to grow to \$6 million by 2015.

<sup>29</sup> Beyond calling for a greater focus on TVET, the policy calls for a greater role of the NCTVA in co-ordinating TVET in order to ensure cohesion between the formal and non-formal training, of the sector as well as to ensure that the curricula at every level is responsive to national development and manpower priorities (MEST 2011).

development. Central to the strategy is improving the linkages between demand-driven initiatives (e.g. through improved quality of training, and apprenticeships) and supply-side initiatives (e.g. improving access to finance, public works projects). The primary initiatives to improve demand-supply linkages include a labour market information system, career guidance and counselling, government incentives to hire youths, improved regulations to reduce entry barriers, and aligning other policy areas with the strategic objective of increasing youth employment (see Figure 4). On an institutional level, the YES proposes the establishment of National Youth Commission (NYC) aimed at coordinating the work of all relevant Government Ministries working on youth employment matters. The programmes envisioned in the YES are, however, only 20% GoSL-funded and the government estimates a \$79 million funding gap and (as of May 2012) lacks an operational Youth Employment Action Plan.<sup>30</sup>

Figure 4: Diagram illustrating policies and programmes central to Youth Employment Strategy



Source: GTZ/WB/UN/EU 2010, 3

<sup>30</sup> Efforts were made to address this through the *Joint Response to Youth Employment in Sierra Leone*, a coordinated programmatic framework aligned to the YES developed by GTZ, the World Bank, the UN and the European Union, to support the financing of some of the YES objectives and initiatives. It focuses heavily on the security threat posed by youth unemployment, arguing that “many of the pre-conflict conditions that helped fuel the youths’ participation in ... conflict ... still exist today” (GTZ/WB/UN/EU 2010, 1). The programme aimed to create 106,000 jobs and has a total budget of \$46 million under six components: labour-intensive public works, private sector & agro-business jobs, skills development and employment support, youth empowerment, research on the coordination of youth, and sector planning and coordination. However, it appears that this mostly was a sector coordination document that combined existing programmes.

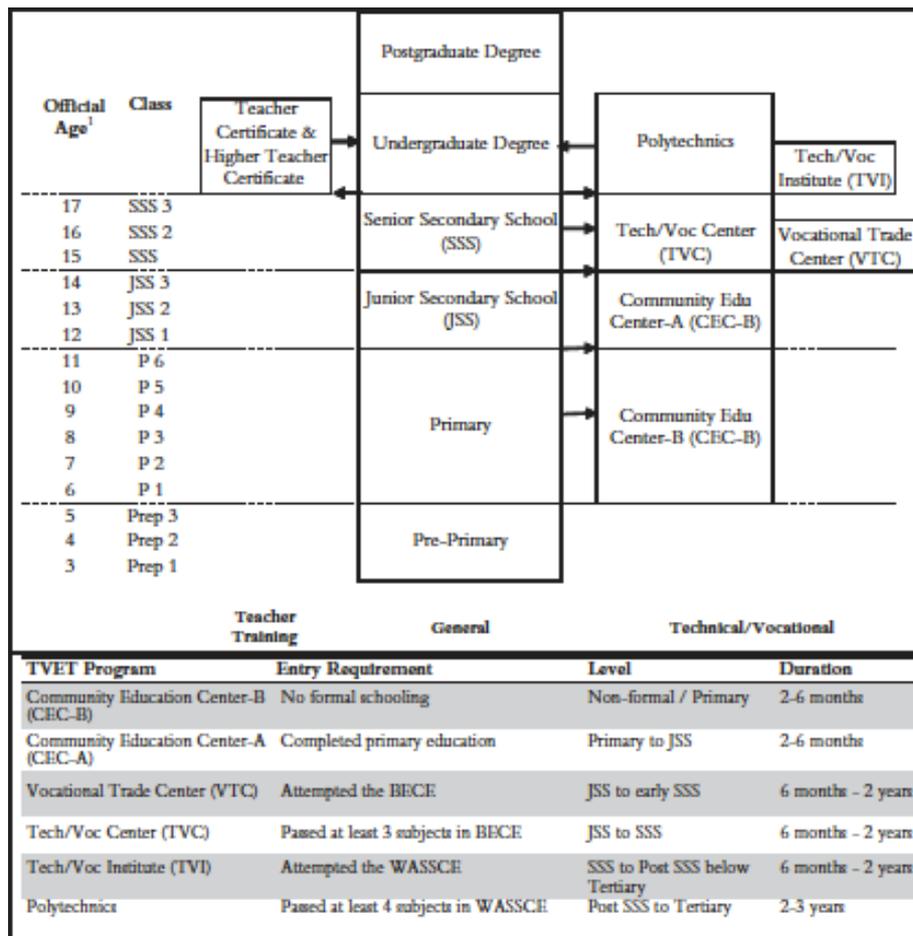
### 5.3. The scope and nature of skills development and training provision

#### 5.3.1. The TVET system

The TVET system has an important but not overarching role in training and skills development, with many shorter-term programmes providing training as well. In recent years, improving the formal TVET system has been a government priority and expenditure has been increased in recent years. Total enrolment in 370 registered public and private TVET institutions at all levels is approximately 27,000 students (in 2008), with almost two-thirds female. According to 2006 figures, the majority of TVET institutions are run by non-state institutions, with the private sector accounting for 24% of TVET institutions, and NGOs and faith-based organisations operating 35% (Peeters et al 2009, 94).

In total, there are 70 junior secondary technical vocational schools with ca. 2,000 students and 42 senior secondary TVET schools with ca. 10,000 students (see Figure 5 for an overview of the system). Moreover, there are three polytechnics, two teacher-training colleges and several other technical and vocational tertiary institutions. The quality of TVET nationwide is patchy, with high failure rates and poor quality teachers and instructors. Private training generally includes certificate courses in electronics, tailoring, soap-making, auto mechanics, tie-dyeing, masonry and carpentry, among others.

Figure 5: Structure of Sierra Leone’s Education and Training System



Source: Peeters et al 2009, 94

### 5.3.2. Other skills development programmes

#### Numerous NGO and donor programmes linked to demobilisation

Since the end of the civil war, a multitude of employment- and training-related programmes for youths have been implemented in Sierra Leone. A 2006 study found a total of 580 NFE, literacy and skills training programmes for adults and out-of-school children were implemented in 2001 alone (Edundayo-Thompson et al 2006 in UNESCO 2008). This has been mostly provided through a wide-ranging network of NGO- and donor-run programmes in which coordination was frequently absent. Programmes moreover placed a heavy focus on short-term training. Despite the frequently uncoordinated nature of skills development programmes in Sierra Leone, it is worth noting that unlike for example in Liberia, donors operating in Sierra Leone quite early on shifted from humanitarian assistance to development aid, enabling the establishment of more long-term assistance programmes (UNESCO 2011, 231).<sup>31</sup>

In recent years, the Sierra Leonean government has been taking a stronger role in provision, though most programmes continue to be implemented by NGOs – frequently through application processes to government or donor funding schemes (see 5.5). The notable exception to this have been the Community Education Centres (CEC), which provide non-formal education at the primary level for 2-6 months duration (Peeters et al 2009, 93). These are considered part of the Government’s TVET system, and offer courses in, for example, metalwork, automobile and motorbike mechanics, masonry, electrical installations and agricultural skills at both primary and post-primary level. The German government is currently providing support to many CECs.

#### Increasing the focus on public works and employment creation

Given the country’s dire infrastructure situation, one of the most common and generally effective means of addressing youth unemployment has been through large-scale cash-for-work programmes, particularly in the areas of road rehabilitation, agriculture, sanitation and energy. The rationale for these lies in part in the current weakness of the private sector and its inability to provide sufficient employment over the medium term. Given concerns that in the past these programmes have mostly been limited to short-term employment creation initiatives that have not been sustained, there have recently been greater linkages to training programmes. Donor-funded road construction programmes implemented by the Sierra Leone Roads Authority are intended to create 57,000 and 24,000 short-term jobs, respectively (GTZ/WB/UN/EU 2010). The World Bank Youth Employment Support programme relies on the National Commission for Social Action (NaSA) to identify and target sub-projects to local councils, chiefdoms and wards according to relative poverty (World Bank 2011). Some of these programmes also combine skills development programmes with cash-for-works. GIZ is scaling up its waste management programme, implemented through public-private partnerships, that provides jobs in urban communities in primary waste collection, as well as offering basic skills training.

#### Combining skills training and education

A substantial number of programmes are moreover intended to improve employment skills, and many programmes combine vocational training with non-formal basic education. Training programmes include the “Youth Engagement and Job Creation through Agriculture Programme,” which targets youths with

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<sup>31</sup> Of relevance also for Sierra Leone, McKibben (2011) points to several factors that have been key to the frequent mismatch between vocational training and jobs for ex-combatants. These are inadequate labour market research, meaning that training is not linked to available jobs; a lack of consultation on the types of training participants want to receive; low quality training; very poor monitoring and evaluation processes; a lack of attendance to mental health issues; a neglect of female ex-combatants; and a neglect of ex-combatants with physical disabilities.

high vulnerability and aims to provide employment, enhance food security by teaching young people to manage crops, and provide an alternative to urban flight. It supports youths to organise themselves for microenterprise development, provides self-employment in farming and food-processing, and provides funding for income-generating ideas and projects, and support for marketing and coordination (see UN 2007, 108). The programme was implemented by the Ministry of Youth and Sports with UNDP and had over 15,000 beneficiaries nation-wide. For highly skilled and educated youth, UNDP has recently established a Career Advising and Placement Services (CAPS) at Forah Bay College (University in Freetown) to facilitate job internships and shadowing, employability workshops, recruitment and job placement, and job and career fairs, as well as to teach soft skills (such as teamwork, communications, and conflict resolution) and intends to open three more during the course of 2012. The “Promotion of Employment for Marginalised Youths” programme supports private initiatives in urban and rural areas by providing basic and advanced technical training for young people. This is done through a vocational training program for youths between the ages of 15 and 25. The 18-month program at a training centre near Freetown (Kissy) offers courses in motor vehicle mechanics, air conditioner maintenance, electrical engineering and welding. Through the use of mobile vocational training units, youths in rural areas are also able to acquire fundamental skills in these areas, as well as in repairing pumps and in metalworking.

There is limited scope for formalised on-the-job training programmes, but some companies, such as the Road Transport Corporation train some of their staff in auto mechanics or the use of machinery. To strengthen the country’s apprenticeship system, APT (a DFID-funded NGO) is working on an “Opportunity Mapping Survey” that identifies job trends. Related to these mapping efforts, GIZ’s “Youth Employment Promotion” programme has focused on market research to determine the actual and potential absorption capacity of employment markets. This programme has worked on three levels, supporting community-based NGOs in establishing employment opportunities, providing assistance to SMEs, supporting the formation of viable trade associations, and supporting the Ministry of Education and the Ministry of Labour as well as district authorities to improve the employability of marginalised young people. GIZ’s “Promoting the Development Capacity of Youth and Young Adults” runs an apprenticeship scheme as part of training courses in mechanics, building/construction, metal-working and tailoring. Finally, there are numerous micro-finance and enterprise promotion programmes launched, including, for example the USAID “LINKS” programme and the UNDP’s “Business Development Services.”

### *Comprehensive programmes*

Programmes offering multi-focus comprehensive interventions (for example, combining counselling and basic education with vocational training) have been particularly common in Sierra Leone, especially in the aftermath of the civil war. Programmes have focused heavily on former soldiers and those affected by conflict, with a particular emphasis on un(der)employed youths. Many skills development programmes over the past years have thus consisted of multiple-service interventions, including life skills, job training, microcredit, and temporary employment opportunities, as well as counselling and the provision of inputs to develop income-generating activities (Peeters et al 2009, 98).

For example, the USAID-funded “Youth Reintegration Training and Education for Peace Programme” provided over 80,000 young people with non-formal education focused on reintegration, livelihood skills training, as well as literacy and numeracy skills. It was implemented by the GoSL’s Office of Transition Initiatives and World Vision. The EU’s “Sierra Leone’ Rehabilitation and Resettlement Programme” (1997-2005) helped young people in communities resettle in areas of origin by providing agricultural assistance and employment in basic social services. The programme moreover included skills training,

school constructions, the renovation of vocational training centres and hospitals and provision of furniture; short-term employment through public works programmes, and agricultural assistance.

On the whole, skill development programmes that have been independently evaluated were shown to only have had limited success in terms of labour market outcomes, with the most common weaknesses relating to their supply-driven nature, the limited implementation capabilities of project teams, weak targeting, minimal private sector participation, and weak monitoring and evaluation procedures (Peeters et al 2009). In part these are being addressed through a greater focus on labour market demands, greater coordination between programmes, and a general effort to link training directly to jobs. Given Sierra Leone's difficult starting position, this is proving to be a slow process, though some improvements are beginning to be felt.

### 5.3.3. Accreditation of training

Most TVET programmes are certified through the National Council for Technical, Vocational and other Awards (NCTVA), which sets the National Vocational Qualifications examinations and ensures parity for formal training. However, there is currently no standardised quality assurance framework that is effectively implemented and externally recognised. The UK-based organisation, *City and Guilds* has, as a result, become a key source of external accreditation and certification at the secondary level (though all institutions still require Ministry of Education accreditation as well). There is currently no set of formal standards or framework for the certification of skills, and there are no time limits for an apprentice to become a craftsperson (Peeters et al 2009, 96)

Beyond this, the Ministry of Education, Sports and Technology (MEST) has raised concerns that there is currently a proliferation of institutions offering TVET training throughout the country and yet most of these are unregistered, with a lack of observance of the limited guidelines. As a result, there is a recognized need for the MEST to begin standardizing training modules, testing and certification and introducing apprenticeship programmes (MEST 2011).

## 5.4. Governance of training and skills development

The TVET Division of the Ministry of Education is responsible for administering the formal TVET system, including approving the establishment, certification and registration of institutions.

Beyond the formal TVET system, the newly established National Youth Commission (NAYCOM) focuses on bringing coherence to the fragmented youth sector by coordinating and promoting all youth interventions across line ministries and youth organisations and to act as an interface between the GoSL, development partners, NGOs and the private sector to increase the visibility of youth issues. It further should assist in the creation of employment opportunities for youth, develop a comprehensive youth development plan, and initiate youth development programmes in collaboration with relevant government bodies (GoSL 2009). The NYC is gradually becoming operational, and receiving capacity-building support from the World Bank, UNDP, and GIZ. Previously, the functions of NAYCOM were carried out by the Youth Employment Scheme. The working group was a consultative body. Nowadays such working group is a monthly meeting of actors active in YE and is chaired by NAYCOM. This Working Group is also responsible for coordinating the aforementioned joint donor response and includes representatives from most donor agencies (GTZ/WB/UN/EU 2010). It is not completely clear

how the NYC will relate to the Youth Secretariat in the Ministry of Youth Employment and Sports, which had been administering the Youth Employment Scheme from 2006 onwards.

## 5.5. Financing of training and skills development

The government only directly operates 4% of all institutions, and supports 37% of schools with financing, though these are run like private institutions (Peeters et al. 2009, 94). However, despite these subsidies, the fees charged place attendance out of reach for many. Of the 370 institutions registered with the government, 46 receive grants, while 109 have recurrent costs reimbursed. Total public expenditure for TVET is low, at approximately 1% of the growing education budget. However, recent education sector reviews have called for an increase of the share of the TVET sub-sector to approach 6%.

The main GoSL basket fund for youth employment, the *National Youth Employment Scheme*, funded individual projects using government and donor funds, and was administered by UNDP. The SLETFUND, which has been announced in the most recent PRSP, would support vocational training, policy review and development, improved management of training institutions, investing in entrepreneurship, development of core work skills, workplace learning, apprenticeships, improved delivery through ICT, improved innovation capacity, improved ICT access, and reforming employment service agencies (GoSL 2007).

That said, the majority of financing for youth employment and skills development in Sierra Leone relies on donor-funding, with the World Bank, the German government, and UN agencies being the most active. Following the end of the civil war, donors made long-term commitments to support reconstruction, with education central to these efforts. A strong focus has been placed on donor alignment and on providing aid through sector budget support (UNESCO 2011). As part of the 2010 “Joint Response,” these organisations are allocating \$24 million (World Bank), \$13 million (GIZ) and \$9 million (UN).

## 5.6. An effective response to a looming crisis?

Spurred by the threat of youth unemployment providing an important catalyst for renewed conflict, recent years have seen a concerted and coordinated effort by many within government and the donor community to address this risk. This has relied particularly on public sector job creation programmes, as well as increased and – frequently interlinked – skills training efforts with many of these explicitly targeting marginalised youths. There has been a recognition, Weeks (2011, 7) argues, that “the institutional and social factors that provoked civil war in Sierra Leone are the same that blocked rural and urban youth from finding productive employment.” The scale of the response provides some hope that it may be commensurate to the scope of the problem being addressed over the coming years. The explicit focus on linking demand and supply in Sierra Leone’s strategy document is, moreover, seems appropriate.

However, youths’ lack of education and useful skills remains a pressing problem that will need to be addressed over the coming years through more comprehensive programmes linking the creation of jobs with long-term skills training programmes. There have been hundreds of programmes that provided some vocational training in the decade since the end of the civil war – with only quite limited success as programmes have frequently been too uncoordinated, short-term and supply-driven. The more broad-based and long-term nature of ongoing efforts provides some hope, as do efforts to improve linkages

between training and labour market demands, and the increased focus on improving traditional apprenticeships outside the formal TVET system. However, addressing the low levels of quality and relevance of many of these programmes over the coming years will be of central importance.<sup>32</sup> As the country's Deputy Minister of Education recently argued, ensuring the development of a system of accreditation for TVET programmes is required (see Nyalley 2010), and it will be important that this also addresses qualifications gained outside the formal system.

There are also widespread concerns about the short-term nature of many public works programmes – frequently without the provision of sufficient training – as solutions to youth unemployment. The government and development partners are relying heavily that the private sector can, in the coming years, take over from the government as a source of job creation.<sup>33</sup> A recent IDA-IMF note (2009, 13) argues that “[s]uch job programs can play a useful short-term role but they are, by their nature, unsustainable.” As a result, ongoing programmes also rely heavily on parallel efforts to diversify and stimulate the economy, as well as on the reconstruction of markets, social networks and human skills (Weeks 2011). Given high (and arguably growing) levels of fragility in Sierra Leone, youth skills development has been recognised as a central government priority – the impact of these programmes and strategies, and the extent to which they focus on sustainable skill development efforts in priority sectors will not just be of vital national importance but also of utmost urgency.

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<sup>32</sup> However, in the absence of effective programmes it has been encouraging to see youth group initiatives created by youths themselves to address the high unemployment and idleness they continue to face. A recent employment opportunity mapping study found that these youth groups are engaged in diverse activities ranging from rice and cassava cultivation, road constructions and even providing financial assistance to their group members for technical and tertiary education.

<sup>33</sup> See <http://www.sierraleonetelegraph.com/articles/100453.htm>

## 6. Ethiopia

### 6.1. Context: An agriculture-based economy with high levels of chronic poverty

Despite rapid economic growth in recent years, Ethiopia remains one of the world's poorest countries. The percentage of people below the dollar-a-day poverty line remains around 40%, with the majority of the population (85%), and an even greater proportion of the country's poor (90%), living in rural areas. The economy largely remains in large part agriculture-dependent, with limited urban migration. The growth of modern industrial and service sectors has been hindered by the slow pace of private sector development with a large number of enterprises state-owned.<sup>34</sup> Manufacturing is based primarily on food, beverages and textiles, which account for more than half of manufacturing output (MoE 2008b).

Recent decades, particularly since the end of Ethiopia's civil war in 1991, have seen rapid population growth (2.6% p.a. since 1990) and a steadily growing workforce. Children and youths up to 24 years of age constitute the majority, and youths between 15 and 29 make up 28% of the population. The working-age population stood at 54% of the population in 2004/05, and is growing by about 1.2 million people per year (GoE 2008). 1.6 million youths annually enter the labour market and the youth unemployment rate in Ethiopia is higher than for the population as a whole (Denu et al. 2005). Particularly in urban areas there is growing unemployment that particularly affects less educated youths (Guarcello et al. 2006). There are moreover substantial urban-rural and formal-informal gaps in employment and wages (GoE 2008). According to ILO data from 2006, the youth inactivity rate (15-24 year-olds) is 27.9% for women and 18.6% for men.

Substantial improvements in access to basic education have led to increased pressure on post-primary skills development (see Engel and Rose, 2011), and have brought a greater focus on those – particularly in pastoral regions – that have been hard to reach. Training provision has been relatively minimal over the past decades, with TVET enrolment under 40,000 in 2001, in a country of almost 80 million. This neglect has resulted in a recent large-scale push on TVET expansion and on increasing access and provision of non-formal education and skills development programmes for those in more hard-to-reach areas.

### 6.2. Addressing the skills mismatch in strategy and policy documents

Since the country's Education and Training Policy was adopted in 1994, a diversified TVET programme has become a central part of the country's policy framework, operating parallel to general education. Over the course of four Education Sector Development Programmes (ESDPs), skills development has become increasingly central. This is also mirrored in the 2008 *National TVET Strategy* (MoE 2008b), and the country's Adult Education Policy.

#### *A rapid expansion of TVET*

Already in the first PRSP (MoFED 2002) there was recognition that the many forms of training and skills development needed greater strategic emphasis, and moreover lacked an over-all coordinating structure. The second PRSP, *Plan for Accelerated and Sustained Development to End Poverty* (PASDEP), recognised under-

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<sup>34</sup> The role of the formal private sector remains restricted to several exceptional sectors (leather, flowers) and thus underdeveloped. The regional distribution was also uneven, with most of the private sector concentrated in and around Addis Ababa. Generally, very small firms predominate, limiting productivity. The share of the state sector in industrial output has been around 50 percent since 2000. (see Brixiova and Asaminew 2010)

and unemployment (especially among urban youths) as a serious problem (MoFED 2006). Key dimensions of this included a focus on expanding TVET in rural areas (with a particular emphasis on agriculture), integrating SMEs into the TVET system, and providing skills training to the unemployed. Moreover, PASDEP points to the development of a multi-sectoral Youth Development Strategic Plan and a corresponding Youth Sector Development Programme aimed at facilitating the growth of self-employment and formal and informal employment, and creating conditions conducive for rural youths to acquire farming plots and grazing lands. The most recent PRSP, Ethiopia's *Growth and Transformation Plan* covering the five-year period (2010/11-2014/15) places the promotion of youth empowerment as one of its pillars (MoFED 2010). The chapter on youth lists the central policy goal as "facilitat[ing] the growth of self employment and formal / informal employment opportunities and encourag[ing] active participation and benefit of the youth in economic, cultural development, democratic system and good governance.

In the third ESDP (MoE 2005), covering the years 2005/06-2010/11, TVET and training were given a stronger emphasis, due to its integral role in "produc[ing] educated farmers and other workers who utilize new agricultural technologies."<sup>35</sup> In the fourth ESDP (MoE 2010), it is recognised that substantial progress has been made, with enrolment targets for ESDP III vastly exceeded. Targets through the period from 2010/11-2014/15 are to increase TVET enrolments from 717,603 to 1,127,330, and the number of trainers from 14,596 in 2009/10 to 22,547 in 2014/15. Furthermore, one of the objectives emphasized in ESDP IV, is to ensure equal access of females and rural communities and people with special needs to TVET.<sup>36</sup> However, more substantially, the plan focuses on increasing technological capabilities and increasing the effectiveness and quality of TVET institutions as sources of both learning and technology transfer. Central to the ESDP is moreover the implementation of the quality assurance framework, curriculum reforms, as well as broad-based internship and apprenticeship programmes.

*A focus on greater flexibility in supporting TVET outside the formal sector*

The 2008 TVET Strategy (MoE 2008b) provides for an overhaul of the TVET governance system, through the creation of an autonomous Federal TVET Agency, as well as the development of an Ethiopian TVET Qualifications Framework (ETQF) and certification system. The TVET Strategy focuses more extensively on non-state provision of training, both through in-company TVET schemes and, in particular, through wide-spread traditional apprenticeship training provided in the micro and small business sector. TVET Authorities in turn are asked to consider the provision of incentives to foster these processes. As such, the strategy aims to provide greater flexibility in delivery, in part by strengthening, further developing and deepening cooperative TVET. The strategy posits that "the TVET system will explicitly address the occupational requirements in all segments of the labour market, target all population groups in need of TVET and thus incorporate and coordinate all aspects of TVET in Ethiopia" (MoE 2008b, 16).

Throughout policy documents, there is an explicit focus on social inclusion and on addressing the skills training needs of marginalised groups both within and especially beyond formal TVET institutions. The NFE component of ESDP III focuses on expanding Community Skills Training Centers to train 143,500 adults over the period, and to moreover establishing an equivalency system between skills and credentials

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<sup>35</sup> The expansion of TVET receives particular focus with an aim – over a five-year period – to significantly increase enrolment rates (from under 100,000 in 2004/05 to 315,403 in 2009/10, building an additional 3,300 classrooms, and training 4,500 additional teachers.)

<sup>36</sup> In this context, targets are set to increase the share of female TVET students from 46% in 2008/09 to 50% in 2014/15, increase the number of institutions in rural areas by 100% in 2014/15, and increase the share of enrolments of students with special needs by 100%.

obtained in schools and those obtained through NFE and training programmes.<sup>37</sup> Similarly, the TVET strategy aims to specifically provide opportunities for a wider range of target groups, including school drop-outs, people without formal education and illiterate people, farmers, unemployed people (to re-integrate into the labour market), employees and entrepreneurs who require skills upgrading, and people from marginalised ethnic groups. There is moreover a particular emphasis to the inclusion of girls and women.

### 6.3. The scope and nature of skills development and training provision

Public TVET institutions parallel to the secondary education system aim to produce middle level technical graduates at post-Grade 10 level. Parallel to this, public and private companies have had their own TVET programmes, as have NGOs. Meanwhile, through TVET programmes outside the formal system, public institutions, NGOs, and private schools offer employment-oriented, more short-term TVET programmes to various target groups, including unemployed people, school dropouts and other marginalised groups in the labour market. Unlike formal TVET, these programmes are not yet systematically delivered. (MoE 2008b, 9). However, in recent years, through the development of the “Nonformal Technical and Vocational Training Implementation Framework,” non-formal education is being integrated as part of further skills training and livelihoods. The framework links vocational training and education more directly with poverty reduction, and delineates implementation steps and guidelines for delivery (Anis 2007).

#### 6.3.1 The formal TVET System

##### *A rapid expansion with a focus on agriculture*

Formal public TVET is provided either as a one, two or three year course following lower secondary school (known as “10+1”, “10+2” and “10+3 – the latter of which is a diploma course). The formal TVET system, which had been the most neglected area of the Ethiopian education system, has been undergoing a rapid expansion and comprehensive reform since 2000/01. The aim of this, as outlined in the ESDP III, is “to meet the middle-level human power demand of the industry, service sector and commercial agriculture” (MoE 2005, 11). Between 1996/7 and 2004/5, the number of TVET institutions providing formal non-agriculture TVET increased from 17 to 199, and enrolment increased from 3,000 to 106,305 (MoE 2008b, 10). Despite this expansion, this is only 3% of the relevant age group and – as mentioned in Section 6.2. – the Ethiopian government plans to further triple enrolment and massively expand the scope of training. This has been supported extensively by the German-funded *Engineering Capacity Building Programme* (ECBP – see Box 4).

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<sup>37</sup> Incidentally there is no mention of CSTCs in the most recent Education Sector Development Programme IV (covering the years 2010/11-2014/15).

#### Box 4: Linking TVET and employment – Engineering Capacity Building Programme

The *Engineering Capacity Building Programme* (ECBP) was launched in 2005 by the Ethiopian and German governments and aims to improve the skills of the country's workforce, create jobs, modernise the private sector and make Ethiopia's products more competitive. It is focused on funding and furthering TVET reforms through the development of an "outcome-based TVET strategy" to promote a unified TVET system between formal, non-formal and informal training, and developing a system of occupational certification for all levels. The programme, which is expected to run until 2015, is working with TVET institutions and the Ministry of Education to revise the systems and curricula of the schools, in addition to developing human resources and increasing their institutional capacity. Representatives from enterprises have been more closely involved in defining the competences needed for work, and first training programs based on new competences have started in the construction sector

However, beyond this, it has also made efforts to link more practical and employment-focused components to training. It aims to create linkages to six key sectors (agro-processing, textiles, construction, leather, pharmaceuticals, and manufacturing), which are vital to the economy of Ethiopia and potentially competitive in the global market. In order to help improve employment prospects of TVET graduates, the programme promotes government efforts to also involve industry through in-company and cooperative trainings as well as the placement of interns from TVET schools into companies. Technology transfer has been integrated into TVET, leading to local production of previously imported machinery. Some of the main results include the following:

- More than 1,800 TVET teachers have received training and qualified.
- 27,000 apprenticeships have been created in the construction sector.
- The introduction of cobblestones in road construction has created local employment for about 80,000 people. It is now being implemented countrywide through national and international organisations, and driven by private demand.

Source: <http://www.gtz.de/en/weltweit/afrika/aethiopien/14270.htm>, <http://www.ecbp.biz/about.html>

A central focus of these expansion efforts, and closely linked to broader efforts to further agricultural development-led industrialisation, has been the promotion of TVET programmes focused on agriculture (AgVET) and 25 AgVET institutions have been established in recent years. AgVETs are exclusively engaged in the fields of animal science, plant science, animal health, natural resource management, cooperative accounting and auditing, and cooperative organisation, management and marketing (MoE 2007:12). In addition to training students in a wide variety of agricultural specialties, the AgVET programme is being used to retool and expand Ethiopia's Agricultural Extension program, especially to meet the needs of a more market-oriented and diversified agricultural economy (World Bank 2006b). Over a short period of time, these have trained Ethiopia's cadre of extension workers (known as Development Agents, DAs), including the 15,000 existing DAs and 50,000 new recruits. Between 2006-11, this work is supported by Component 1 of the World Bank's Rural Capacity Building Project (see World Bank 2006b, 7).<sup>38</sup>

These efforts aim to improve the level of coordination between private and public, as well as agriculture and non-agriculture TVET supply, though it is unclear to what extent this is being achieved. At the very least, through ongoing reform efforts a common strategic framework to improve joint and coordinated planning is being developed. These reform efforts notwithstanding, "TVET has a long way to convince

<sup>38</sup> This project aims to: (i) Develop a strategic plan for the future of the AgTVET colleges and provide technical assistance for the implementation of the plan; (ii) Strengthen the capacity of those colleges under the federal Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development; and (iii) Support the transformation of AgTVET colleges into training institutions with new mandates identified in the strategic plan.

the public that it is a viable alternative to, for example, university education” (Teshome 2008, 83) and in many cases continues to be seen as a second-choice for students who fail to join preparatory schools.

### **6.3.2. Skills development programmes beyond the formal system**

TVET outside the formal system is generally referred to as non-formal TVET in government documents. The primary differences include the backgrounds of students, the lack of defined certification and examination procedures for teachers and trainers, and the absence of standardised curricula. It includes all other training that is not part of public or private post-primary formal TVET, including short courses (up to 6 months), training through alternative modalities (community-based, mobile, apprenticeships, etc), as well as life skills training, and is usually more cost-effective than formal TVET (Beyazen 2008). It furthermore includes a much broader range of target groups, including numerous disadvantaged groups, the unemployed, school dropouts and illiterate people, the landless poor, and people with disabilities.

The main providers of training outside the formal sector are the Ethiopian government, the private sector, and particularly NGOs, which have a much stronger presence than they do in the formal TVET system. On the whole, according to a mapping study of non-formal TVET by the Education Expertise Center (Beyazen 2008, 6), the most frequent form of training in government institutions includes metalwork, woodwork, tailoring knitting and embroidery. This is provided through the Ministry of Education, the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development, the Ministry of Social Affairs, and the Ministry of Home Affairs.. Government non-formal TVET institutions include Community Skills Training Centres, Farmer Training Colleges, Rural Appropriate Technology Centers and prisons.

#### *Community Skill Training Centers*

The core of the Ethiopian public skills development framework are the numerous Community Skill Training Centers (CSTCs). Established in the 1970s as a means to further literacy training as part of a national literacy campaign, as well as to introduce and expand appropriate technology for the rural community, their reach and upkeep had declined over their years, and many have fallen into disrepair and been underutilised. In recent years they have been expanded to offer training programmes of varying quality related to the specific needs of the rural community. CSTCs offer a variety of different programmes, focusing particularly on literacy and numeracy programmes, in addition to offering life skills and community development programmes, income generation programmes, and non-formal vocational training and rural and community development. This includes training in skills such as entrepreneurship, handicrafts, clay working, home economics, metalworking, traditional cloth-making, sewing, embroidery, woodworking and other trades. It is particularly focused on school dropouts, the unemployed and illiterate people. According to ESDP III, it is anticipated that between 2005/06 and 2009/10, 143,500 adults will be trained in 287 CSTCs (MoE 2005).

However, CSTCs continue to encounter problems in relation to inadequate budget, trained manpower and equipment and poor organization of the programs (Beyazen 2008, 6). Moreover, despite their rural focus, they generally located not very far from the principal woreda towns (Sandhaas 2010). This is in part being addressed through the EXPRO programme, which has been developing highly effective model CSTCs (see Box 5).

### Box 5: Model CSTCs through EXPRO

EXPRO CSTCs aim to provide formal vocational training to geographically and socio-economically marginalised groups, and particularly school drop-outs who have no access to the formal vocational training system as an alternative route to a vocational qualification. Preference is given to poor people from rural areas with particularly high rates of poverty. Started in 2000, and implemented by the Ministry of Education, Regional Education Bureaus and TVET Commissions, EXPRO CSTCs are supported by the German Foundation DVV and train approximately 1,000 people annually. Given the frequently substantial focus of CSTCs on literacy training, EXPRO was premised on the idea that focusing on livelihood skills would often be more successful than exclusively emphasising reading and writing. Skill areas were chosen with regard to the findings of the market analysis and the training need assessment undertaken. Furthermore, a central component of the success of EXPRO CSTCs is their focus on participatory and cooperative methods to plan training programmes. Sandhaas (2005b, 13) argues “to make the training generally sustainable and demand-oriented, the communities in the catchment area of the CSTC need to be a decisive part of the Woreda Education and Training Board (WETB) or the TVET Council. ... The active participation of these and the trainees should be designed in such a way that the community develops a sense of ownership on the CSTC and its program”

Model EXPRO centres run all year long, receive technical assistance and professional training, and seek to make skills training more effective by linking it with market’s needs assessment. EXPRO centres were recently awarded a prize by the European Adult Education Association for their exemplary work in contributing to the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals (the Grundtvig Award). The involvement of several partners in the formulation and development of the project enabled it to reflect and capture the fundamental needs of both the nation and the individual beneficiaries within the communities. However, there has not been any impact evaluation available, though according to reports and supervisory visits to two thirds of the centers indicate a clear improvement.

Source: Sandhaas 2005a and 2005b.

### Farmer Training Centers

Parallel to the expansion of AgVETs, there has also been a large increase in the number of Farmer Training Centers (FTCs), which are run by the Ministry of Agriculture and regional agricultural bureaus. These aim to give specialized training in modern farming techniques, provide agricultural extension services, provide information/data and advisory services on market, entrepreneurship, ecological, and demographic data and information, as well as serve as permanent exhibition centres to transfer technologies (Tefera 2006). More than 20 training modules have been prepared on different agricultural sectors (crop husbandry, animal husbandry, natural resources development, increasing agricultural productivity, how to use fertilizers, etc.) (Tefera 2006).<sup>39</sup> The government plan is that each Farmer Training Center will have 3 development agents, one plant science expert, one animal science expert and one natural resource manager. This would rely on a large number of the existing 34,400 graduates of agricultural colleges to be adult basic education trainers in Farmer Training Centers (Anis 2007).

### NGO- and community-based training

NGOs and community-based organisations frequently provide training through Alternative Basic Education Centers as well as Youth and Women Development Associations (Beyzen 2008, 13). Courses are offered in leather craft, heavy machine operation, metal work, secretarial science, and photography.

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<sup>39</sup> As of 2008, there are 14,766 existing or “proposed” Farmer Training Centers (Beyzen 2008). However, many are still being established, there is no data available on enrolment. Some in the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development estimate that about 80% of these are said to be “operational”, whereas others estimate that only 30% are operational.

This includes numerous different types of providers, including international NGOs, national NGOs, community-based organisations, religious organisations and many others (see Anis 2007 for a comprehensive overview). These tend to combine literacy programmes with equivalency or second-chance programmes, in addition to providing life skills training and non-formal vocational training.

Private institutions generally provide training in woodwork, embroidery, hair-dressing, food preparation, leather work, car decor, massage, driving, basic computer, computer maintenance and beauty skills.<sup>40</sup> While there is generally more variety among non-state providers, it is unclear exactly how many benefit from each. One of the central goals of the TVET Strategy has been to integrate the training offered by different providers through different modalities. Figure 6 provides an overview of the main objectives and target groups of different training providers, according to the Education Expertise Center mapping study:

**Figure 6: Objectives and target groups of different training providers in Amhara, Oromia and Addis Ababa (abridged)**

Objective	Government	NGO	Private Sector	CBO
Provide short-term training for disadvantaged youths and adults to continue formal education	X	X		X
Improve the livelihood of poor youth and adults	X	X		X
Prepare poor youths and adults for self-employment and self-reliance	X	X		X
Create training opportunities for out-of-school youths and adults	X	X	X	X
Create job opportunities and promote wage employment			X	
Train landless rural women		X		X
Provide training opportunities for disabled youth and adults		X	X	
Produce low-skilled labour		X		
Keep and upgrade indigenous crafts	X	X		X
Target Group	Government	NGO	Private Sector	CBO
Dropouts from grades 4-8	X	X	X	
Poor rural and semi-urban women youth and adults	X	X		X
HIV/AIDS victims and orphans	X	X		
Landless rural women		X	X	X
Orphans		X		
Youth and adults with disabilities		X		

Source: Beyazen 2008, 22-3, 25

### 6.3.3. Accreditation and certification

<sup>40</sup> The EEC mapping study has found that on the whole, most government non-formal TVET institutions give training for less than 6 months. NGOs and private institutions give training up to 10 months. The proportion of training time for theory and practice is 20% and 80% and 30% and 70% respectively in most cases

One of the main objectives of ongoing TVET reform efforts has been the development of a national TVET Qualifications Framework. This is intended to define the value of different qualifications, ensure comparability, and facilitate mobility within the TVET system. In the ESDP III, the government commits itself to developing an equivalence system between skills gained through non-formal education and those gained through formal education (MoE 2005).

Plans are spelled out in greater detail in the *TVET Strategy* (MoE 2008b). National Occupational Certificates are awarded following occupational assessments, and count as proof of a person's competence in a TVET-relevant occupational area. These occupations are to be defined according to labour market needs, which in turn would be based on a labour market analysis. Gaining occupational qualifications will not be contingent on attending a formal TVET programme. The Ministry of Education is expected to carry this out, in close cooperation with the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs, the Civil Service Agency other concerned bodies. However, the necessary standardisation and testing procedures are expensive and ongoing. Frequently qualifications offered by public and private institutions are not recognized due to lack of systematic testing and certification systems and insufficient assessment centres (AfDB/OECD 2008).

#### **6.4. Governance of training and skills development**

The Ministry of Education is responsible for both the TVET and the NFE systems, and thus governs the majority of skills development programmes. However, the governance of the skills development system has undergone substantial reforms in recent years. The TVET Council, which was an advisory body within the Ministry of Education, was seen as too weak to provide substantial guidance for this cross-cutting policy priority (MoE 2008b).

##### *Development of a TVET Agency*

As a result, the TVET Strategy called for the establishment of a “Federal TVET Agency as an autonomous organ with its own legal personality and reporting to an appropriate body ... to harmonize a comprehensive and integrated TVET system encompassing formal and non-formal TVET or informal learning” (MoE 2008b, 46). This drew from similar organisations in the Philippines, Jordan, South Korea, and Brazil, Tanzania, Mauritius, Botswana, Zambia and others, and is comprised of representatives from public and private employers, business chambers and private sector associations, public, NGO and private TVET providers, trade unions, farmers, representatives of rural off-farm activities, women's representatives, representatives from Civil Society and NGOs, professional associations, and the Ministries of Education, Capacity Building, Labour & Social Affairs, Agriculture & Rural Development, Trade & Industry, Health, Youth and Sports, Finance and Economic Development, Works and Urban Development, Water Resources, and Women Affairs. The establishment of a TVET Agency was approved by the Council of Ministers on February 11, 2011. Its objectives include ensuring the quality and sustainability of TVET, ensuring equitable training is provided and enhancing the capacity of Micro and Small Enterprises. It will have the power to draft legislation in support of its mission and implement this legislation upon approval, develop strategies and policies in collaboration with stakeholders, and oversee teacher training and among other powers.<sup>41</sup>

##### *Responsibility for non-formal training is spread across ministries and devolved*

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<sup>41</sup> See <http://www.ecbp.biz/actions/recent-actions/federal-tvet-agency-approved-by-ministers.html>

Other ministries also have a key role in skills development. The Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs, and the Ministry of Youth, Sports and Culture are responsible for youth employment. Similarly, the Ministry of Capacity Building is responsible for numerous training initiatives and is the implementing agency for the ECBP.

Beyond this, the management of most training and skills development institutions occurs at a regional level, and increased decentralisation is integral to the new *National TVET Strategy*. According to this, responsibility for all functions will be gradually devolved to lower levels in the system. At the national level, federal authorities are responsible for national policy formulation and all federal statutory functions (i.e. system of occupational standards, assessment, certification, drawing up of accreditation rules, and others), the system of TVET teacher/instructor training and further training, as well as coordination, advice to authorities at lower levels, and implementation of selective support instruments to the implementing actors. The main responsibility for implementation lies with state/regional authorities, which may again delegate to lower levels as appropriate. Furthermore, major responsibilities are devolved directly to TVET institutions. However, in practice there are few differences in delivery between different regions (excluding the pastoral regions).

This devolution also applies to TVET beyond the formal sector (though this varies from region to region). Anis (2007) has found that Community Skills Training Centres have been placed under different sections of governance, depending on their region. For example, in Oromia the Technical and Vocational Education and Training Unit of the Regional Education Bureau govern CSTCs, while in Amhara, the Micro and Small-Scale Industry and Trade Bureau govern these. Moreover, woreda education offices are responsible for directly administering the CSTC located in their respective jurisdiction. The Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development's Agricultural Extension, Technical Vocational Education and Training Department is responsible for the FTCs, in collaboration with the Regional Agricultural Bureaus. Communities also have a significant contributory role in the governance of non-formal education programmes. Anis (2007, 10) states "Centre Management Committees are often composed of influential people in the community, usually elder men, and to a lesser extent women (though women's participation is highly encouraged and set as a goal in the ESDP III)." Furthermore, many NGO providers are handing over NFE centres to be managed by Woreda Education Offices.

## 6.5. Financing of training and skills development

The Ethiopian Government allocated substantial funds to the TVET sector: 8.6% of the total education budget during ESDP III, and 8.0% during ESDP IV.<sup>42</sup> However, this does signify a declining share of the budget (despite quantitative increases). Given Ethiopia's devolved structure, the MoE funds regional governments, which in turn allocate funds to regional education bureaus and finally to zonal education offices. Regions have a great deal of discretion in allocating funding.

The government plans to expand TVET without a commensurate increase in government expenditure through cost-saving measures, and by encouraging private investment in TVET institutions, as well as co-financing through voucher schemes and the outsourcing of public training programmes. Its TVET Financing Framework aims to share the burden and readjust the roles of the public sector, private sector and households in TVET financing (GTZ 2006). Employers will also be encouraged to contribute to the financing of TVET through scholarships and the donation of equipment, while the contribution through

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<sup>42</sup> According to informant interviews, based on KfW estimates, however, the actual share is significantly lower : 5.2% during ESDP II, and 5.0% during ESDP IV.

student fees is expected to rise considerably (AfDB/OECD 2008). Furthermore households and communities, which contribute about one fifth of TVET costs, are expected to contribute more over coming years. For NFE, communities have been contributing human labour as well as building materials for the construction of ABE centres, (Anis 2007, 10). Nonetheless, there seems to be recognition among the GoE that “the public sector must still actively finance TVET ... to address issues of equity, market failures, strategic development, etc.” (GTZ 2007, 5).

Donors are also taking an increasing role in financing TVET, particularly given the growing pressure on the system following the massive expansion of primary education in recent years. Germany, Italy, Belgium and the World Bank are the main donors supporting TVET in Ethiopia, with Germany as the largest donor, supporting existing TVET programmes as well as broader systemic reforms. Most recently, the World Bank’s Rural Capacity Building Project has contributed to the development and strategic direction of AgVETs and FTCs. Donors are also very active in the financing of NFE in Ethiopia (see Anis 2007, 10). USAID has funded non-formal education with \$11 million from 2005-2009, while the Italian Cooperation Agency has bilaterally allocated EUR 2 million to alternative basic education over a three-year period and the Netherlands Embassy dedicated EUR 8.2 million to fund literacy education, skills training and entrepreneurship support for adult women. NGO financing of NFE is also enormous, though difficult to estimate given the scope of provision and number of NGOs involved.

## **6.6. Ambitious goals, but will quality suffer?**

Responding to the surge of primary and secondary school graduates, Ethiopia has rapidly expanded the scope of its TVET system, with a particular focus on ensuring that this meets the agriculture-related demands of its largely rural population. Skills provision has become an urgent task of the government in the context of poverty reduction, unemployment, and the mismatch between what formal education offers and the opportunities youths have. However, the expansion of other sectors (such as the recent construction boom in Addis Ababa) has further fuelled efforts to address the mismatch between existing skills, and those needed by employers.

Unlike in other countries, the provision of skills training – both formal and informal TVET – is led by the government, though NGOs have built on these approaches and private sector provision has been growing in recent years, particularly for training in remote areas. Within the strategic framework of the PRSP, the ESDP, and particularly the TVET Strategy, these various approaches are effectively united and the planned governance structure, as well as the development of the ETQF provides hope that linkages between formal TVET and the non-formal system will be made. This is particularly relevant for poorer and more marginalised groups, as these are more likely to be users of non-formal TVET.

Ensuring sufficient financing for training will, however, become increasingly urgent. A key question over the coming years will be whether the scope of expansion envisioned in ESDP IV and the TVET Strategy (MoE 2005, 2008) can in fact be achieved without either increasing the share of total education expenditure or sacrificing quality, and arguably the envisioned expansion without a substantial increase in funding may be too much, too fast, particularly considering the parallel need to rapidly support the skills development of trainers. Donors, private sector employers, as well as federal and regional officials will need to find an effective cost-sharing mechanism that ensures the sustainable implementation of government strategies.

## 7. Conclusion

The above case studies provide an overview of four countries' efforts to increase access to skills training for youths, and thereby combat pervasively high rates of youth unemployment and underemployment. While all countries in the initial sample were experiencing some form of youth bulge, and were coming to recognise the long-term problems likely to emerge from a labour force inadequately equipped for the needs of a modern economy, Bangladesh, Ethiopia, Jordan and Sierra Leone are among those countries in which governments, as well as donors and other non-state actors are attempting to set in place comprehensive reforms to modernise TVET systems, expand access to training, and ensure that the types of skills taught are linked to labour market needs. However, the pace, scope and success of these efforts has varied greatly both between these four countries, and over time. In many cases, there seems to be a strong commitment on paper that is, however, not matched by budgetary allocations.

From this, a few conclusions emerge:

### Policies and strategies

- Growing youth unemployment, caused by insufficient or inadequate skills are seen as a severe problem in all four countries and are seen as a primary justification for increased investment in skills training by the government and/or development partners. However, unlike the majority of countries examined in Phase 1 of this study, there seems to be a more focused and broad-based response that aims to address both demand- and supply-side constraints.
- All four countries also see changing technologies and skill demands within the context of an emerging knowledge economy as a primary driver for the need to address skills development on a national level. Adapting to these changing demands is seen as integral to the nation's competitiveness and to long-term poverty reduction aims.
- The promotion of skills development is, in some cases, very explicitly tied to goals of furthering inclusive economic development. This applies most notably to efforts to increase the share of marginalised groups in formal and non-formal TVET in Bangladesh and Ethiopia, and the focus on linking training to rural jobs for ex-combatants in Sierra Leone. Particularly the longstanding urban bias, and neglect of youths in more remote areas is becoming more apparent and efforts are being made to ensure that skills development in rural areas – particularly for the promotion of a more productive agricultural sector – is increasingly central.
- Strategies feature an increasing awareness of what groups have been marginalised in the skills development and training system, and increased efforts are made to address the role of poverty as a barrier to training.
- In all four countries, the role of informal training (for example, through apprenticeships), and its integration into broader skills development strategies is emphasised. This is generally both a recognition of the reality of skills training in low-income countries, which generally happens outside the formal system, and is part of broader efforts to make education and skills training more inclusive and accessible to the poor and members of marginalised groups.
- For many countries – and most notably Bangladesh and Jordan – migration patterns are a key driver of changing skills needs. In the case of Bangladesh, the export of labourers is seen as an opportunity that requires an improved skills base. In Jordan's case, the role of immigrants in taking low-skill jobs is seen as an impetus to invest in the skills base of the nation's young.

### Skills development programmes

- Formal TVET systems in all four countries are seen to be inadequate in providing skills development for the modern economy and are in the midst of substantial reforms that aim to increase the scope of formal training and increase its relevance. In all four countries this has resulted in relatively sweeping TVET reforms – generally with extensive donor support and foreign expertise.
- The provision of skills training varies significantly from country to country, with varying levels of engagement by the private sector, NGOs and donors, as well as various government ministries. However, in several countries (esp. Jordan and Bangladesh), Youth Ministries had a significant role in providing training to marginalised groups.
- The focus of skills training and youth employment programmes varies significantly. In all countries there has, however, been a move to integrate skills training with work experience. This seems to be based on the recognition that merely providing employment through cash-for-works programmes is likely to leave youths without sufficient skills and without sustainable employment. On the other hand, training that does not also help facilitate the transition to work is also likely to be unsustainable.
- There is a growing recognition that programmes have insufficiently addressed the needs of marginalised groups in rural areas and programmes in all four countries are increasingly doing so. Particularly Ethiopia has emphasised agricultural training. Sierra Leone, Bangladesh and Jordan are emphasising greater training in non-agricultural vocations.
- Donors have taken a variety of approaches to the provision of skills training. The World Bank has launched large-scale programmes in all four countries that predominantly focus on the formal TVET system, by both supporting its expansion (particularly through private sector engagement), and reforming the institutional framework. Other donors (such as USAID in Sierra Leone and Jordan) have provided significant support to NGOs providing training to marginalised groups. GTZ is a leading donor on TVET in Ethiopia and Sierra Leone. There is also substantial overlap with donor programmes providing non-formal education (especially in Ethiopia) or to education sector plans (in Bangladesh and Jordan).
- A central aspect of reforms has been to develop a framework for recognising qualifications obtained through training outside the formal sector. Though such qualifications frameworks are at different levels of completion, in all four countries this has been integral to reform efforts.

### **Governance**

- All four countries, in the process of their reform efforts, have created (or are in the process of creating) independent commissions or agencies to govern youth skills development programmes. These are intended to avoid prior problems of having one over-dominant ministry or agency in this area and also aim to integrate a larger number of stakeholders (especially the private sector). Establishing these institutions has been central to TVET/skills development/youth employment strategy documents and supporting their development has been a central government and donor priority.
- All four countries have developed high-level cross-governmental policy or strategy documents on skills development, TVET and youth employment. This can be an important tool to bring coherence to an area that is frequently not addressed directly, and split across ministries covering labour, education, youth and culture, among others. These specific strategy documents not only allow for an elaboration beyond the frequently relatively vague and general treatment of the subject in PRSPs and National Development Plans, or the TVET-specific focus in Education Sector Plans, and allows for linkages to be drawn across various sectors.

- That said, in the four case study countries, skills development programmes remain split across numerous ministries and agencies. Frequently, NGO programmes function without coordinating with other providers.

### **Financing**

- There is a growing recognition in all four countries that training and skills development has been under-resourced. This is leading to growing investment in the sector by the government (in many cases) and donors (in all cases).
- Jordan has attempted to mobilise resources for skills training by taxing employers. This fund has, however only had limited success, and the bulk of funding, like in the three other countries has mainly been through the government budget, or through private sector-run schools that are, however, frequently of lower (or unverified) quality.
- Donors play a very large role in financing skills training, and in all four countries donors have moved towards longer-term programmes in recent years, in addition to developing more sustained partnerships to plan and implement reforms affecting the structure of training governance and provision.
- Though it figures prominently in strategies, the private sector is only gradually being integrated and the quality and relevance of private sector skills training has been lacking in many countries. As a result, donors and governments are stepping in to provide greater financial support to private sector programmes and the growth of public-private partnerships is one of the main aims to ensure the sustainable growth of training provision, while ensuring that this doesn't come at the expense of quality.

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